

# DOCUMENTS OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN INDIA

Vol. 11  
(1965-1967)



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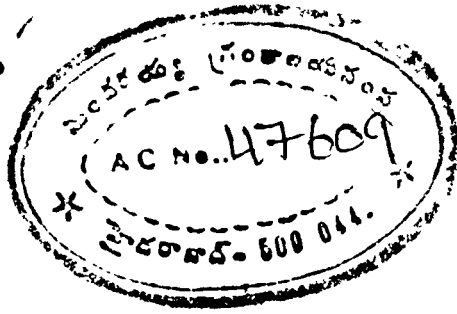
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## Introductory Note

This Volume (Volume No. XI) contains documents of the Communist Movement in India for the period 1965 to 1967. This is a very important period in contemporary political history of India as the development during this period gave definite indications of the erosion of the influence of the Indian National Congress over the people of India and emergence of non-Congress forces in the Indian political arena.

The Communist baiting that was started by the Indian National Congress in 1962 immediately following the border war between India and China, the same Communist baiting was continued by the Congress Government at the Centre as well as in the States with greater ferocity in 1965. When the fight against the revisionists in the Communist movement in India culminated in formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the 7th Congress held in Calcutta in October-November, 1964, the Government of India and the State Governments started repressive measures against the leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) with a view to crush this Party-formation. In the early hours of the morning of December 30, 1964 nearly 1,000 leaders and active members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) were arrested all over India and detained without trial under Defence of India Rules. The then Home Minister of India could not state publicly any reason to justify this arrest and for keeping them in detention without trial. When demands were consistently made by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) for trial of the detained leaders in the court of law, the Home Minister maintained his silence.

When the Communist Party of India (Marxist) opposed in West Bengal the rise in Tram fare in 1965 in Calcutta Tramways Company Limited, which was then a British Company, the Congress Government of West Bengal again resorted to arrest

of a large number of leaders and active workers of the CPI(M) and kept them in detention without trial. But the leaders of the Congress Party neither at the Centre nor in the States could measure the feeling of the mass of the people of India and could never imagine that in 1967 General Election the Congress Party would be defeated in 8 States including West Bengal and Kerala.

The popularity of the newly formed CPI(M) took a definite shape and the voters returned a large number of CPI(M) candidates in West Bengal and in Kerala and in both these States. United Front Governments were set up. In Kerala, the UF Government was headed by the Communists and E.M.S. Namboodiripad again became the Chief Minister. This turning point in the contemporary history of Indian politics is a notable event and students of Political Science who want to study and analyse these developments will find the documents contained in this Volume most useful.

The movement for release of the arrested leaders and active workers of CPI(M) took the form of a mass movement in West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Tripura and in many other States. The fight for release of political leaders kept in detention under DIR and the fight for food and the fight against the price rise and taxation all were combined in a total fight in these mass movements. The base of public support for CPI(M) gathered enormous strength in the course of these mass movements and belying all expectations of the Indian National Congress, CPI(M) could establish itself as a stable All-India Political Party.

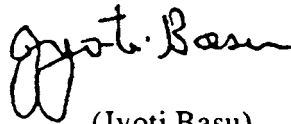
The Indo-Pak war of 1965 is a notable event of this period. This Volume contains statement which elaborates the stand of CPI(M) on this war.

The "People's Democracy", the Central Organ of the CPI(M) started publication from 27th June, 1965. This is also a notable event of this period.

This Volume contains documents of left deviations which started from Naxalbari Movement in 1967. It also contains documents on the divergent views between the CPI(M) and

Communist Party of China on certain fundamental issues on programmes and policies. The Central Committee of CPI(M) prepared a draft for the ideological discussion in 1967 and also finalised tasks of the Party in Kisan Front, in Trade Union Front and on Party organisations. All these documents included in this Volume make it a substantive compilation and the readers will find sufficient materials from these documents to enrich their knowledge on growth and expansion of CPI(M) in India.

18th October, 1997

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jyoti Basu'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J'.

(Jyoti Basu)  
*Chief Editor*



## Foreword

With the sharp difference and division inside the Party in and around 1964 the critics and enemies of revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party comforted themselves with the thought that communism would be rolled back from India, very few people among them count on this today. In 1964, hardly six weeks after the Seventh Party Congress, the Government of India launched repressive measures against the Party on an all-India scale and detained more than a thousand of its leaders at different levels under the Defence of India Rules. The Government using its media of propaganda and pressing into service the so-called free Press under the control of big business let loose a most vicious slander campaign against our Party and its leaders who were nailed as "Peking agents", "anti-national" and so on. What made the Party's struggle even more difficult was that in addition to the slander campaign of the bourgeoisie-landlord Government, our Party leaders and their political line were also the object of concerted attacks by the leadership of the CPI which was supported in this by the CPSU leadership. Indian reformists pretending to be the unifiers of the Communist movement dubbed us as splitter. Depicting us as dogmatists and adventurists, the Indian reformists sought to project themselves as creating Marxists. The Government had calculated that repression and all-round attack through propaganda would be able to stifle our voice and that because of the split in the Communist Party, the revisionists would be able to rally a majority. But these hopes were belied. The first test of the correctness of our line was established in Kerala Elections held in 1965 where CPI(M) secured a resounding victory and the revisionists fared miserably. Most of our comrades who contested the elections from prisons got elected at a situation when large number of leaders and cadres were in jails, and slanders and repressions were going on unabated.

In September 1965, when Pakistan attacked India, the Party leaders and cadres were in jail. The Party's international outlook was again tested during this war. Every other Party, including CPI, adopted chauvinistic position. Ours was the only Party in the country that stood for peace and Indo-Pak amity. Our comrades outside the jails and our committees carried on their work valiantly. In this period Party organs were brought out in Bengali, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil, Punjabi, Kannada and Marathi. People's Democracy was brought out. With the Party still semi-underground, big mass battles were fought in West Bengal and Kerala was also no relaxation in the Party's ideological battle against revisionism.

The Party leaders were released only in 1966. The process of release was completed only in May that year. It was then that the task of reorganising the Party and the mass fronts was taken up in right earnest. The Party worked out the tasks on various fronts basing on the documents of the 7th Party Congress concerning the Kisan Front, Trade Union Front and Party Organisation. The Party was soon to face a General Election.

It was clear that, given the sort of circumstances that the Party had to face during '65-66, it was very difficult to organise mass struggles. But again the central aspect of establishing the new identity of the Party was linked to our ability to lead the masses in struggle. And our strong units took a lead in this.

West Bengal was rocked by a massive upsurge of struggles by various sections of the people during the entire period of 1965-66. The massive struggles touched a new watershed during February to April 1966 on the popular demand of food and kerosene. The thoroughly anti-people food policy of the Congress Government in the State provoked widespread discontent among the people. The discontent was channelised into surging struggles. During this struggle, the Party played a pivotal role in activising united broader militant platforms of the fight people to carry forward and to widen and deepen the sweep of the movement.

Apart from West Bengal, notable struggles were also being fought in other parts of the country. The most important of these being the general strike in Bombay in August, 1966.

Apart from the popular struggles on the question of food, increasing struggles were being conducted on the most important political issue of the time—democratic rights. The issue of democratic rights crystallised with the concrete demands of the immediate release of political detenus, withdrawal of the emergency provision and the draconian Defence of India Rules.

The solidarity struggle with the national liberation movement of Vietnam against the crude barbaric war of aggression perpetrated by US imperialism also picked up momentum during this period. The issues and developments regarding the struggle were taken to the grassroot level and hundreds of solidarity meetings and demonstrations were organised.

All these struggles, not only vindicated our political line vis-a-vis the Congress, but also got adequately reflected in the results of the general elections.

The fourth General Election held in 1967 brought about a new situation in the country. The electorate delivered disastrous blows to the ruling Congress Party and dislodged it from office in eight States where non-Congress governments were formed. Our Party came to occupy a central place in the two State Governments of Kerala and West Bengal. The strife-ridden Congress Party commanded only a precarious majority in the Parliament. The popular victory scored by the opposition on the democratic parties in these elections were the first big rebuff to the ruling Party after the victory in Kerala. This election was also the first which we contested as a separate Communist Party. Apart from Kerala and West Bengal, we also emerged as a strong force in Tripura.

Following the election, on the issue of formation of the non-Congress Governments we took a principled position. The CPI on the other hand opted for a line of total support to non-Congress governments, joining in coalition governments which included the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party also. This fact amounted to repudiation of their own programmatic and tactical line. Our Party decided that we would join only those of the State

Governments where we could effectively influence the policies of the Government.

The results of the fourth General Elections confirmed the correctness of the class analysis made in our Party Programme at the Seventh Party Congress. The election results and the course of developments following them also fully vindicated the political-tactical line of the Seventh Congress. The Party came to the conclusion that by pursuing a determined struggle to win allies on a wider scale and directing the main fire against the Congress Party and its Government, since it continues to be the chief instrument of bourgeois-landlord class rule, we had succeeded in contributing considerably to the people's victories at the polls. But the fact that the Congress Party was still the strongest class party of the bourgeois-landlord classes was not to be lost sight of.

In both Kerala and West Bengal States, the Party participated in running the coalition Governments which comprised of several democratic, petty-bourgeois, bourgeois parties, groups and individuals. Our strength in Kerala at that time was decisively preponderant, while in the case of West Bengal, it was not so, though our Party, was definitely one of the principal components of the coalition.

The Party made it clear that the power in the States was to be understood in clear class terms with all its limitations. In class outlook, composition and in several other respects the administrative machinery was not a suitable instrument for implementation of many of the pro-people policies, let alone, class policies decisively directed against the vested interests. The Party also made it clear that the actual life-span of these State Governments and all the possible vicissitudes that these were to undergo during their tenure could not be forecast. Our Ministers, without either entertaining undue illusions about radical reforms and giving relief to the people in a big way or despairing that nothing could be done under the present set-up, should always bear in mind, that they, as Party's representatives, should strive to establish our bona fides to the people. Any failure on this score compromised Party's political line in the eyes of the people.



In April 1967, the Central Committee adopted a Political Report entitled "New situation and Party's Tasks". It assessed the developments since the 7th Party Congress and carried forward its understanding. The Report noted the deepening economic crisis and its projection into the initial stages of a political crisis. It was noted in this Report that how the pursuit of the capitalist path without affecting radical agrarian reforms and relying heavily on foreign monopoly capital was leading the country to the danger of neo-colonial domination under US imperialism. It was endangering the country's national independence and condemning its people to the cruel exploitation of imperialists, Indian monopolists and big landlords. The virtual abandoning of the Fourth Five Year Plan and opening the floodgate of invasion of private foreign capital and its collaboration agreements with the Indian big business and the crisis of the internal and external policies of the Government spoke eloquently of the correctness of the Party's assessment.

Alongside, that Central Committee meeting addressed itself to work out the tasks of the Party in the post-election situation. It was at this time that the "Left" adventurist assault on the Party, its Programme and tactical line had been unleashed by the Naxalites in West Bengal. This assault was largely supported by the Chinese Communist Press and radio. This "left" infantilism spread to some other states and district units and developed into a serious challenge to the Party, diverting its main attention from the mass political tasks it had set before itself. It may be noted that in the above-mentioned Central Committee meeting there was no dissenting voice over the Report. However, in the wake of the Naxalite infantile revolt in May-June that year and with the support extended to it by the Chinese Communist Party, its open calls to rebel against the Party, the dissent based on "left" adventurism reached a breaking point.

The Chinese Communist Party came out sharply criticising our understanding of the Indian situation in June 1967. It became obvious that they had serious differences with us on a number of issues concerning the Indian revolution. From the writings in the Chinese Party Press and the broadcasts by the Peking Radio

it was clear that the CPC regarded our Programme to be fundamentally wrong; our assessment of the Indian situation and our political tactical line to be reformist. The assessment of the CPC led to the conclusion that Indian State was not a bourgeois-landlord State led by the big bourgeoisie but a puppet Government led by the comprador bureaucratic bourgeoisie run principally in the interest of imperialism while they themselves were reconciled to being parasites dependent on the crumbs thrown by their foreign masters. The CPC propaganda went to the extent of saying that ours was not a genuine Communist Party and that those of the extremists who had been expelled from the Party for following an adventurist anti-Party line and who later formed the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) were in fact the real revolutionaries.

The CPC attack was a grave development for our Party and the revolutionary movement of our country. But this unpleasant reality had to be faced. It would have been wrong on the part of our Party to gloss over the differences. The Central Committee therefore discussed the issues threadbare and took measures to educate the entire Party about the erroneous position of the CPC in principle and in practice.

The C.C. outlined that our differences with the CPC were of three categories. Firstly, regarding the Programmatic aspect, the class character of the Indian state and Government, the character and role of different sections of Indian bourgeoisie and their attitude towards imperialism. Secondly, regarding the actual assessment of economic-political situation in India, the degree of development of class contradictions and class consciousness among the working class and the peasantry and the concrete tactics and forms of struggle. And thirdly, regarding the political-organisational principles governing the relations between Communists Parties.

In our rejoinder to the CPC positions, the Party stressed that the Indian Government was not a 'puppet', 'stooge' or 'lackey' of imperialism and that the Indian big bourgeoisie was not the parasitic puppet of imperialism. The Party rejected the view that

the class revolution was imminent or that the revolutionary situation had matured demanding the highest form of revolutionary struggle. The Party called this CPC view of the Indian situation as "highly exaggerated and extremely subjective". The Party also rejected the CPC interference in our Party's internal affairs and their attempt to impose on us a programme and political line contrary to our understanding. This sectarian deviation had ultimately led to the second split in the Party.

*Harkishan Singh Surjeet*

(Harkishan Singh Surjeet)

General Secretary

Communist Party of India (Marxist)

October 18, 1997



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## **List Of Abbreviations Used**

|          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| CI       | : | The Communist International                                       |
| ECCI     | : | The Executive Committee of the Communist International            |
| CPI      | : | Communist Party of India  |
| LM       | : | The Labour Monthly, published from London                         |
| CPGB     | : | Communist Party of Great Britain                                  |
| CPSU     | : | Communist Party of Soviet Union                                   |
| CPC      | : | Communist Party of China  |
| INPRECOR | : | International Press Correspondence of the Communist International |
| BCI      | : | Bulletin of the Communist International                           |
| CC       | : | Central Committee   |
| PB       | : | Political Bureau  |
| INC      | : | Indian National Congress  |
| AITUC    | : | All India Trade Union Congress                                    |
| AIWPP    | : | All India Workers' & Peasants' Party                              |
| INTUC    | : | Indian National Trade Union Congress                              |
| AIKS     | : | All India Kisan Sabha   |
| CKC      | : | Central Kisan Council of All India Kisan Sabha                    |
| WFTU     | : | World Federation of Trade Unions                                  |
| AISF     | : | All India Students' Federation                                    |
| CSP      | : | Congress Socialist Party  |
| CPI(M)   | : | Communist Party of India (Marxist)                                |



## Reply From Prison \*

**P. Sundarayya, M. Basavapunniah, A. K. Gopalan,  
P. Ramamurti, Harkishan Singh Surjeet**

*Members of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) detained without trial under the Defence of India Rules.*

*Published as booklet in April 1965 with a Foreword by Joyti Basu.*

### FOREWORD

We are publishing 3 letters addressed from prison by comrades, the members of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India, to the Home Minister, Prime Minister and Sri N.C. Chatterji, M.P.

These letters would not have seen the light of day but for the fact that these were included as documents in a case which the detenus instituted in the Kerala High Court.

The Congress rulers are aping the vile method of the British imperialists in India by taking recourse to lawless laws detaining political opponents without trial, slandering them and lying against them at galore. We, who are free, have already replied to the charges and innuendos on behalf of our Party. But we are sure that the replies of our comrades from prison will be read with interest by all those who unlike the Congress rulers have any regard for truth and a democratic way of life.

We are also giving below the extracts from a reply (which

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\* Letters written in January 1965 by the detenus to (i) The Union Home Minister, Guljarilal Nanda, and (ii) The Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri. A letter dated 31.1.1965 was written by A.K. Gopalan to Shri N.C. Chatterjee for his assistance.

may not reach the addressee) given to Comrade A.K. Gopalan by the eminent lawyer and prominent member of Parliament Sri N.C. Chatterjee. He writes in a letter dated 7th April 1965 :

“I am amazed that you wrote to me a letter on the 31st of January, 1965, but it never reached me. It must have been withheld by the authorities. You have been the leader of the opposition in the Indian Parliament for 12 years and you are the leader of an important party in Parliament. Now that you have been declared as guilty of prejudicial act by the Home Minister of India and clapped in Jail under the lawless law, viz. the D.I.R., it is quite in the fitness of things that your letter to another member of parliament, who was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, and is acknowledged as one of the leaders of the bar in India, and who has also been an opposition leader in parliament, and who is the President of the All India Civil Liberties Council for many years, has been withheld.

“I spoke very strongly both in parliament and outside on the detention without trial and without formulation of any charge of members of Parliament and members of your party. I wish you were in Parliament to hear me. Anyhow I have forwarded a copy of my speech to Mr. E.M.S. Namboodiripad and I can assure you that many members of Parliament including leading Congress members supported my stand and particularly appreciated my speech condemning the Presidential Proclamation as an outrage on the Indian Constitution

“I have also declared in Parliament and outside that Mr. Nanda’s booklet condemning you and others was a political judgement delivered by him against you, and having worked with you in Parliament for so many years I can not believe that you would be guilty of any underhand or treasonable activities. I have gone through Mr. Nanda’s booklet with due care. It is full of ideological effusions and is particularly lacking in cogent legal evidence.”

Calcutta

Dated 25th April, 1965.

**Jyoti Basu**

To

Shri N. C. Chatterjee, M.P.  
Advocate, Supreme Court,  
Pussa Road, NEW DELHI.

Central Jail, Viiyur  
Trichur (Kerala)

31.1.1965

Dear Shri N. C. Chatterjee,

We are writing to you for your assistance in an important matter which affects our honour and reputation as public workers.

We have been detained without trial under the D.I.R. The Government is not bound to disclose its grounds to any court, because of the position that our right to go to court for assertion of fundamental rights stands suspended during the Emergency.

But the Home Minister, Mr. Nanda went out of his way and made a broadcast to the nation on the A.I.R. on 1.1.65 which has been published in all the Daily news papers in the country in their issues dated 2.1.1965.

This broadcast is highly defamatory to our honour and reputation. Without any proof Mr. Nanda asserts that we have been engaging in "disloyal activity", that we are "Indians who have no love or loyalty for India", that we have been "preparing the rank and file for armed struggle and guerilla warfare", that our party was created "to serve as Peking's instrument", that its aim is to prepare for "an internal violent revolution to synchronize with a fresh Chinese attack", etc. etc. Every one of these allegations is totally untrue and without any foundation whatsoever.

Mr. Nanda gives no evidence in support of these contentions. In order to make people believe them he has actually resorted to distortions, suppressions and falsification of our political stands as embodied in our Programme, Resolutions and other documents. The purpose of such falsifications is quite clear. Unable to give any evidence for his defamatory assertions, he seeks to clothe them with some plausibility by such political

arguments, based on distortions and falsification in order to make the public believe these allegations.

We have already written a letter to Mr. Nanda repudiating these allegations and demanding publication of the letter.

Quite apart from this we are anxious to vindicate our honour and reputation in the face of these defamatory accusations. We, therefore, request you to draft and send us :

1. A complaint of defamation under Sec. 499 I.P.C. to be filed in individually ;
2. A complaint of defamation to be filed jointly by P. Sundarayya, M. Basavapunniah, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, A.K. Gopalan and P. Ramamurti, as members of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India on behalf of the Party.

We are herewith sending a copy of our letter to Mr. Nanda with its enclosures in order to enable you to draft the complaints.

We are sure that you would help us in this matter of vital importance to people like us who have devoted their whole life for the service of our people. We hope you would send us a draft soon and also advise us as to how to file the complaint and in which court. Obviously, the complaint will have to be filed in a Delhi Court where we will be able to avail of your services.

Trust you are in good health.

Thanking you.

Yours Sincerely,  
**A. K. Gopalan**

To

**Shri Gulzarilal Nanda**  
Home Minister,  
Govt. of India, New Delhi.

**Vyyur Central Jail**  
27.1.1965

Shri Nandaji,

Taking advantage of the fact that we are prevented during the pendency of a state of emergency from going to court to assert our fundamental rights under Article 19 of the Constitution, you have illegally detained us in jail without trial.

And on top of it, on 1.1.1965 you misused your official position and the access which it gives to the Govt.-owned All India Radio and made a broadcast to the nation. That broadcast was full of slanderous allegations against our Party, which are nothing but a string of lies concocted by you and your officials to serve your political ends.

These false and slanderous statements specifically refer to us, leaders of the Party, are highly defamatory to our honour and reputation.

Not content with the slanderous statements over the Radio you go on making them whenever opportunity presents itself. The "Hindu", an English daily news-paper of Madras, has published in its issue dated 26.1.1965 (morning) a report of the Press Conference you held at Trivandrum on 25.1.65. The report, apart from the fact that you were calling us pro-China, contains the following :

"To a question whether it was a fact that a large sum of money, nearly 20 crores was seized from the pro-China elements when they were arrested, Mr. Nanda replied, "That Bank (Bank of China) was not doing quite innocent business."

The question, whether a sum of Rs.20 crores was seized from us when we were arrested under the D.I.R. on and after 30-12-1964 under your orders was a specific, straight and simple

question and required a straight unequivocal answer “yes” or “no”. But you evaded the answer. The reason can only be that you want the slander, which you know to be false, to continue.

While not giving a straight answer to this question you made the suggestion that the Bank of China was financing us. It is well-known that the Bank of China was closed sometime in October or November, 1962, under orders of the Government who took possession all its records. For two years Government have been investigating the records. Why do you hesitate to publish the facts of the investigation that has been going for nearly two years, but go on making such slanderous allegations on the sly ? It can only be because the publication of the findings will not serve your nefarious political purpose of vilifying us behind our back.

You must have seen the letter we addressed to the Prime Minister in which we repudiated this slanderous statement you made in the said broadcast.

We are sending you a copy of the said letter to the Prime Minister herewith. In view of the unfounded slanderous statements you have circulated we demand that you immediately arrange for giving our reply contained in the said letter to the Prime Minister as wide a publicity as was given to your radio broadcast. Failing which we will be constrained to take appropriate steps to vindicate our honour and reputation.

Yours truly,  
**P. Sundarayya, P. Ramamurti,  
A.K. Gopalan, M. Basavapunniah,  
Harkishan Singh Surjeet.**

Central Jail, Viiyyur



7.1.1965

To

**Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri,**  
Prime Minister of India, New Delhi

Mr. Prime Minister,

In the early hours of 30th December, 1964 we were arrested at Trichur (Kerala) where we had gone for the meeting of the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee of our Party. That same night All India Radio announced that over 600 active workers of the Party had been arrested and that arrests were continuing.

You must certainly be aware that these meetings of the Polit Bureau and Central Committee had been fixed in Kerala with a view to help the preparations that our Party was making to fight the forthcoming elections to the Kerala State Assembly.

The whole world knows that the Congress Party faces prospects of a defeat in these elections and that our party will play the leading role in bringing about that defeat.

The policies that the Congress Government has been pursuing, despite all the vaunted slogans of “democratic socialism” have nothing to do with either democracy or socialism, but on the other hand, as experience has shown, they serve the interests of big business and landlords and, in the bargain, have let loose on the people, the bands of speculators, hoarders and blackmarketeers, as never before seen in the history of the country—not even during the period of the last war under the hated British regime. Our party has been in the forefront of the growing people’s struggle against these policies. In these conditions the Government can not contemplate with equanimity the prospects of a defeat of the Congress party and our party emerging as the leading force in Kerala, for that would bring confidence to the people and strengthen the popular struggle against anti-people policies.

Once before, the Government removed the elected Communist-led Government of Kerala for no other reason that its activities and measures, in contrast to those of the Congress

Government, were giving relief to the people and setting an example to the people throughout the country. The conspiracy that the government of India hatched in 1959, in collusion with all communal and reactionary forces, to instal the Congress Government against the will of the people in Kerala has boomeranged on the Congress.

Faced with this situation, the Government of India tried to avoid the elections by first constituting a Cabinet sub-committee to see if the Constitution could be amended in order to avoid all mid-term elections. But faced with opposition from all quarters it had to retrace its step.

And now the government has attacked our party hoping thereby that it will be crippled and will not be able to effectively fight the elections. And on top of it, the Government has let loose through the Radio, the press and all media of publicity, a barrage of lying propaganda that we are against the country, and serve the interest of China. The ruling circles hope that this will be a trump-card with which the Congress party will be able to win the forthcoming elections in Kerala and prevent the emergence of our Party as the biggest single force in Kerala. This is obvious from the fact that apart from the Home Minister's broadcast, A.I.R. carried a special broadcast in Malayalam by the only Kerala Minister in your Government, Shri A. M. Thomas, on 2.1.1965.

Shri Gulzarilal Nanda in his broadcast over A. I. R. on New Year day sought to justify this attack by stating that the object of our Party is to promote an internal violent revolution "to synchronize with a fresh Chinese attack". Except for cooked-up cock and bull stories which are all figments of imagination and have been the traditional stock-in-trade of the ruling class whenever it was faced with opposition to its policies he had no concrete proof to advance. In the circumstances, he sought to make worse stories sound plausible by doling out political arguments.

He said the Calcutta Congress of the Party held in 1964 “laid stress on the necessity of pursuing the non-peaceful path to socialism and characterised any talk of peaceful path in this country as nothing but self-deception and deception of others”. A more brazenfaced lie cannot be imagined. We challenge Shri Nanda to point out any passage in either the Draft Programme, or Political Organisational Report, or any resolution or documents adopted at the Congress to substantiate his claim.

On the other hand, the Programme which is the basic document of the of the Party for an entire period states :

“The Communist Party of India strives to achieve the establishment of People’s Democracy and socialist transformation through peaceful means. By developing a powerful mass revolutionary movement, by combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forms of struggle, the working class and its allies will try their utmost to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and to bring about the transformation through peaceful means.”

“However, it needs always to be borne in mind that the ruling classes never relinquish their power voluntarily. They seek to defy the will of the people and seek to reverse it by lawlessness and violence. It is, therefore, necessary for the revolutionary forces to be vigilant and so orientate their work that they can face up to all contingencies, to any twist and turn in the political life of the country.”

An identical passage can be found in the Draft Programme that was released to the press as early as March, 1964 and later published in printed form and also translated and published in many languages. This Draft Programme was discussed for months at all levels of the Party, local, district and state conferences before its final discussion at the Calcutta Congress. As stated above, there has been no change in this section dealing with the means of achieving People’s Democracy and socialist transformation.

It should also be pointed out that the identical passage was put forward in the Draft Programme, drafted by P. Ramamurti

and Bhupesh Gupta for discussion at the Vijayawada Congress in 1961. This was bodily lifted into the alternative draft by S.A. Dange, G. Adhikari and P.C. Joshi. The Vijayawada Congress, however, did not discuss these drafts and forwarded them to the National Council.

It should also be stated that a similar formulation is found in the Draft programme of the Dangeite National Council and their Bombay congress did not change the formulation in any way.

All these documents have been published and sold in the country. And hence this clear and unambiguous statement could not have escaped the attention of Shri Nanda or his Central Intelligence.

It is not fortuitous that Shri Nanda has chosen not only to conceal this clear and unambiguous statement about the means of transition but actually sought to justify his stand as stated above. For the truth would knock the bottom out of the political arguments he seeks to build for his case.

Shri Nanda went on to say in the broadcast that “the Congress proceeded to amend the Constitution adopted at the Amritsar Congress in 1958 in which the possibilities of peaceful transformation to socialism had been emphasised.” Shri Nanda ought to know that the Constitution of the Communist Party deals with the structure of the party, the functioning of its organs, duties, rights of members etc. It does not deal with the aims and objects or the means of achieving them.

An extraordinary situation arose in the Party when the Preamble came to be inserted. At the Palghat Congress in 1956, it was decided that the current Programme had become outmoded and defective. It was then decided to put the Programme in abeyance and the Central Committee was asked to submit a new draft for discussion at the next Congress. However, this could not be done at the next Congress at Amritsar. In the absence of a Programme, it was decided to insert the preamble to the Constitution which defined the aims and objects and the means for achieving them.

As stated earlier, the next Congress at Vijayawada could not discuss and adopt the Programme although two drafts were placed before it. The Programme was finally adopted at the 7th Congress at Calcutta.

Now that the Party had adopted a full-fledged and detailed programme which clearly defined the aims and objects as well as the means, as stated above, the need for the stop-gap arrangement by way of a Preamble to the Constitution disappeared and hence it was deleted from the Constitution to restore it to its normal form and content at Calcutta.

That the Home Minister should give a sinister meaning to this simple procedure only shows the dire straits to which he has been reduced in his attempt to prove a patently absurd story.

The Home Minister went on to say that "it (the Congress) decided on certain amendments in its organisational structure in order to create a monolithic structure suited to conspiratorial and subversive activities." It is remarkable that the Home Minister who asserted about this change in the character of the Party structure dared not refer to any concrete amendments.

The fact is that all along, the highest organs of the party functioning between two party congresses were the polit Bureau and the Central Committee. At Amritsar it was decided to have, apart from these two bodies, a new body of 101 members called the national Council in order to have wider consultation and discussions which was to meet once in six months. A similar arrangement was provided at state and district levels.

In practice this was found difficult and unworkable. Meetings of the National Council took place at intervals of over 8 months. In practice, decisions were taken by a small Secretariat. The organisational sub-committee set up by the National Council in 1961 had recommended the scrapping of the three tier system and revert to the earlier two-tier system. The Vijayawada Congress could not take up the amendments to the Constitution.

It was mainly this amendment that was carried at the Calcutta Congress. As a matter of fact, the constitutional amendment

provided for a Central Committee whose membership was fixed at 41—larger than the Central Executive Committee—the interval between whose meetings should not exceed three months.

At the same time, the amendment also provided for a plenum annually which would be a much wider body than even the old National Council consisting of the members of the Central Committee and representatives of State Committees for discussing and taking decisions on important political questions.

Thus, the constitutional amendments provided for more democratic functioning than before and for minimising the need for a small body like the Polit Bureau taking important political decisions. Where is the question of any provision “suited to conspiratorial and subversive activities” in all this ? Unlike the Congress Party where the AICC just meets and on which lakhs of rupees are spent and no serious discussions generally take place and decisions are taken in practice by a Working Committee, our Constitutional amendments were designed to ensure effective democratic functioning.

Our Draft Programme was sent to the entire party and published seven months before the party Congress. Criticism of the drafts were also published and also sent to the entire Party. They were discussed at local, district and state conferences, which suggested amendments. Taking all these into consideration, the 7th Congress discussed and made some amendments and finally adopted the Programme. Do all these show conspiratorial methods or the conscious attempt to develop the widest democracy—a thing unknown in the ruling Congress Party ?

Yet another puerile argument advanced by the Home Minister was “the Programme accepted by the Calcutta Congress was Peking’s prescription of People’s Democracy as distinguished from Parliamentary Democracy which we have in this country.” It is difficult to match the naivete of this argument of the Home Minister.

Does he not know that the Communist Party has always accepted the establishment of People's Democracy as its immediate programme long before the People's Republic of China was even established ? Even when the Palghat Congress kept in abeyance the then current Programme, the aim of People's Democracy was affirmed in a separate chapter of the political resolution adopted at the Congress.

Does Shri Nanda not know that the Amritsar Preamble to the Constitution, approvingly referred to by him in his broadcast, also reiterates this aim of People's Democracy ? The recent Congress at Vijayawada did not change this and the Preamble which defined the aim continued to be valid. Where does the question arise of our Seventh Congress suddenly accepting Peking's prescription of People's Democracy ?

It is inconceivable that the Home Minister of the country is so very ignorant as not to know that the concept of People's Democracy deals with the real content of democracy and not the form ? On the other hand the concept of parliamentary Democracy is concerned with the form, with the instrument through which democracy is exercised. People's Democracy is distinguished from bourgeois democracy.

Despite all outward forms of democracy that may be prevalent in a country, the real question is who wields state power, which class or classes wield state power ? In other words, democracy for whom—for the common people or the handful of exploiters ? This is the decisive question.

We have not concealed our view, but have proclaimed in clear and unambiguous language in the Programme adopted at the 7th Congress that the State in India is the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords led by the big bourgeoisie. The successive programme of our party including the one adopted at Calcutta, have pointed out that despite adult franchise and five yearly elections to the Parliament and State Assemblies, the big bourgeoisie and landlords who constitute a small minority of our people are able to rule and exploit the toiling people because of

the power of their money and their ownership of means of production. The entire experience of our people since independence confirms the statement in our Programme that “the working people can not compete with their (monopolists and landlords) vast resources and are thus disabled in the exercise of the rights finally given in the Constitution.”

It is not for nothing that Shri G. D. Birla stated the other day in his address to businessmen at Madras that the latter should talk to the Government and not against the Government. For it is the interests of monopolists like the Birlas and Tatas that reign supreme in our democratic state. Obviously, despite all the trappings, this is not democracy for the people, but democracy for the bourgeoisie and landlords. That is why the Programme adopted at the 7th Congress declared :

“The democracy that the bourgeois-landlord state and Govt. have been practising all these years is, in reality, denied to the people and only the top exploiting classes are flourishing under it at the expense of the toiling millions of the country.”

It is this state of affairs that we want to change when we say our aim is a People’s Democracy, a state in which the people will be able to exercise state power. We want a state in which the monopolists and landlords will be barred from exercising the power of their wealth and money and preventing the people from exercising their power in the state and thus function their democracy.

As pointed out earlier, People’s Democracy has been throughout the aim of the Communist party since independence.

As for parliamentary institutions, the Programme adopted at the 7th Congress clearly points out that despite its basic class character, “India’s parliamentary system embodies an advance for the people” and that it “affords them certain opportunities to defend their interests and helps them to carry forward their struggle for peace, democracy, and social progress.”

It further pointed out that the threat to the parliamentary system and democracy comes from the exploiting classes. The



way in which the Communist-led ministry in Kerala was subverted by resorting to violence and lawlessness by the ruling party in alliance with reactionary and communal forces, encouraged by the Central Govt. and the very attack on the party on the eve of the Kerala elections go to prove this. In these circumstances, the Calcutta Congress declared that "It is of utmost importance that democratic institutions are defended in the interests of the people against such threats."

The Home Minister who noticed such a small thing as the deletion of the Preamble to the constitution of the party must certainly be aware of all these things, for they are found in the Programme adopted at the 7th Congress to which he referred. And yet he not only has to suppress these facts, but also resort to palpable falsehoods, for he has to prove an unprovable case.

The Home Minister again referred to our attitude to the India-China border dispute. As early as 1959, at the meeting of the National Council at Meerut our Party had adopted a resolution that the area south of the McMahon line, which was under Indian administration should be in India. As a matter of fact, this position was reiterated in the alternative resolution by P. Ramamurti at the meeting of the National Council towards the end of October, 1962, after the Chinese forces had crossed the McMahon line.

However our Party's acceptance of the India-China boundary as disclosed by the Govt. of India does not solve the problem. We have to reckon with the existence of a dispute with China over the boundary. It is our firm conviction that no military solution can ever be found to this problem and that a political solution by peaceful negotiations will have to be found. This we urge in the interests of our own people and the country.

True, China has not accepted the Colombo proposals in toto ; what is to be done under the circumstances ? Statesmanship does not consist in drifting and allowing the deadlock to continue. For, quite apart from the larger cause of peace and Afro-Asian solidarity, the continuation of the deadlock brings immense harm to our country and people.

The Tenali Convention met when it was reported that Sirimavo Bandarnayake had enquired whether India would consider it a fulfilment of Colombo proposals if the Chinese withdrew the civilian posts in the demilitarised 20-kilometre area in Ladakh. There were indications that the Govt. of India was inclined to agree.

In the circumstances, the Tenali Convention noted these developments and urged the Govt. of India to take the initiative by directly contacting the Chinese Govt. and explore the possibilities of starting negotiation on this or any other basis acceptable to both India and China.

Only a prejudiced person, or who is deliberately bent upon creating prejudices, can see in this resolution an attempt to blame anyone. Nothing of the kind. What we were and are interested in is breaking of the deadlock. India has diplomatic relations with China. Then what is wrong and dishonourable in exploring a mutually acceptable basis for starting negotiations through these diplomatic channels ? On the other hand, we are convinced that such an initiative on India's part will add to its prestige as a nation seeking ways and means of breaking the deadlock and ensuring peace.

And what is the alternative ? Endless mission to the U.S.A. Britain and other countries seeking arms aid and mission from Britain and America to our country which tell us what we require and do not require for our defence, certainly are no edifying spectacle which adds to our prestige. And in the bargain, with the diversion of a thousand crores to the military budget, we have a spiral of inflation, ever-rising prices and intensification of misery and poverty for the common people. And yet in spite of all this, it is admitted on all hands that the problem has no military solution.

Shri Gulzarilal Nanda's dubbing us as anti-national and shutting us up behind prison bars will not deter us and we will continue to urge this course. We know that some day or other the Government of India will come to the realisation of the need for a peaceful negotiated political settlement, and when that

realisation comes, the Government will explore the basis acceptable and honourable to both for starting negotiations. Voices in support of this as the only sensible course have been raised during the last few months from Sarvodaya leaders like Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Jai Prakash Narayan to others including Congress members of Parliament. It would be the height of absurdity to dub them anti-national and pro-China because they advocate this course.

Shri Nanda states that “the object of the party now is to promote an internal revolution to synchronize with a fresh Chinese attack destroying the democratic Government of India.” Any sane man would see that if this is true then we must be anxious that there should be no settlement of the border dispute with China, we must be anxious for the mounting of tension and for a renewal of armed clash between the two countries. But, in the same breath, he blames us for urging the Government of India to take the initiative to break the deadlock and explore a mutually acceptable basis for starting negotiations on the border dispute. If this is done, obviously, the possibilities for armed clash would disappear. Why should we advocate such a course, if we are interested in a renewal of armed clash ?

Shri Nanda can only resort to such ridiculous absurdities and contradictory arguments for he had to justify an unjustifiable case.

The Home Minister asserted that we are working for the hegemony of China in Asia. This again is an invention. On the other hand, our Programme expresses its concern over the fact that in recent years India has been losing its position in Asian and African countries. It analysed the causes, showed that the government's wobbly and compromising stand on many anti-colonial issues was primarily responsible for this and demanded the reversal of these policies that have led to this situation.

It is admitted on all hands that India's position in these countries has considerably deteriorated in these years. Is our

Party responsible for this state of affairs ? Instead of examining with a little introspection and objectivity, the policies that have led to this, the Home Minister wants to make us the scapegoat for the failure of Govt.'s policies. We may be shut up in jail. But that certainly is not going to help in regaining our prestige in these countries. That position can only be regained if we make the necessary changes in our policies. This can only stem from our economic strength.

The harrowing spectacle of ever-rising prices and long queues before fair-price shops, the spectacle of our Govt. perpetually running to U.S.A., Britain, West Germany and other countries with the begging bowl eighteen years after independence, are certainly not the things which help us to regain our prestige. It is exactly to change this situation that we have been fighting for a change in the basic policies that are being pursued by the Govt. today. The Govt. is in no mood to change them because that would injure the vested interests that are thriving under its "democratic socialism."

The Home Minister then went on to say that we had split the Communist Party of India at the instance of China, This again is a concoction. Differences inside the party started nearly ten years ago and they came to a head at Vijayawada long before Oct., 1962. At the last minute they were patched up. The differences got acute in 1964. These controversies are well-known since they can be found in published documents. And particularly during the last one year open polemics have been carried on, on these issues. They relate to the attitude that the Communist Party should adopt toward the ruling Congress Party and the Government.

The Political Organisational Report adopted at the Seventh Congress detailed all these with documentation. The resolution on political and organisational tasks adopted at the Congress declared that the Communist party of India is a sovereign party, which, while taking international experience into account, decides issues on the basis of its own study of the situation and on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

It charged the Central Committee with the task of organising a thorough-going inner-party discussion on questions of ideological controversy in the international Communist movement. In fact, one of the subjects to be discussed at the Central Committee meeting convened at Trichur from 4th January, 1965, was to decide when and how to organise the discussion.

In the face of all this, the Home Minister says that the party was split at the instance of China. There is nothing original in this. Earlier the ruling class and the leaders of the Government of India used to say that the Communist party acts under the inspiration of Russia. Only this time, the Home Minister has substituted "China" for "Soviet Union" hoping that because of the conflict between India and China, our people will swallow this.

Shri Nanda went on to say that the party receives "other forms of assistance." He did not specify what these "other forms of assistance" were. But under the inspiration of official spokesmen, newspapers have carried the canard that we are receiving financial assistance through the bank of china. This story has been going on for the last two years. Even in-Parliament innuendos were made to this effect.

For over two years now, the Special Police has been investigating the affairs of the bank of china. The Finance Minister has been announcing from time to time that after completion of the investigation, the findings would be placed before Parliament. And yet in the last session the Finance Minister announced in Parliament that the Government considers it would not be in public interest to place the findings of the investigation. If these allegations which the government allowed to be spread, had been borne out by the investigations, is it not highly in public interest to let them have the findings that some people in our country's public life have so debased themselves as to sell themselves to a foreign power ?

We have shown above that in regard to our political position the Home Minister indulges not only in *suppressio veri*, but also

in actual invention. When he has descended to such depths, to what levels he and his Home Ministry would go in sheer concoction of imaginary activities can easily be imagined.

His statement that our party has been engaged in preparing for armed struggle can only be based on reports of agents provocateur and their forged or cooked-up documents, if any.

As a matter of fact, in the Programme adopted by the Seventh Congress at Calcutta can be found the following passage :

“The Party will obviously have to work out various interim slogans in order to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing political situation. Even while keeping before the people the task of dislodging the present ruling classes and establishing a new democratic state and Government based on the firm alliance of the working class and peasantry, *the party will utilise all the opportunities that present themselves of bringing into existence of governments, pledged to carry out a modest programme of giving immediate relief to the people. The formation of such governments will give great fillip to the revolutionary movement of the working people and thus help the process of building the democratic front.* It, however, would not solve the economic and political problems of the nation in any fundamental manner. The Party, therefore, will continue to educate the mass of the people on the need for replacing the present bourgeois-landlord state and government headed by the big bourgeoisie even while utilising all opportunities for forming such governments of a transitional character which give immediate relief to the people and thus strengthen the mass movement.”

(Para 112, emphasis is added)

It is in pursuance of this understanding and line that the party gave the slogan of defeating the Congress party in the coming Kerala Election and forming an alternate Government of left parties. In the face of this can anyone believe that our party is preparing for armed struggle ? It is clear that the government wants to prevent such a government from coming into existence. Hence, all the slander and cooked up stories.

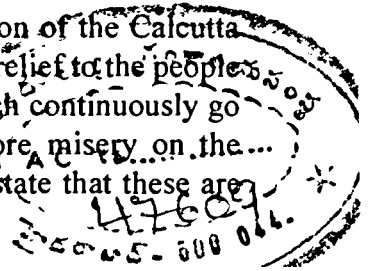
By the way it may be pointed out that we do not believe that the Home Minister honestly believes that the Programme adopted at the Seventh Congress bears a “striking resemblances” to the thesis adopted at the Second Congress in 1948. Anyone even cursorily reading the two documents can see the gulf that divides the two in their analysis of the Indian situation and the tasks facing the Communist Party. Can the Home Minister concretely point out that “striking resemblance” ?

Shri Nanda has charged us with a string of treasonable activities. With the Government’s huge police establishment it must be easy enough for him to place the evidence relating to some at least of the charges before a normal court. He dare not take that course for the simple reason that they can not be proved and the truth will come out that they are just concocted stories of the police over which the Home Minister presides.

The real purpose behind this attack came out, though unconsciously, when the Home Minister said “they have been expecting their followers to organise a massive agitation to create an atmosphere of disorder in which the Party can resort to violent methods.”

And later on he says that the Govt. could not allow a party “to disorganise economic life generally”.

We have openly called upon our people to carry on agitation against the anti-people policies of the Govt. on the question of prices, for stringent action against hoarders and black marketeers, for dearness allowance to workers, against revision by Govt. in favour of employers of the Bonus Commission recommendation, against the eviction of peasants, for distribution of waste lands to the peasants and for real land reforms. This call is embodied in the resolution of the Calcutta Congress. This agitation is intended to secure relief to the people and for the reversal of the Govt. policies which continuously go on heaping more burdens and inflicting more misery on the people. It is a figment of the imagination to state that these are intended to create an atmosphere of disorder.



May we ask who has disorganised the economic life of the country, with soaring prices, and foodgrains not available to the common people at reasonable prices ? And who allowed this state of affairs to grow in the country ? Did we make the condition in Kerala where the people had to go without any foodgrains for days, and even now have to be satisfied with just 4½ oz of rice and 6 oz of wheat per day in the rural areas ?

We are proud of the agitation the people of Kerala carried on against this state of affairs. We are proud of the fact that all opposition parties and even people belonging to the Congress Party joined this agitation. We are proud that our party played a leading role in this agitation.

In this massive agitation under the leadership of our party, there was no disorder or violence on the part of the people. On the other hand the only violence was on the part of the police against peaceful people and even against people who actually gave information against hoarders' stocks. When we agitate against these policies that have given birth to these conditions, the Govt. charges us with a desire to create conditions of disorder and disorganise economic life.

It is clear that the Govt. is bent upon inflicting more misery and starvation on the people. Even the fourth plan memorandum does not hold out any hopes that the prices will be reduced. It only talks of efforts to arrest any future rise. But even during the last two months since that memorandum was accepted by the National Development Council, prices have continued to rise. The Govt. knows that under the policies it is bent upon pursuing, it cannot even arrest the prices from rising. It is to strike terror into the hearts of the masses who in the coming period, will inevitably oppose these policies with greater vigour that the Govt. has made this attack on our Party.

It is for the same purpose that the Govt. has been continuing



the State of Emergency two years after virtual cease-fire has come into being. The record of the use of the powers invoked under the emergency is the clearest proof of this purpose. In every struggle of the workers, peasants and the common people against rising prices and the exploitation, the Defence of India Rules have been freely used for detaining without trial the active workers. But the hoarders and profiteers went scotfree. Even when employers locked out factories illegally and continued it after the lock-out was declared illegal they went on starving the workers with a view to force them to submit to their terms. The Govt. took no action. But strikes are suppressed on the pleas that there is Emergency !

It is clear that all these slanders are nothing but an attempt to conceal the real purpose of the attack on our Party. In this there is nothing original. The very slanders that Dange indulged in when he could not face up to the political charges that we made against him, have been repeated.

Mr. Nanda talks of defending democracy and the rule of law. The highest Court in the country has expressed the view that the provisions relating to detention in Defence of India Rules are ultra vires of the Constitution. The DIR can not make the unconstitutional provision constitutional. Any Government which claims to have the least respect to the Constitution would have at once scrapped the unconstitutional provisions. This talk of the rule of law cannot but sound hypocritical coming as it does from the spokesmen of a Government which has thus trampled under foot the provisions of the Constitution and detained us illegally taking advantage of the fact that we are deprived of the right to go to Court, and which by detaining the active workers of the major opposition force of Kerala on the eve of elections crippled it in the election and thus made a mockery of election itself.

If there is any modicum of respect for the Constitution and rule of law, we demand the cancellation of the detention orders and open trial of the specific charge.

This is not the first time that the leaders of the ruling Party and Government have indulged in slanders against us. But every time they failed to isolate us from our people. Even in November, 1962, when the Government detained us in jail they indulged in the same vicious type of slander. But when we were released, people in thousand greeted us and gave the lie direct to the slanderers.

Gone are the days when the people reposed trust in the Congress leaders and their utterances. Experience ever since they came to power brings the people daily to the realisation that the Congress leaders' profession and practice are poles apart. This realisation will grow. We are confident that this time too, despite all the slander campaign that the Government has let loose against us with the powerful media of publicity at its disposal, it will not succeed and the people will see through this attack for what it really is.

Our whole life has been an open book. We have selflessly served the toiling people of our country and counted no sacrifice too big in that service. We have refused to be the servitors of big business and their foreign collaborators and the landlords. For a Government that came to power on the tremendous sacrifices of the people, but has gone back on every one of its undertakings to the people and has continuously served the interest of big business and landlords, our mobilising the people against its policies can not but appear to be anti-national. For, in the Government's reckoning the country belongs to the monopolists and landlords.

We have been denied trial before a court of law on specific charges. We have been denied even the limited opportunity available under the preventive Detention Act to place our answer to the grounds of detention that the Government would have had to furnish us with.

And yet shutting us behind prison bars, the Home Minister has gone to the people with wild and slanderous charges against us.

We request you to publish this letter. This is the minimum that the Government owes to the people before whom it has made slanderous statements.

We are not afraid to be judged by the people. Ultimately, whatever might be the impediment, they will pass their judgement on the Government and on us, and we have no doubt what that judgement will be.

Yours truly,

Sd/-

**P. Sundarayya**

**P. Ramamurti**

**M. Basavapunniah**

**A. K. Gopalan**

**H. K. S. Surjeet**

## Sundarayya Exposes Nanda \*

**P. Sundarayya**

M. Basavapunnaiah, P. Ramamurti, A.K. Gopalan, Harkishen Singh Surjeet and myself from Viyyur Jail, Kerala State, had written a reply to Home Minister Nanda's broadcast on New Year's day. We requested him to give it as much publicity as his own broadcast wherein he had indulged in slanders and utterly false charges against us. He had not cared to publish our reply but has gone on issuing statements indulging in bigger and bigger Goebbelsian lies.

He laid on the table in Parliament a statement in place of the "White Paper" he had earlier promised and in the course of debates in the Lok Shbha and Rajya Sabha indulged in more brazenfaced slanders. He has not produced any evidence or documentary proof for his slanders, but simply goes on repeating them more and more vilely and in his speech in Calcutta in the third week of April dared even to dub us "traitors".

*He dares not produce us before any "court of law" nor has he the courage to place our replies and repudiation of his vile charges before the bar of the people and allow them to judge who is a "traitor".*

After waiting for about four months, I am writing this note to put on record our repudiation of his false charges contained in his February 18 Statement in Parliament and also in his speeches in Parliament.

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*\* This was a reply to the groundless allegations brought against the leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) by the Union Home Minister, Guljarilal Nanda in his All India Radio broadcast on 1.1.1965 and also in the statement laid by Guljarilal Nanda in the Parliament of India.*

*This Document is connected with the Document given under Item No. 1 of this Volume.*

## **What Are Nanda's Charges ?**

Nanda's main political accusations against us are :

1. That we Communists do not support the Government of India on the issue of India-China border dispute, we refuse to characterize Communist China on this question as aggressor and we continuously agitate that this question be settled peacefully and that the Government of India take the initiative in the matter.

2. That we do not believe in achieving socialist transformation through parliamentary and peaceful means but call upon the people and revolutionary forces to bear in mind that "the ruling classes never relinquish their power voluntarily and that they seek to defy the will of the people and seek to reverse it by lawlessness and violence", and as such "to be vigilant and so orientate their work that they face up to all contingencies".

Nanda knows that for holding these and such political opinions, he cannot justify our arrests and detention, nor can he isolate us from the people.

So, he tried his best not only to distort our viewpoint on these two issues, and hurled vile slanders against us "as having consistently shown loyalty and devotion to Peking" and as acting at the bidding of the Peking Government ; as having split the Communist Party at Peking's bidding; and "as a requital Peking has throughout put this Party in large funds through various clandestine channels", and that we are preparing to start Telangana-like armed struggles to coincide with the coming Chinese attack to catch the Indian Government "in a pincer movement".

In support of these grave and serious charges, all that he has produced are :

(1) Assertions that in such and such party meetings so and so leaders of our Party had said this.

(2) And some more assertions on the basis of some confidential information or documents which the Government says it has in its possession but which it refuses to reveal on the excuse of safeguarding the security of India.

(3) Quotations from Dangeites' writings and reports against us.

(4) And lastly, quotations from some secret documents, cyclostyled or printed, alleged to have been issued clandestinely by leading comrades or units belonging to our Party; and some quotations from the documents which we have issued.

About the so-called speeches of Party leaders in Party meetings, from where and from whom does the Government get these reports? These assertions of the Government are not based on authenticated proceedings or minutes of such meetings but evidently from reports of their agents whom the Government had succeeded to plant or purchase.

### **False And Mendacious**

How false and mendacious these reports from their agents are can be seen from what Nanda said about my speech in Calcutta.

"Speaking to Party workers at Calcutta soon after the party Congress P. Sundarayya stated that a revolution was necessary for capturing power and wanted preparations to be made for it. Participation in elections, he added, was only a matter of tactics". (Nanda's Statement, Feb. 18, 1965, Page 40).

*This is total distortion of what I actually said in that meeting. In fact, I tried in that speech to warn Party comrades not to fall a prey to pseudo-leftist slogans or become a party to the Government's or Dangeites' slanders that we were out for an armed revolt. The question whether the people would have to take to arms will be decided by the people, if when the majority of them find that in spite of their democratic verdict against the*

*ruling classes, the ruling classes resort to violence to suppress their verdict and bar them all democratic means to replace the ruling classes.*

Some raise the question of armed revolution and talk about it in such a way as to bring grist to the lying mill of the Government and of our opponents and slanderers. It is not the people or the Party who resort to violent methods. It is the ruling classes that resort to violence to suppress the growing movement of the people for their just economic and political demands. Whenever the majority of the people realize the necessity of replacing the present ruling classes, to usher in any radical changes in the social set-up or to usher in a new society, the socialist society, history has shown that the ruling classes have invariably resorted to violence to drown the will of the overwhelming majority of the people in blood.

The ruling classes are always the first to resort to violence to retain their power. Only when faced with such a situation, the people are left with no other alternative except to counter the violence of the ruling classes to defend people's political rights and people's power. That is what history teaches us.

### **Supreme Task Today**

But we are a small party, with only ten percent of our people voting for our candidates, and that ten percent also mainly in three States—Kerala, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. We must realize that we have to work patiently to win the majority of our people on to our side. Instead of concentrating on this supreme task, to forget this and get derailed by the enemy into any talk of armed revolution is madness.

Now it is Nanda and the Government of India that are destroying the parliamentary democracy, that are trying to destroy the democratic path of development. We must fight them and defeat them so as to preserve and extend the democratic rights of the people and save parliamentary democracy. This is our immediate task, not to indulge in provocative debates as to

whether the revolution will be achieved by violent or non-violent methods.

*Nanda knows that he cannot prove his allegations against anyone of us before a court of justice or before the bar of public opinion, as he would have then to produce his agents or their reports and they can be easily challenged and proved utterly worthless concoctions. That is why he refuses even a trial but goes on repeating slanders !*

I can categorically state that all his allegations against the important leaders and cadres of our Party in different States are of the same baseless character, as it is in my own instance.

### **This is Nanda's "Evidence"**

Nanda quotes from *Shengodi*, a Tamil weekly edited and published by one Nannilam Selvan (alias Perumal) from Madras. This Nannilam Selvan was expelled by the Tamilnad Committee of the Party a few years ago as an anarchist element and because his behaviour was suspicious. Again, in 1963, in the Tamilnad State Executive of the Party, P. Ramamurti moved a resolution, which was adopted, saying that no one in the party should have anything to do with this Perumal.

In the month of May or June, 1964, a circular letter was sent by post to all weeklies run by our Party not to have anything to do with this Tamil weekly. In August, A. K. Gopalan and M.R. Venkatraman issued a statement repudiating *Shengodi* and warning party members not to be misled by its quotations from Gopalan's and other comrades' statements. I myself wrote a letter in September to Perumal that *Janashakti*, the Party's Telugu weekly, was not being sent to *Shengodi* as we did not consider it to have anything to do with our organization. We consider him and his *Shengodi* as indulging in utterly wrong and provocative writings and as such to defend our party and politics we should have nothing to do with it. All these are on record and the Government knows it. Yet it has the audacity to quote from *Shengodi* to implicate us, and to prove some of its false accusations against us!



Similarly in West Bengal, on the eve of our arrests, we received reports that the Government was trying to plant in our Party some agents-provocateurs who were indulging in talk of armed struggle. We wanted to track them down and to clear them out of our Party and deputed some important comrades to investigate the activities of such elements.

*It is intriguing to note that exactly at that very time the Government arrested these leading comrades who were on the job of tracking down these elements. A few days later, the rest of us in the whole of India were arrested and detained. The activities of such shady elements whom the Government itself is trying to plant in our Party-activities behind the back of our Party and against the decisions of the Party, cannot be attributed to our Party.*

Nanda goes on repeating *ad nauseam* filthy charges against us, based on such reports from his CBI or from some planted agents. But he refuses to tender this "evidence" and produce these agents of his before any court of law where they would have to face cross-examination, where they could be shown up for what they really are as also the worthlessness of their reports and evidence.

### **The Vile Slander of "Chinese Money"**

Nanda hints about "Chinese money" in his broadcast on January 1, 1965, as "other forms of assistance" that our Party had been receiving from China. And under the inspiration of official spokesmen, newspapers have carried the canard that we are receiving financial assistance through the Bank of China.

Again in his press conference at Trivandrum in the third or fourth week of January, when asked by pressmen whether the press reports that Indian Communists had received Rs. 20 crores through the Bank of China was true, he slyly replied that the Bank of China was not carrying on business innocently, thus further hinting to the pressmen to draw the conclusion that there was some truth in those reports.

Nanda's allegations that we have been "spreading the instructions to our rank and file from mouth to mouth" is another monstrous lie. He has got the whole proceedings of our Party Congress and reports which were seized from us when we were arrested. He has documents of our Party Conferences held at various levels before the Congress. He had before him our explanatory documents prepared during November-December 1964 about the Calcutta Party decisions.

*But he could not get anything from the documents to prove or even to suggest that we have been preparing our Party rank and file for getting ready for an armed revolution of the Telangana type or any other type. That is why he has resorted to this manufacturing of document in the CBI and of manufacturing lies and suggestions.*

Similarly, let me categorically say that we have nothing to do with guerrilla training camps which Nanda alleges have been established in neighbouring countries by the Chinese, nor has any member of our Party been sent for any training in so-called training camps.

Nanda is resorting to bigger and bigger lies as he fails to convince anyone, even communist-baiters, of his crude allegations against us! Now he hopes that the Goebbelsian technique may fool some people, at least for some time.

### **Nanda Makes Sly Suggestions**

When Nanda does not have any worthwhile evidence he tries to create an impression on the public by referring to incidents like P. Ramamurti or some Bengal comrades going to Kulu valley in Punjab as planned trips to contact Tibetan refugees to subvert Indian security!

The facts are P. Ramamurti's wife and children were sent to stay at a friend's place in May and June 1964 in Kangra district and Ramamurti went there in June 1964 for two or three days to bring them back.

Similarly, after attending on March 31 the opening of the Deshbhakt Memorial Hall in Jullundur, Narayan Roy, Ganesh Ghosh and others went to see Kulu for two days, while Niranjana Sen had not even gone there but returned directly to Delhi.

*But for Nanda, visit to Kulu for two or three days by these comrades is to strengthen subversive activities on the border area! Nanda and his CBI agents must know that strangers who do not even know the language of the local people are not sent to do such work or that any worthwhile activity or planning for subversion cannot be done in two days!*

Similarly, Nanda characterizes the Vijayawada fires as a result of the "fierce struggle for the allegiance of the rank and file" and "it erupted in a series of acts of incendiarism" at Vijayawada! To win over the Party members and mass following, no fool would start setting fire to the huts of the very poor folk who are the base and strong supporters of our Party. The criminal hand behind the Vijayawada fires is that of a notorious new-rich Congressman who wanted to bag two birds at a shot, one, of frightening and suppressing the poor people of strong Communist areas, who are consistently voting against the Congress and for the Communist Party, by setting fire to their localities; and two, at the same time by attributing these to the leaders of the Communist Party to destroy the Party's influence among the people and get the leading Communists sentenced for long years of imprisonment.

*The Government's police machinery worked hard in accordance to the directions of the Congress Chief Minister and the Congress bosses and launched a series of conspiracy cases, and the courts have quashed all these as baseless. The people from the beginning had not only disbelieved these charges of the Congress leaders and of the police; but they have always pointed their finger to the really guilty person.*

### **Another Spicy CBI Concoction**

"It is worth recalling that in a procession in Kerala taken out in connection with the Trivandrum District Party Conference in

October 1964, one of the slogans shouted was 'Let four months pass, let the Chinese come, we shall rule the country and teach you a lesson'."

Any ordinarily intelligent person can immediately see that such slogans could never have been given by any party or any individual, as no person would shout such utter nonsense!

This slogan was alleged to have been shouted in October 1964, i.e., four months before Kerala elections. In the procession our party rank and file had given the slogan, "Wait for four months and we will teach you a lesson in the coming elections". And the people of Kerala did teach a lesson to Nanda, in the election! As *Stateman* of Calcutta had editorially commented : four months have Passed. No Chinese have come. No guerrilla activity is there, so release the Communist detenus. But Nanda is blind and is guided by his police informers in his mad policy of strengthening and furthering the interests of big moneyed interests and their foreign collaborators, the Anglo-American imperialists!

Nanda says that Harekrishna Konar went to peking after attending the Communist Party Conference in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1960 and there he was coached up thoroughly by the Chinese leaders and was well equipped by them.

Nanda hides the truth that the delegation consisting of Harekrishna Konar and K. Damodaran of Kerala, both of them at that time members of the Central Executive Committee of the CPI, went to the Party Congress in North Vietnam and from there both proceeded to Peking and there they met and discussed both together with some of the Chinese leaders about the sharp differences that have come up in the international Communist movement and especially between the Communist party of the Soviet Union and the Communist party of China. They ascertained the views as well as the answers of the Chinese Party to the accusations levelled against them by Khrushchov. They came back and reported the same to the Central Executive jointly.

*When these are the facts how does this question of Konar being trained and equipped separately by the Chinese arise except in the fertile imagination of Nanda?*

Nanda resorts to such falsehoods and distortions to create the impression among the people that after all, there must be something behind Nanda's charges and accusations.

### **Nanda Quotes The Devil**

Nanda gives extensive quotations from Dangeites' writings, reports, resolutions to prove that we are acting at the behest or on the orders of the Chinese Government or the Chinese party.

Our opposition to the Dangeites' political line from 1955 onwards, at the Palghat, Amritsar and Vijayawada Congresses of our Party, is based on their giving up the Marxist-Leninist proletarian class outlook and policies and on their adoption of the line of collaboration with the ruling classes, the bourgeoisie and the landlords led by the big bourgeoisie and of collaborating with the Congress Party, the party of the ruling classes.

Pursuing that line, they have degenerated to the extent of decrying those sections of our Party and Party leadership who opposed their alien class line as unpatriotic.

Especially after the India-China border conflict had started, they used to brief the bourgeois Press especially *Link*, about the discussions held in the Central Secretariat and in the Central Executive of our Party and caused them to publish distorted versions of those discussions to slander their political opponents as "unpatriotic", "agents of Chinese", etc. They refused to implement Party decisions to campaign for peaceful settlement of the India-China border conflict but started supporting blindly whatever the Government of India said or did on this question.

When Government's policies which are dragging our country to the camp of American imperialism and which are very harmful to the interests of our country and the people, they

intensified their slanderous attacks on us. They could not convince the Party ranks and the mass of our following about the correctness of their political line and hence resorted to "prove" that we are acting as "Chinese agents" and at their behest are trying to disrupt the defence of our country.

They hoped that by carrying on this slander campaign the Government would arrest and remove all the leading comrades who were opposing their political line and thus they would have an absolute sway over the Party ranks, the Party organization and the Party press. The Government arrested, in 1962, most of the leading comrades and detained us for months. The Dangeites did not even campaign for our release.

The Dangeites did capture the press and some party institutions, but they could not win the mass of the Party members and the Party following to their line of collaboration with the Government and the Congress. So when the Government released some of us in the latter part of 1963 and in the beginning of 1964 we made another effort to unify the Party by convening a Party Congress to discuss all questions of difference, but the Dangeites refused to convene the Party Congress democratically and stuck to their own list of Party members from which more than 50,000 old members were dropped out and more than 20,000 new members, their supporters, were enlisted. During this whole period the Dangeites were trying their worst to paint us as "Chinese agents".

For Nanda, the writings, reports and resolutions of the Dangeites against us have come very handy and so he quotes from them extensively in support of his slanders against us and in justification of the detention of more than 1,000 comrades of our Party. But how do the Dangeites' slanders become facts any more than the concoctions and slanders of Nanda's *CBI*? That is why he dares not bring us before courts of justice which function according to the procedure fixed by his own Government.

*How vicious the Dangeites have become and to what extent they have degenerated, practically to the extent of becoming accomplices of the Government and their police, can be seen from the given simple example of their writings.*

When Dange wrote in April 1963, when we were all under detention, that "the Chinese Leadership wished the Indian Communist party to help their advance in the NEFA border by an attack from within the country and thus hold the Nehru Government in a sort of pincer movement", it was not so much to expose the Chinese Government or the Chinese leadership as to tell the Government of India that those Communists in India who were opposing Dange's political line were to be arrested ; otherwise they would organize a pincer movement to aid Chinese invasion.

No wonder Dange who offered his services to the British Viceroy as early as in 1924 is now actively lending his services to Nanda's Government ; and so Nanda again and again approvingly quotes Dange and Co. to prove the so-called anti-national activities of the Communists.

But once again we ask : how Dange's and Dangeites' writings and slanders can become facts to prove the so-called "anti-national activities" of our Party?

### **Our Stand On Various Questions**

The Government has given quotations from many so-called secret documents which, it alleges, have been brought out by our party or by leading members of our Party secretly. I have not seen or read these so-called "secret" documents. So I am not going to take the Government's word or the authority of the Dangeites as to the origin and authenticity of these documents or their contents and try to answer the charges levelled on the basis of these documents.

There are enough documents of our own from some of which the Government has quoted, though out of context and one-

sidedly, on the basis of which our outlook and standpoint on the India-China border and on peaceful transition to socialism can be ascertained. There are also the minutes of our Party Congress which the Government seized from us at Trichur when they arrested us but from which it did not dare to prove that we are wedded to violence or that we are preparing to go underground and start guerrilla warfare on the lines of Telangana.

I will try to put in this reply the stand of our Party, as I understand it, on these questions, try to repudiate Nanda's grave accusations against us and dispel the confusion that might have been created by the continuous propaganda indulged in by Nanda and his men through the network of their millionaire Press.

### **On The India-China Border Conflict**

Nanda accuses us—B.T. Ranadive and other Communist leaders belonging to our party—that we had taken an “anti-national stand on the developments in Tibet,” the prelude to the later bursting up of the India-China border conflict. The stand which we took at that time in 1959 was the united stand of our whole Party. The national Council of our party had stated in its resolution that the Tibetan happenings were entirely an internal question of the Chinese People’s Republic and that it was perfectly justified in putting down the rebellion engineered by feudal forces and Lamas.

It was wrong on the part of the Government of India to have given royal facilities to the Dalai lama and allowed him to carry on anti-China propaganda from India as it was detrimental to friendly relations with China. Even Dange, the spokesman of our party in Parliament at that time, has put across this stand of the Party in the Lok Sabha. Yet Nanda tries to accuse us of “anti-national activity” on the basis of our attitude towards the Tibetan happenings in 1959.

On the India-China border dispute, we stand even today by the resolution passed by the national Council of our party at



Meerut in November 1959 which had said : *One*, that the border conflict between India and China should be settled by peaceful negotiations and in no case by war, as this question can never be settled by military means ; any effort to settle it by military means would only endanger the very interests of the people of both the countries and even become dangerous to peace in Asia and would only help the American imperialists. *Two*, that the border issue can be settled peacefully by taking the administrative reality into consideration and not by insisting on respective historic, legal or geographical rights and counter-rights. *Three*, that the McMahon Line on the Eastern sector must be accepted as the border between India and China, as for several years Indian posts were situated on this line and the territory south of this line was under the administrative control of India. *Fourth* and last, that in the Ladakh sector, the traditional border line which both the sides declare as their border should be settled and agreement arrived at on the same principles as in the case of the McMahon line.

If this means that the Chinese being in administrative control of the Akshai Chin Plateau beyond the karakoram range certain portion of that area has to be recognized as Chinese territory, just as NEFA area south of the McMahon line which the Chinese claim as theirs is our territory as we were in effective administrative control in 1959, the responsibility for such a solution squarely lies on the Indian Government as it failed to be in administrative control of the Akshai Chin Plateau. Now this position cannot be changed by vast military operations on either side and the only sensible course is to politically negotiate a border agreement on the principle of "give and take" as even Jayaprakash Narain has been advocating recently.

We have been advocating this course of action not because the party involved is a Communist country, China, but because it is in the interests of our people and of our country. We strongly believe that any other course of action which may lead to large-scale military operations and war is ruinous to our people and to our country. That these border disputes have to be settled

peacefully through negotiations has been our stand, even with regard to Pakistan, with whom from the day of the partition of our country we have had a war and continuous conflicts. It has been reported in the Press that during the last 18 years, there had been over 6000 firings and more than 60,000 border transgressions and conflicts between India and Pakistan.

We, Communists, had advocated and are advocating peaceful settlement with regard to Pakistan, though it is a country ruled over by landlords and the bourgeoisie and though it is a member of SEATO and CENTO, the Anglo-American imperialist military blocs. This is because we feel that it is in the interests of our people and of our country to find some peaceful settlement with Pakistan, and reduce and eliminate the growing tension and conflict between our two States and between our two peoples. And we believe that it is the only way by which the American and British imperialists' plans of domination over both our countries by keeping up the conflicts and tension between our two countries can be frustrated and both our countries can develop our economic strength and well-being and strengthen our independence as well.

We want the people of our country to think over these border conflicts and consider where the course of action that the Government of India has been following will lead us and our country. It has resorted to large-scale military expenditure of Rs.1000 crores per year, as against about Rs.300 crores earlier ; it has resorted to lean heavily upon the military support of the US and British imperialists, on their military aid and military supplies ; joint air exercises near our borders ; joint naval exercises, allowing the Andaman-Nicobar Islands as stopping and refuelling centres for British aircraft on its way to Malaysia and the Far East and now, on top of all this, the Prime Minister of India's request for some kind of atomic umbrella and the US-British imperialists gleefully responding to it and their efforts and decision to set up in the Indian Ocean a chain of island outposts for their atomic naval and air strength—a dark shadow

over all the countries in the whole of South-East Asia, a constant threat to our freedom.

**We never said India should not Develop  
its own atomic weapons**

Here, I want to refer to Nanda's accusation that we hailed the Chinese explosion of atomic bombs while advocating "that India should not develop (its own) atomic bombs." This is another utter falsehood. Our Congress did not discuss this question and did not pass any resolution on it, and subsequently due to the wholesale arrests we had no opportunity to discuss this issue. But since this question has been raised by Nanda to accuse us, I am expressing my viewpoint on this issue.

We are opposed to atomic weapons and stand for their total prohibition and destruction, because they are weapons of mass destruction capable of wiping out countries after countries and leaving behind radioactive furnaces for years. We are also opposed to nuclear tests of all kinds and nuclear pollution of the atmosphere, sea or underground as it endangers not only the existing generation of humanity but the future generations as well. But it was the US imperialists who developed them first and used them on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan, on Asian people. They used them to blackmail the rest of the world to submit to their domination. Britain also developed its own atomic and hydrogen bombs and missiles. The Soviet Union, for its own self-defence against US blackmailing, developed its nuclear arsenal. The whole democratic world hailed the Soviet Union for breaking the atomic monopoly of the US imperialists.

But even after nearly twenty years of nuclear weapon development, it is the US imperialists who refuse to agree to the banning and destruction of nuclear weapons. The US imperialists are not even prepared to declare that they will not be the first Power to use them, while the Soviet Union has declared to the whole world that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons even for its self-defence. On the other hand,

the US imperialists threaten China, Vietnam or any other country that does not bow to its dictates with atomic weapons.

Further, France has developed its own nuclear arsenal.

Events have proved that without an agreement, neither testing nor proliferation of atomic weapons can be stopped. It is not only France and China that are actually developing nuclear weapons, some other countries have also the capacity and are on the eve of developing their own nuclear arsenal.

In such circumstances, we consider that every nation has a right to develop whatever weapons that it considers necessary for its self-defence including nuclear weapons to defend its national independence against the atomic blackmail of the US imperialists. The Chinese Government has declared that it is developing nuclear weapons to counteract the US nuclear threat ever being flaunted against it, and it will never be the first to use nuclear weapons. It has called for a world conference to find an agreement to ban atomic weapons.

We consider that our Government must join with all other Governments and forces to see that atomic weapons be banned and destroyed within a definite time. If it fails in that effort, there may be no alternative left except to develop our own nuclear weapons for our defence, if we feel that our independence or defence is in danger under the threat from any foreign Power, because the only correct course for any country is to develop its own independent military strength including the necessary nuclear weapons than to depend upon a US nuclear umbrella or even on a Soviet nuclear umbrella.

As such, Nanda's accusation that we do not want the Indian Government to develop its own atomic weapons is false.

### **We Advocate Peaceful Settlement of Border Conflicts**

We want the Government of India and our people to ponder whether it is in the interests of our country and the people to get

involved with two neighbouring countries in a military conflict over border disputes or over the problems left over by the imperialists and perpetuate them leading to increasing tension between the newly independent countries.

We are not advocating peaceful settlement with China, because it is a big and powerful country with whom it is unwise to draw military conclusions. Nor are we advocating a military solution of our problems with Pakistan, because it is comparatively a smaller and weaker country than us. In both cases we advocate peaceful negotiations and settlement because that is the only way by which the interests of our people and of our country can be safeguarded.

There are certain sections in our country and in the Government and the US and British imperialists who want our Government to settle the dispute with Pakistan, so that both India and Pakistan can concentrate and fight the Chinese Communist Government and thus carry out the global strategy of the US imperialists. There are certain other sections who want to fight out both Pakistan and China, one after another or against both at the same time and they speak about the collusion between Pakistan and China. We consider either of these policies very very harmful for our people and to our country and hence we advocate peaceful settlement with both China and Pakistan.

Peaceful settlement with Pakistan is not a new slogan which we took up after the conflict with China, but that is our Party's stand from the very beginning of this conflict. It is only the Dangeites who after taking up the stand of wholehog backing of the Government of India and the Indian ruling classes in its anti-China campaign that now advocate an equally "uncompromising stand" against Pakistan.

While we have been advocating that our disputes with China and Pakistan are to be settled through peaceful negotiations, at the same time, when the border conflict with China erupted into large-scale military operations and the Chinese armies crossed the McMahon Line and advanced into NEFA area, we criticized

that action as making peaceful negotiations impossible and that there was no question of unilateral ceasefire and appealed to our people to give all the help to our fighting units and demanded that the Chinese armies must withdraw to the November 1959 positions to which both our Prime Minister Nehru and the Chinese Premier Chou-En-Lai referred in their Joint Communiqué.

It is true that we did not characterize that Chinese action as aggression at that time nor are we even now prepared to call it aggression, not because of our ideological conviction alone that no socialist country can ever resort to aggression against a neighbouring country, but because we feel that the word aggression can be used only if one country wants to grab the other's territories wholly or partly. That term "aggression" cannot be used in case of border conflicts, even though either party might have resorted to military action to solve border disputes. Especially when the Chinese had withdrawn their armies to the positions which they held before the military clashes of October 1962, the continuous harping on "aggression" is not conducive to either starting negotiations or for seeking a peaceful settlement. Further, once you characterize a country as aggressor, you have to oppose it and fight till it accepts a peace settlement on our terms or we have to admit defeat and surrender if less than our terms are to be accepted. Therefore, it is our conviction that to characterize either India or China as aggressor would vitiate that atmosphere for peaceful approach and for successful negotiation and settlement honourable to both the sides.

Even Dange, from whom Nanda so often and so extensively quotes, had to admit in his article "Neither Revisionism nor Dogmatism" in April 1963 after returning from his trip of the socialist countries, that he had not used the word "aggression" in connection with the Chinese crossing the McMahon Line and advancing into NEFA in the sense of occupying and exploiting that area but in a popular sense.

So, neither our failure to use the word “aggression” nor our advocacy of peaceful negotiations and political settlement of the border conflict with China can be held as a crime against the existing laws of our country, nor is it against the interests of our people and country. Similarly, it is nothing wrong nor harmful to the interests of our country if we advocate that our Government must take the initiative and find some other basis for starting negotiations even when China has not accepted the “Colombo proposals in toto”. Jayaprakash Narain, Vinobaji, P.N. Saprú, R. K. Khadilkar and even K.P.S. menon in his book advocate peaceful negotiations on give and take basis to arrive at a settlement. If that does not become a crime, how does our policy become a crime ?

The Government realizes this and hence its desperate effort to create the impression that we do not stop with advocating peaceful settlement of India-China conflict but we are active accomplices of the Chinese, and that we are actively preparing for an armed rebellion of the Telangana type to hold our fighting armies “in a pincer movement”—the notorious slander that Dange has been indulging in.

### **“Preparations for Telangana-Type Armed Struggle”**

Let me once again categorically deny the slander that we are preparing to go underground for making preparations for a Telangana-type armed struggle to coincide with a future Chinese invasion of our country. Nanda has not given even a single incident or act of ours to prove this grave charge. If we have had any thought of going underground, how is it that myself, instead of going underground, had started setting up our party Headquarters at New Delhi and fixing up cadres for our English and Hindi organs to be published from there ? How is it that I had shifted my headquarters to Delhi to function from there as the General Secretary of our Party ?

If we have had any thought of going underground, I would not have gone to Nanda, the Home Minister, and the president of our Republic to plead with them not to rely on CBI reports to launch repression against our Party and to represent to them for the release of our detenus in West Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and other States.

And lastly, if we have had any idea of going underground, Nanda and his elaborate police machinery would not have been able to get over one thousand of our leading comrades at one swoop, *sleeping* in their own houses !

Nanda has not given one single instance or example of any overt action of our party or of our leading comrades indulging in any sabotage activity from 1959 onwards, not even in those days of 1962, when the Chinese armies had penetrated into NEFA area, as a proof of our plan or of complicity in any conspiracy to launch a rebellion to coincide with the Chinese invasion to hold the Indian armies "in a pincer movement", as Nanda now alleges.

Nanda started telling hair-raising stories of "Telangana atrocities" committed by the Communists in order to scare his listeners into believing his charge of "Communist preparation for a Telangana-type of armed struggle." The malice and malafide of Nanda stand out in this very raising the question of Telangana after a decade and a half during the course of which we had been functioning as a legal Party, as the main Opposition both in Parliament and in a number of State Legislatures.

A telangana-type armed struggle had not been organized nor can they ever be organized in future by the wish of any party or by conspiratorial methods indulged in by any party. The Telangana armed peasant struggle is a historical event. If anybody is responsible for the Telangana struggle it is the Nizam and his feudal and other accomplices.



Under the old feudal Nizam rule, the vast peasant masses were deprived of the land they brought into cultivation by clearing the forests and jungles. They were being evicted on a mass scale from lakhs of acres by the Nizam himself and his feudal stooges—the Paigas, the Samsathanams, the Deshmukhs, the Makhedars, the Ijadars and the Pattedars who, with criminal and civil judicial rights vested in them and with the employment of their private armed retinues of goondas, were collecting forced levies of various kinds from every family from the agricultural labourer to the well-to-do peasant and the merchants. The vast majority community was being bossed over by a minority community as the ruling class. The languages of the vast masses were suppressed and Urdu was being imposed from the primary standard ! There was not an atom of civil liberties even to hold cultural meetings. It was these and many more unbearable conditions that made the Telangana peasant masses and their youth to respond to the call of the Andhra Mahasabha : “No evictions and land to the tiller”, “No begar in any form”, “No forced levy of galla (foodgrain)”, and “Democratic Government” which slogan later, when the Nizam refused to join the Indian Union, was transformed into “Liquidate Hyderabad State and form Visalandhra, Samyukta Karnataka and Maharashtra in democratic India.”

When the landlords resorted to their private goonda retinues with the Nizam’s armed police backing them to strike terror against the peasant masses, when the Razakars were let loose burning and looting the villages and raping women, the peasant masses were forced to take up whatever weapon they could lay their hands upon, from slings, lathis and spears to muzzle-loaders, and defend their homes, their womenfolk and their honour and their lives. We are proud that we Communists in Telangana and Andhra stood with the peasant masses and resisted this black terror even though we were few and inexperienced in every aspect of this struggle. But the very saga of resistance brought the youth and student from every section of the people to the Communist Party, we grew and learned from

bitter failures and terrible sacrifices. People nourished us and gave us the strength and sustenance in that terrible and glorious ordeal.

But the Indian Government entered into a standstill agreement with the Nizam's Government and later when it decided to march its armies into the State to force the Nizam to agree to join the Indian Union, it brought back the landlords into the Telangana villages and launched large-scale military raids against the Telangana peasants and their Sangham (Andhra Mahasabha) and their Communist Party to restore the lands to the landlords and to wipe out the Communist Party. It did not even agree to the proposal of the late Dr. Jaisoorya to give him six weeks' time to contact the leaders who were forced to go underground and seek a solution but the Government declared haughtily that the Communists would be wiped out within six weeks !

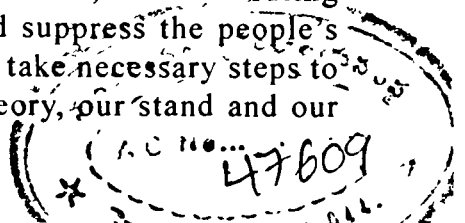
After reviewing the Telangana struggle our Party has answered the doubters and slanderers who questioned the correctness of the action in defence of the peasants' lands against the violent onslaught of the Indian Government, that it was the only correct course and not to do it would have been betrayal of the peasant masses ! And in spite of some mistakes in the course of conducting the resistance, the one fact that stands out is that we stood with the peasant masses to defend their lands, to resist landlord and the military-police zoolum. Nanda now tries to narrate so-called atrocity stories alleged to have been committed by the Communists. Who committed atrocities against whom ? We challenged the Indian Government in Parliament in 1952 to set up an impartial judicial enquiry and that we were prepared to prove the unspeakable atrocities and butchery committed by the Indian police authorities on the Telangana peasant masses. The Government dared not institute any such judicial commission.

The justness or otherwise of the Telangana peasants' struggle in defence of their land and against the autocratic medieval regime of the Nizam and later against the onslaughts of the Indian Government, military and police force has been historically settled by life and events. The election verdict they have passed in 1952, 1957 and even in 1962 is there ! It is too late for Nanda to try to sidetrack the issues by raising the old stories of so-called Telangana "atrocities"!

I am forced to go into these details of the Telangana struggle only to point out to Nanda and his ilk that "Telangana" cannot be created by any party, by any tricks or confabulations. It was the objective conditions that made life unbearable and finding no other way out the masses took up arms to defend their elementary existence and decencies against the armed violence of the exploiters. The Communists only stood with the masses and were trying to stand in the forefront and give leadership to the best of their capacity.

When I met Nanda in the first week of December and appealed for the release of our detenu comrades I answered his questions and doubts. I told him :

"Do not believe your police reports. Use your political judgement. We are not thinking of any armed struggle of any type. For even an armed struggle to succeed, the sympathy and support of the majority of people are necessary. We do not at present have more than ten to fifteen per cent of our people supporting us, taking the country as a whole. We are a legal party and function openly. As long as we have these democratic rights, we are not children to throw them away and resort to so-called underground. If and when the majority of the people vote for an alternative democratic Government, and if the ruling classes then resort to violence and suppress the people's verdict, the people will decide and take necessary steps to defend their rights. That is our theory, our stand and our



practice. So do not believe your CBI's concocted reports. Release our detenu comrades."

Nanda asked me : "That might be so ordinarily but in the context of a Chinese invasion what prevents from you staging armed revolts with an intent to capture power ?" I told him : "We have to make our revolution here on our own. Apart from that, do you really believe that China is going to invade and occupy our country ? And if it does, do you think that we are going to be their stooges here in India ?" He kept mum.

Our life and our whole record of service to our people and to our country are there to prove that we have never nor will ever be the agents of the Soviet Union or China or of the moneybags of India. If Nanda wants to find people whom money can purchase, he must look elsewhere !

But it is now evident that Nanda believes these cooked-up CBI reports in toto. He has embarked on a course of action of suppressing the Communist Party by slandering it as a tool of China. He has rounded up more than a thousand Communist leaders and threatens more drastic action. In the name of suppressing the Communist Party, he has started on the course of suppressing democratic rights and civil liberties and liquidation of even the bourgeois parliamentary mechanism. Otherwise, how can one explain the wholesale rounding up of legislators and members of parliament as well as other elected representatives like panchayat Presidents, Samiti Presidents, etc. ? How can one explain his refusal even to bring them before the courts of law ?

In fact he is not fighting the Chinese. He is fighting the Indian people and suppressing their legitimate demands for a reasonable economic, educational and cultural life by resorting to the Defence of India Rules. He is doing this while defending the profits of the millionaires, the big millowners, the big landlords, the blackmarketeers, in fact the sharks that fatten themselves on the blood and sweat of the toiling masses !

I urge upon the Government of India to stop and think over the line they have started pursuing and to reverse it and release the Communist detenus and restore civil liberties. I appeal to the people to seriously consider the dangerous course which the Indian Government and the Congress leaders have embarked upon, rise against it and defeat it before it is too late and before a fascist regime gets established in our beloved country.

## Problems of National Integration \*

E.M.S. Namboodiripad

### Foreword

Collected in this booklet are some articles and documents on National Integration written by me on various occasions. These are brought together with the hope that the booklet will stimulate discussion on the problems dealt with here.

The first is the article entitled "Problems of National Integration", published in the Sunday Standard in 1963. It deals with the problem as a whole in a popular way.

More or less the same ground is covered in the second, "National Integration in the Communist Party", a note submitted in 1962 to the National Council of the Communist Party. It however deals with the problem by relating it to the Marxist-Leninist theory of nationality.

The third are a few notes which were submitted by me as a member of the National Integration Committee to its Sub-Committee on communalism and National Integration.

The fourth and the fifth are my criticism of Sri Kumaramangalam's book on "Language Crisis" and my rejoinder to Sri Kumaramangalam's reply to my criticism.

It is to be hoped that these will enable the reader to understand how the party to which I belong understands and tries to solve one of the most vital political problems which the country is facing today.

I am not presumptuous enough to think that the view-point

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\* This document was circulated on 1.9.1965 and published as a booklet by National Book Agency Private Limited, Calcutta, in January 1966.

presented here will be universally accepted. It is bound to be opposed from various angles. I for my part would welcome such opposition. For only through exchanges among people who hold different points of view can a correct understanding be reached.

A reference may, in this connection, be made to the last 2 articles contained in this book. They are, it can be seen, part of the ideological struggle which is today being waged between that are popularly known as the “right” and “left” wings of India’s Communist movement. I am only sorry that Sri Kumaramangalam has not made any contribution to the discussion of the problem of National Integration. May I take this opportunity to appeal to him, and those of his way of thinking to concretely point out where precisely I have taken a “dogmatist” view of any aspect of the problem of National Integration.

Trivandrum  
1.9.1965

E. M. S. Namboodiripad

## **Problems Of National Integration**

The language disturbances which broke out in Assam in the middle of 1960 were a grim warning : the unity built up in the course of freedom struggle, and sought to be carried forward in the period of national reconstruction, was facing a serious threat.

Then followed serious communal disturbances in early 1961 in Jabalpur and certain other cities of Madhya Pradesh. Outbreaks of communalism repeated themselves in certain other States and localities too.

These alarming developments made our leaders take serious note of the fissiparous trends that threaten national unity - casteism, communalism, linguism, provincialism and regionalism. The question arose : can these forces be overcome and the nation unified ? And if so, how ?

A series of Committees were set up and Seminars organised both at the official and non-official levels to discuss this question. The discussions culminated in the National Integration Conference, held at New Delhi in September-October, 1961. Out of this conference emerged the National Integration Council. The latter, in its turn, resolved to set up two Sub-Committees, each with its own specific problem to deal with – the Ashok Mehta Committee on National Integration and Communalism, and the Ramaswamy Iyer Committee on National Integration and Separatism.

While the two Committees were doing their work, the political situation in the country underwent a basic transformation : the Chinese launched their massive attack all along the border. Their troops began to march into our territory. Some of the vital posts of national defence had to be abandoned ; the army formations guarding them retreated.

The President, the Prime Minister and other leaders of the Government called on the people to unite as one man to defend the honour, integrity and the borders of the nation. Every section



of the people, every political party, every social organisation, responded to this call and rallied behind the Government. Differences and disputes existing among them were buried.

This new development made the Committees on Communalism and Separatism have second thoughts on the work they had undertaken. They came to the conclusion that the problems under study at their hands receded to the background. The spontaneous response which all sections of the people, all political parties and mass organisations, had given to the leaders' call for unity to face the common danger did, in their opinion, show that the purpose for which they had started their work had by and large, been achieved. Their work was, therefore, suspended for the duration of the emergency.

The forces of disruption, however, continued to exist; they had not been eliminated. The Government for its part did not take at its face value the declaration made by the DMK that it would not raise the issue of regional separatism for the duration of the National Emergency. The work of drafting the Bill declaring separatism an offence continued.

The position became still worse after the Chinese announced their unilateral cease-fire and withdrawal beyond their own line. Although these steps were looked on with a certain amount of reserve, the passage of time made more and more sections of the people convinced that the emergency was passing. Demand for its formal lifting began to be voiced and became the official policy of several of the opposition parties and groups.

Official policy too began to relent on particular aspects of the way in which the emergency situation is to be dealt with. The decision to hold bye-elections to the Parliament and State Legislatures (originally held over for the duration of the Emergency) was clear proof of the new thinking on the Government's part.

It is, therefore, not surprising that some of the issues which had receded into the background in the days when the Chinese

armies were advancing into our territory should once again come to the forefront. The recent controversy on the division of river waters as among the Andhra, Mysore and Maharashtra Governments and the bellicose speeches delivered in the three Legislatures on the issue showed that the question of regionalism is as serious today as during the days when the Ramaswamy Iyer Committee on National Integration and Regionalism was doing its work.

Passions were roused also on the issue of official language. The introduction of, and debate on, the Official Language Bill in Parliament excited passions both in the Hindi-speaking regions as well as in the rest of the country. The understanding on the basis of which the two Committees of the national Integration council had suspended their work was thus proved to be too facile. The questions referred to them for consideration and recommendation are as serious now as ever. It will be a serious mistake to underestimate the dangerous potentialities arising out of them.

The questions naturally arise : why should these threats to national unity assume such serious proportions now ? Why should even the threat from outside be ineffective in stemming the tide of all these fissiparous tendencies ? What are the socio-economic factors which led to the accentuation of these tensions and conflicts in the post-independence years ?

These questions are answered by different sections of the people in different ways.

The most common among them are those given by the ruling party and opposition parties. They are naturally incomplete, since the political prejudices and self-interest of the respective parties cloud their vision.

Take, for example, the answer given by the ruling party. Its essence is that the ruling party and the Government are sincere and earnest about integrating the nation and rooting out all the disruptive forces, It is the opposition parties which are thwarting

their efforts to unify and integrate the nation ; it is, therefore, the duty of all those who are interested in national integration to rally behind the ruling party and the Government.

On the other hand, such opposition parties as are above casteism, communalism and other disruptive forces—the Communist Party, the PSP, the Socialist party of India, etc.—take the stand that the ruling party and the Government should take a major part of the responsibility for creating a situation in which national unity is threatened. It is, therefore, necessary according to them for the ruling party and the Government to change their policies and practices. They, therefore, demand that these policies and practices should be changed and that a really national policy be adopted—the policy of consistent struggle against all disruptive forces.

Both the ruling party and these opposition parties accuse the others of compromising with disruptive elements with a view to gaining temporary and local advantages for themselves. Furthermore, the ruling party accuses these opposition parties of actively participating in and even instigating movements which tend to divide the nation, such as the movement for the formation of linguistic states. The ruling party, in its turn, is accused of using all the parochial sentiments which are the main weapons used by their provincial and regional leaders in their struggle against the opposition parties as well as against rival groups in their own party.

The result is that the discussion on national integration itself becomes a matter of partisan struggle between the ruling and the opposition parties on the one hand and among the various opposition parties on the other. This partisan character of debate makes it impossible for any of them to make a sufficiently objective and deep study of the issues involved—study which leads to meaningful conclusions and enables to find effective solution for these problems.

It is proposed in the following pages to make such an objective study of issues involved in what is called the problem

of national integration. It is necessary at the outset to state that the conclusions arrived at by the writer are tentative. They are offered with a view to provoking discussion, rather than by way of giving final conclusions. It is hoped that the points made here will be subjected to serious criticism by those who hold different views and that the writer will be able to profit by such serious criticism.

## II

The crucial issue involved in national integration is how to make various sections of the people and organised groups subordinate their narrower loyalties to the larger loyalty ; how to make them see that their primary and most important loyalty is to India as a whole, rather than to the caste or tribe into which they are born, the religious community through which their spiritual needs are satisfied, the language they speak, etc.

This is an issue which has had to be faced by every country in the world at some phase in its history or other.

The countries of Western Europe faced and solved it in the 19th century. The solution which they ultimately arrived at is called by the theoreticians of Political Science as the 'formation of nation states'.

The process was delayed in Central and Eastern Europe, and even in certain parts of Western Europe, because of the existence in the pre-First World War period of three big empires—Russia, Austria and Prussia. It was only at the end of the First World War when these three empires were broken up, that nation-states were formed in Central and Eastern Europe.

This process has not yet been completed either in Asia or Africa. The countries in these two continents have, however, started the process. They are today proceeding along the same path as was traversed by Europe in the 19th century and in the early years of the present century.

One of the reasons why there was so much delay in the

completion of this process in Asia and Africa is that, down to the end of the Second World War, they were all—or almost all—under the thralldom of the colonial empires formed by the Western powers. Just as several European nationalities were held down by the military might of the Russian, Austrian and Prussian empires in the pre-First World War period, so have almost all the Asian and African countries been prevented from giving expression to their natural urge for the formation of nation-states. Even after the end of the Second World War, it took more than a decade for the majority of these countries to emancipate themselves completely from the colonial domination imposed by the Western powers.

These colonial powers have, however, recently been compelled by the growth of militant anti-imperialist movement throughout the world to retreat from their dominating position and transfer power to national Government. But, when they did so, they did their utmost to incite passions among the various nationalities, and, within the same nationality, among various tribes, communities and other groups.

We know to our cost how in the years preceding the formation of an independent Indian state, they encouraged all manner of fissiparous forces in our country and how they succeeded in forming two rival states, rather than one state, on the Indian sub-continent.

The same game was played and is being played by the colonial powers, for instance, in the Arab world, where they are trying to set one Arab country against another and thus preventing the emergence of a united Arab nation. In South-East Asia, they have succeeded in forming the new Malaysian state which ostensibly unites the Malay people, inhabiting the contiguous territories of Singapore, Malaya, Borneo and Brunei. In the process, however, they set this new Federation of Malay people against their brethren in the Philippines and Indonesia.

More blatant than all these are the intrigues that they are carrying on in the African continent, where the formation of

nation-states is sought to be prevented by the encouragement of all sorts of tribal and other fissiparous forces in every single African country.

It would, however, be wrong to think that what prevents the formation of nation-states in Asia and Africa is only the existence of colonial domination before the Second World War, followed by the dirty intrigues resorted to by the former colonial powers when they had to retreat. The socio-economic and cultural conditions in the various countries of these two continents are also such that the formation of nation-states is not easy. Narrower loyalties having their origin in mediaeval forms of social and cultural life are deep-rooted and have their influence on the thinking and activity of millions of people in these countries. Had it not been for the existence of these loyalties which have become part of the consciousness of the people, the colonialists would not have been able to take advantage of them and to divide and disrupt national unity in these countries.

Take, for instance, our own country. It is true that the British rulers played a dirty role in inciting communal passions in the years immediately preceding our attainment of independence. Had it not been for their presence here and the intrigues resorted to by them, the communal problem would not have reached such proportions or taken such tragic forms. It is, however, equally true that they could resort to such intrigues precisely because the socio-economic conditions in the country were such that these passions could easily be roused.

That is why, even after the attainment of independence when the British rulers were out of the scene in our political life and were not in a position to intrigue, communalism did not recede into the background but only took other forms. The emergence of such organisations as the Jan Sangh, for example, cannot be explained except by recognising the fact that Hindu communalism is a force to reckon with even when the foreign intriguer is away and is not in a position to mould the course of political developments in the country.

Let us recall, in this connection, that the process of the formation of nation-states even in Western Europe was attended by serious clashes and conflicts between outmoded ideas and concepts having their origin in mediaeval society and the ideas and concepts of modern democracy, nationalism and secularism. Loyalty to one's own region or principality, to one's guild, to one's religious group—all these contended even in Western Europe against the new forces of modern nationalism. These new forces had to wage revolutionary battles against the old forces and defeat them. It was in the course of these battles that they unfurled the banner of 'liberty, equality and fraternity'. But, before coming out victorious and establishing themselves as superior to the old outworn forces, they had to go through years of persecution and suffering.

Our freedom movement for its part drew inspiration from these national, democratic and progressive movements of Western Europe when it unfurled its own banner of revolt against British imperialism. As our national leaders had made it clear during the freedom movement, our struggle was directed not only against the foreign exploiter, but also against the backward, oppressive and undemocratic organisations and institutions in the country.

The struggles against untouchability, for the elevation of the depressed classes, for the promotion of Hindu-Muslim and other forms of communal unity, for the substitution of English by the mother tongue as the language of administration and education, for the formation of linguistic states, for equality between men and women, etc. were part of this urge for creating a modern democratic and progressive nation out of the various caste, communal, tribal, linguistic or regional groups in the country. It was because they were able to inscribe the banner of the struggle against mediaeval and backward institutions, and ideas arising out of them, that our national leaders were then able to unify and integrate the nation.

At that time, however, they were directing the main fire against the biggest obstacle standing in the way of creating a united nation—against British imperialism. They knew, and the people knew, that there was no question of any successful struggle against these mediaeval and backward ideas and institutions so long as the external oppressor continued to dominate over the nation. They, however, made it clear that, as soon as the foreign oppressor is gone, the nation will work earnestly in order to overcome all the internal obstacles to the unification and integration of the nation.

After the attainment of independence, however, it is no more a question of just laying down the policy and programme of unifying and integrating the nation. The question of implementing those policies and programmes came on the agenda.

This requires not only an awareness of the evils generated by the mediaeval and backward institutions and ideas which have their hold on the people. It requires a thorough and deep understanding of the objective factors and forces which lead to the emergence of these mediaeval and backward institutions and ideas.

Failure in this respect is bound to make the struggle against fissiparous forces ineffective. It is therefore necessary for us to go a little into the sociological roots of the fissiparous trends that are admittedly endangering the unity of the nation.

### III

The historical process of the formation of nation-states in India has certain features which are peculiar. These were completely absent in European countries, both Western and Eastern.

Social development in Europe took the three well-known stages of primitive Communism, Slavery and Feudalism. It was when the feudal society was being broken up under the hammer-



blows of growing capitalist society that the petty barriers which existed for centuries got destroyed and the slogan of 'one nation, one state' was raised as a matter of practical politics.

In India, however, historical development took place in a slightly different way. The breakup of the ancient Primitive Communist Society to form the Slave Society and the substitution of the latter by the Feudal Society took place in India in such a way that a social institution peculiar to India came into existence—the caste.

How the Indian social set-up arose and developed from stage is an absorbing topic for those engaged in research into the development of Indian society. It is, however, clear that it became such an organic part of the Indian people's life that its impact is strongly felt even in this epoch of capitalism and transition to socialism.

The foundation of the Indian village community is the same natural economy as was characteristic of the countryside in all parts of the world in the pre-capitalist epoch. Production for consumption, rather than for sale in the market, exchange of products within the village and that too on a barter basis—such was the pattern of economic relationships in those days.

While this was true of all parts of the world till the rise of modern capitalism, India is different from the rest in that her self-contained economy takes the social form of the Village Community divided into castes. Division of labour, exchange of products, marriage and family relations—all were organised along caste lines. This caste hierarchy with its relations of superiority and inferiority of various castes gave the Indian village certain specific features absent in the rest of the world.

This does not mean that the particular pattern of caste organisation and the village community known to us in modern times was worked out in its fullness at some particular point of history. On the other hand, the division of society into castes and the organised village community have undergone various

transformations both in their outward form as well as in their inner content.

It was a far cry from the original division of society into four *varnas* (which is supposed to have been the beginning of the caste system) into the modern system of caste society with its scores of castes and hundreds of sub-castes. The Village Community too is not the same in all parts of the country nor in all stages of its history.

It would therefore be reasonable to conclude that the socio-economic transformations which took place in other countries through the formation and breakup of the slave and feudal societies took place in India by way of transformation in the caste system and Village Community.

Let us, however, not distract ourselves into the historical origin and development of the two social institutions which are peculiar to India—the Caste and the Village Community. The main point to be stressed is that these two institutions have gone very much into the consciousness and activity of the Indian people. People belonging to various castes have a feeling of being one with their own caste people and separate from the rest of society ; and this feeling is a living force, having its impact on the entire social life of the Indian people. This is the main point which is relevant for the discussion here.

There are, however, certain sections of the people who are outside the institution of caste. They are : Firstly, the various tribal peoples who live their separate lives and have not yet been fully integrated into the caste-ridden Hindu society. Each tribe has its customs and manners, its own tribal bonds and sometimes speak its own tribal language or dialect.

Secondly, there are the non-Hindu religious communities, particularly the Muslims, the Christian and the Sikhs. Although they too, in some respects, have been affected by caste distinctions (there being low caste Muslims and christian, etc.) they have by and large kept away from the customs and manners

of caste-ridden Hindu society. At the same time, they have their own social and cultural lives based on doctrines and rituals ordained by their own religious faith. They too, therefore, have their feeling of separateness from Hindu society and oneness among themselves.

The inevitable consequence of these peculiar features of the social set-up in India is that there is no feeling of unity and solidarity between the various caste in Hindu society, between the people belonging to the caste-ridden Hindu society on the one hand and non-Hindu religious communities on the other, and between the tribal people and the plains people. This is the soil on which have arisen what are called Casteism, Communalism and Tribal Separatism.

The common soil on which these forms of separatism have grown in India is, as we stated above, the reality that the economic relationship in ancient and mediaeval society was based on production for one's own consumption and exchange of products within the village. This, however, has now disappeared. No more is Indian society—even tribal society in the most inaccessible jungles of the most distant parts of the country—free from the influences of market economy. People in every part of the country are steadily being drawn into the vortex of market economy.

There is, therefore, no objective economic basis for the feeling of separateness as between the various castes in Hindu society, or the various religious communities, or the various tribal peoples. They all function within the same system of economic relationships under which any individual belonging to any caste or religious community or tribe can, and actually does, go to any part of the country, take up any occupation and live any type of life which he or she likes. This is something which was unthinkable either in ancient or mediaeval days when the caste, the tribal and the religious organisation had allotted to every individual his or her allotted place of work and occupation.

This fundamental transformation in the economic base, on which the social institutions of the caste, the tribe and the religious community were built, began with the advent of the British regime. The biggest and most effective blow directed by the British rulers fell on the old self-sufficient economy which was the "unchanging" Village Community. The lakhs of Indian villages, each of which lived its own life since times immemorial, began to feel the effect of the slightest tremor in the world set-up. Wars or revolutions, economic crises or political upheavals in the capitalist world, threw dozens of young men out of their village, pauperised hundreds of families and unsettled the family budgets of almost every section of rural society. Continuous and evergrowing pauperisation of the Indian people belonging to every caste, tribe and religious community was the natural result of these upheavals.

Even though the objective basis of the institution of the caste, the tribe and the religious community was thus knocked out, the consciousness in the minds of the people, to which the existence of these institutions had given rise, was not by any means eliminated. Firstly because, being institutions which have had their existence dating back to several centuries, the consciousness of caste, tribe, etc. persisted in the minds of the people even after the objective factor which gave rise to that consciousness was eliminated.

Secondly, even though the British rulers destroyed the basis of the old social system, they did not help the formation of a new system in its place. The role played by them in the history of social transformation in India is, as has been pointed out by all historians and social scientists, destructive, rather than constructive. While they destroyed the old self-sufficient village system, they did not build the modern industrial society. They, therefore, failed to bring about such a technological and cultural revolution as was brought about by the bourgeoisie in the countries of Western Europe. Such a technological and cultural revolution alone would have broken the parochial, cliquish and

other narrower feelings and considerations which have to be broken up if the nation-state is to be formed. Furthermore, having no social base in the country on which they could rely for support in maintaining their alien rule, the British propped up all the backward and reactionary social forces in the country. The leaders of the caste, tribal and religious organisations were the natural allies of the British who did their best to promote them and set them against the growing forces of nationalism.

The same development is unfortunately taking place in the post-independence years too. The process of breaking up the objective economic basis of the caste, the tribal and the religious groups and organisations is continuing. What is left of the caste, tribal and communal societies is being steadily destroyed. But the new rulers of the country have been as yet unable to build a fully industrialised society. They have been unable to bring about that technological and cultural revolution which will sweep away the cobwebs of backwardness inherent in the caste, tribal and communal separatist sentiments.

On the other hand, the new ruling classes, for their own reasons, are, in actual practice, allying themselves, at one stage or in one part of the country, with one, and at another stage and in any another part of the country with another, force of separatism. They are obliged to do this because, in the present set-up of parliamentary democracy, they have to rely on the support of all these backward social forces in order to win victory in the elections.

Neither the ruling nor the opposition parties can escape their respective share of the responsibility from this. For, both are pandering to the prejudices and passions which can secure them votes in elections. Separatism of all sorts—caste, communal, tribal and other—naturally come handy and are used without scruples.

Thus is created the political background in which these forces of separatism can grow.

## IV

The transformations that are taking place in the socio-economic system are of two kinds : (1) those that affect all the socio-economic institutions in the country in general. (2) Those that affect some of them in a particular way and others in another way.

The pauperisation of the majority of the people ; the growth of well-to-do sections connected with various forms of modern business activities or carrying on modern intellectual professions and occupations ; the break-up of the old family ties—these belong to the first category. They affect people belonging to every caste and tribe, having allegiance to every religious persuasion, speaking every language and inhabiting every state and region.

Nobody is free from these social upheavals. No social group in the country is left unaffected by this process. Within the ranks of every caste, every tribe, every religious community, every linguistic and cultural group and within every state and region, this polarisation is taking place.

Even from the ranks of the most socially-oppressed and lowest caste is a narrow stratum of educated professionals growing—the first nucleus of a stratum which hopes to transform itself, in course of time, at least into the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, even from within the highest castes are large numbers of people being pauperised and thrown into the ranks of semi-proletarians, if not full proletarians.

The tribal people too are undergoing the same process of transformation—a narrow stratum of at least professionals is emerging and hopping to get further up the ladder of the modern class society; while their masses are forcibly separated from their land and the tribal social environment to be thrown into the ranks of proletarians.

The well-knit organisation built on the basis of the religious

bond is also breaking. Each religious group is being divided into a minority of the rich and the well-to-do and the majority of either the already poor or those who are being rapidly impoverished.

Linguistic groups and people inhabiting each State and region in the country are also subjected to this process. From the ranks of each of them are arising two classes or strata of society—the majority who are impoverished and have little or no property of their own, and a minority who are taking the utmost advantage of opportunities for developing themselves into property-owners.

The polarisation of society into such a majority (propertyless) and a minority (the property-owners) is thus a phenomenon to which no social group is an exception.

Such a polarisation of society has been going on in our country ever since the British rulers came and destroyed the basis of the old self-sufficient village economy with the caste system as its backbone. The economic basis of all these socio-economic institutions—the division of labour along the lines of caste, all the castes and religious communities together forming the village community—was undermined by them when they brought the market economy.

This, however, is not only being further carried forward but developed into its most perfect form, the form of monopoly capital in these years of planned economy. The renowned economist, D. R. Gadgil, has pointed out that the existence and development of monopoly in business fields goes hand in hand with concentration of power in terms of regional, communal or social groups.

“This”, he goes on, “is an extremely important sociological phenomenon which cannot be ignored in Indian conditions. It cannot be ignored because the total picture that emerges is that of concentration and control over and patronage resulting from all modern finance, trade and industry in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons concentrated in

particular social groups. The diffusion of the benefits of the rise of modern industries and commerce is thus severely restricted within the community and the joint operation of socio-economic and political power makes certain groups so entrenched that social justice is denied and social peace cannot be guaranteed with the continuance of this state of affairs.”

This has its impact on the relations between castes, tribes, religious groups, linguistic and cultural groups, States and regions. For, while on the one hand every such social group is getting polarised into a majority of the propertyless and a minority of property-owners, relations of property as between one social group and another also undergo changes.

The essence of monopoly being that those who are already privileged get increasingly greater opportunities to improve their position in relation to the rest of the society. Relatively larger proportions of those who belong to particular social groups are able to enrich themselves more than other groups.

Thus, for instance, certain special castes in every part of the country are able to secure a much larger proportion of jobs under the Government and professional occupations than the rest. So are certain other communities able to bag a much larger proportion of trade, industry and other forms of modern business activity. While a few individuals from other social groups are also able to ascend the ladder of governmental jobs, professional occupation, trade or other forms of business activity, they are yet proportionately lesser in number.

On the other hand, while several of the old privileged social groups are also getting impoverished, their proportion is much lesser than those of the less privileged groups.

Such developments give an entirely new complexion to the conflicts based on casteism, communalism, tribalism, linguistic and regional rivalries, etc. They are no more confined to a struggle for a proper share in the political and administrative set-up under the foreign rulers, as they were in the pre-



independence years. They have now become the expression of the keen competition and rivalry between the newly-emerging professional and business elements who happen to belong to various social groups. Their competition and rivalry is related to what each considers its own legitimate share in the development of the nation.

Thus is laid the basis for tensions and conflicts between the various castes, tribes, religious communities, linguistic groups and the people inhabiting different states and regions. Conflicts between the propertyless and property-owners as classes bound by economic ties sometimes appear as, and are sometimes overshadowed by, conflicts between such social groups as caste, community, etc. An extremely complex situation is the natural result of these developments.

Thus far about the general socio-economic transformations which affect everyone of these social groups and which, therefore, have become the problems of national integration. Over and above these, however, are the transformations which are peculiar to every socio-economic and cultural factor in Indian society. They, therefore, give some special characteristic feature for each of the problems connected with national integration.

Before examining them one by one we may, however, note that neither the economic transformations that are being made under the Five-Year Plans, industrialisation, development of agriculture, etc.—nor the technological and cultural changes brought about through education and the adoption of new methods of production are adequate to undermine the objective and subjective bases of the existence of the backward sentiments of casteism, communalism and tribalism.

Industrialisation is yet confined to a few selected cities and industrial areas ; the bulk of the rural areas (which happen to be the citadels of these backward sentiments) remain unaffected by the economic and technological changes brought about by industrialisation. In agricultural and other sectors of rural

activity too, modern technology and the consequent changes in the people's outlook to life are mostly confined to a narrow stratum of well-to-do elements in the rural areas.

The mass of the rural people, therefore, are perforce left with all their outmoded ideas and stick to superstitious beliefs and practices. Modern concepts like secularism, casteless and classless democracy, etc., become just fashionable jargons bandied about by a narrow stratum of urban and much less of the rural intellectual elite.

The general solution for these problems, therefore, obviously consists in a more thorough and consistent process of industrialisation, leading to a transformation of the entire life and culture of the rural areas. Modern practices and techniques of production, accompanied by the dissemination of the most up-to-date ideas of science and technology, will alone knock the bottom out of the centuries-old ideas of caste hierarchy, tribal separatism and religious fanaticism, thus undermining the very basis of the political factors of casteism, tribalism and communalism.

## V

Caste as a system of social organisation has two essential features demarcating it from other social systems.

Firstly, one's occupation is determined by the caste into which one is born ; in other words, division of labour is so rigid that people cannot take up occupations other than those followed by their forefathers.

Secondly, this rigid division of labour based on heredity places some in the category of 'superior' castes while others are 'inferior' castes. Furthermore, every caste is 'superior' to some and 'inferior' to other castes (except, of course, the highest which has only 'inferior' castes below and none above, and, the lowest to whom every other is a 'superior' caste).

This whole arrangement received a shattering blow when the British rulers brought with them the economic relations, laws and moral standards of modern capitalist society. The process which they started about two centuries ago is now being continued and further accelerated by the new rulers of free India.

The decisive change in the social set-up made in the course of nearly two centuries of capitalist development is the substitution of the old natural economy by the market economy. This in its turn put an end to the division of labour based on heredity. No more does the accident of birth in a particular family and caste decide one's occupation. On the other hand, one chooses one's occupation to the extent to which one is able to do so by educational and other attainments.

This change affects every caste, 'high' and 'low'. Members of 'high' castes, including Brahmins, are increasingly forced, by the circumstances of their economic life, to leave their traditional occupations and to take up jobs which are customarily associated with 'lower' and even 'scheduled' castes. At the other end of the pole, considerable numbers of the harijan and other 'low' caste people are enabled, by increasing opportunities afforded to them, to leave their traditional occupations and to take up jobs customarily fixed for Brahmins or other 'high' castes.

While the traditional division of labour and the consequent 'superior'-'inferior' relations between the 'high' and the 'low' castes are thus being broken the various castes have not been integrated into a united single community. On the other hand, new tensions are being generated between the various castes, particularly between the major caste groups, such as high-caste Hindus, low-caste Hindus, backward classes, scheduled castes, etc .

There are several reasons for this, some of them economic, others political, still others socio-cultural.

To take the economic reasons first, it should be noted that the process of capitalist development pauperises the majority of

people belonging to every caste, not excluding the Brahmins. Those who occupied a high place in the old caste organisation of society and who, therefore, were the object of hatred nursed by the 'lower' castes have now been thrown into the ranks of the toiling poor. Some of them are of course fortunate enough to get general or higher education. But even they are forced to take up clerical or other similar jobs of low income category. Others who are less fortunate are forced to take up less skilled or unskilled occupations. In either case, they are forced to work for a wage (or salary) in order to keep themselves alive.

While this is the fact of the majority of even the 'highest' castes, a small minority of all castes, including the 'lowest', are enabled to ascend the ladder of economic power. Those who could never have dreamed of getting better-paid and socially-respected jobs in the old set-up are now able to get good jobs and rapid promotions. Some of them are also able to acquire land, or go into other economic activities like trade, industry, etc.

The reality of this differentiation taking place in all castes is, however, given a distorted picture.

It appears to the pauperised majority of the 'high' castes that the fortunate few belonging to the 'low' castes and even 'scheduled' castes are growing and prospering at their (the 'high' castes) expense. They contrast the rise of a handful of people belonging to the 'lower' and 'scheduled' castes to the impoverishment of the majority belonging to the 'high' castes. They, therefore, see in the 'low' and 'scheduled' castes the cause of their ('high' castes') own doom.

On the other hand, the majority belonging to the 'low' and 'scheduled' castes see that it is a difficult job even for a handful of them to move up the social ladder. The lot of the overwhelming majority is virtually no better than in the days when the rigid rules of the caste system were fully operative. They, therefore, come to believe that the elimination of caste

inequalities is nothing but window-dressing ; in spite of all the well-advertised campaigns in favour of a casteless society, low castes still continue to groan under indescribably miserable living and working conditions ; the change, if at all, is from the social oppression of a rigidly-organised caste system to the economic exploitation of capitalist society superimposed on the caste system.

The result is that, in the consciousness of both the 'high' as well as the 'low' castes, their births in particular castes appear to be the source of all their miseries and hardships. Both of them therefore, begin to hate the other castes to whom they trace all the evils of the age.

Against this background, new forms of political life and activity emerge. Newspapers and other media of publicity and propaganda, periodical elections, forms of agitation and organisation like mass meetings and rallies, organisation of social and political associations, etc. give relatively modern form to the old caste consciousness. Associations and organisations of castes, if not of sub-castes, are formed to agitate for 'their' (caste) grievances and demands. The fact that a leader or candidate belongs to a particular caste comes into play as an important factor in political life and influences votes. Politicians and parties use this factor for their own individual and partisan ends. They thus give political respectability to what are universally acknowledged as anti-national and disruptive trends.

To these realities of economic and political life should be added the socio-cultural background of the phenomena of caste-based tensions. The essence of this background is that the social and family life of present-day Hindu society is still dominated by caste distinctions.

The central issue of social and family relations—marriage—is even now arranged within the caste. A few intercaste marriages may have taken place. They may be increasing in number. But, taking Hindu society as a whole, intercaste and (even intersub-caste) marriages are exceptions.

Caste distinctions make themselves felt in other aspects of social life as well. Take, for instance, the behaviour of an average high caste Hindu family, particularly of its women members, to members of 'low' and 'scheduled' castes who visit their homes. The treatment meted out to them now may be liberal in comparison to a generation ago. But only in exceptional cases do they treat 'low' caste visitors on a footing of perfect equality with the members of the 'higher' castes.

Members of the 'low' castes therefore resent the lecturing done by the leaders of the 'high' castes on the necessity for ending all caste distinctions. The few privileges that the Constitution and the practice obtaining in certain States give the 'low' or 'backward' castes—such as reservation in Government services, special provision for admission in educational institutions, special fee concessions, etc.—have come under attack. The pauperised majority of the 'high' castes are equated with the mass of 'low' and 'scheduled' caste people. It is then demanded that nothing should be done to the 'low' or 'scheduled' castes which is not done to the poor sections of the 'high' castes. All this in the name of putting an end to caste distinctions and discriminations! No wonder the 'low' and 'scheduled' caste people look upon such lectures on caste equality with suspicion.

No effective struggle against casteism can therefore be waged unless a concerted drive is launched against the practice of caste inequality and discrimination in everyday social life. It is not enough to put a legal ban of the practice of untouchability, as has been rightly done in the Constitution. The spirit behind this ban should be applied in every aspect of daily social life. All Customs and conventions which treat some castes as inferior to others should be eliminated. The utmost possible encouragement should be given to intercaste dining and intercaste marriage. Casteism in political life cannot be eliminated so long as it is allowed to dominate social life.

Such an attack on caste inequality and discrimination in social life should be combined with the creation of political

guarantees that the hitherto socially-oppressed castes—what are now known as ‘backward’ and ‘scheduled’ castes—would be enabled to overcome the legacy of their centuries-old social oppression. This would obviously necessitate the continuance, for some time more, of those safeguards and special provisions through which the Constitution helps them to rise up the social ladder—reservation, special scholarships, other educational concessions, etc. These special provisions and safeguards are, of course, temporary, being calculated to meet a transitory situation. They, therefore, cannot continue indefinitely. The communities concerned should, however, be assured that they will be continued till such time as they as a Community rise up to the average level in point of education and place in Government services.

While doing this, however, the poor majority belonging to the ‘high’ castes should also be assured that every effort will be made to raise their living standards, along with the living standards of the entire people. They should, at the same time, be persuaded to join their brethren belonging to the ‘low’ and ‘scheduled’ castes in their struggle to overcome the legacies of the centuries-old social oppression arising out of caste inequality.

Elimination of caste psychology and of all the practices arising therefrom is thus the essential pre-requisite for a successful struggle against casteism.

## VI

The tribe and the non-Hindu religious community do not fit into the system of caste organisation. They do not show the two essential features which, as we saw earlier, demarcate the caste from other social systems.

Neither the tribe nor the non-Hindu religious community pursues a particular occupation. Every tribe and every religious

community has, within its ranks, those who pursue several occupations which, according to the caste system, are reserved to different castes, from the highest down to the lowest.

There is, therefore, no superior-inferior relationship within the tribal organisation nor among the non-Hindu religious communities.

The tribe and the non-Hindu religious community, however, cannot be said to be completely free from the influences exercised by the caste system. The dominant social group in ancient and mediaeval India being Hindus belonging to the highest castes, the collective mind of the majority of the Indian people reflected caste consciousness.

Even the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, etc. were, to some extent influenced by caste exclusiveness ; there are cases of sections within these religious communities being considered 'inferior' by their co-religionists.

Again, the Hindus considered all those who did not fit into the Hindu system of caste division as alien to the Indian social system and 'outside the pale of Indian culture'. Christians, Muslims and other non-Hindu religious communities were *Mlechhas*, while the tribes which were not fully absorbed into the Hindu caste system were barbarians. The various tribes living their own lives in the distant parts of the country as well as the non-Hindu religious communities were thus considered by the Hindus as 'inferior' to them.

Such an attitude on the part of the dominant group in the Hindu society naturally reacted on the non-Hindu religious communities and the tribes. Far from conceding the claim of Hindu superiority, the tribal people, living their own independent lives, were satisfied with themselves; they had no use for the way of life which Hindus in the plains used to live.

As for the non-Hindu religious communities, they looked upon Hindus as people who followed false gods, believed in false doctrines and observed false norms and standards of social behaviour.



Furthermore, the champions of some of these non-Hindu religious faiths came to India as conquerors ; wars were fought between them and the Hindu rulers of India. This led to acute social-political tensions. On the one hand was the fanatical faith of Muslims that they were taking the message of true God to unbelievers. On the other side was the equally fanatical determination of the Hindus to defend the Dharma from attack by foreigners. A psychology of conflict was thus generated between Hindus and non-Hindus, particularly the Muslims who happened to be numerically the largest and the most militant group to come to India.

No such open conflicts have taken place in history between the tribes and the plainspeople. But, a development takes place in the socio-economic life of the plainspeople, they show a tendency to make greater and greater encroachments into the areas occupied by the tribal people. The self-contained independent tribal life receives shock after shock as more and more plainspeople enter the tribal areas, take possession of tribal lands and subject the tribal people to wage and price exploitation.

Furthermore, group after group of Christian missionaries have of late begun to settle themselves in such areas, converting the tribals to Christianity and thus rallying them into the ranks of the non-Hindu religious communities. The tension and conflicts developing between the Hindu and the non-Hindu religious communities thus enter the relations between the tribal and plainspeople also.

These conflicts between the Hindu and non-Hindu religious communities and between the tribals and the plainspeople develop side by side with similar conflicts between the high and low caste Hindus. The low caste Hindus, non-Hindu religious communities and the tribal people sometimes happen to join together in a struggle against the dominant sections of the Hindu religious community, the caste-Hindus. Agitations like those

launched by the non-Brahmin and Justice Movements, conversions of low and depressed caste Hindus to other religious groups, etc. create tensions and conflicts. They tend to obliterate the essential difference between caste on the one hand and the tribe and the religious community on the other. Casteism, communalism and tribal separatism begin to develop certain common features—hatred against the prevailing social system based on caste which, in its turn, develops into hatred for the dominant Hindu castes.

This was naturally made clever use of by the British rulers, since it gave them an effective weapon of struggle against the growing freedom movement. The caste and communal composition of the sponsors and leaders of the freedom movement—the fact that, at least in its initial stages, the movement had at its head intellectuals and professionals drawn from the caste-Hindus—came as a handy weapon in their hands. The minds of the low-caste Hindus, the non-Hindu religious communities and the tribal people could therefore be easily poisoned against the freedom movement. The non-Brahmin and Justice Movements, protest movements among the tribal people and, above all, the movement for the formation of the State of Pakistan on the basis of the two-nation theory received the blessing and support of the British rulers.

While recognising this disruptive role played by the foreign ruler in giving all sorts of encouragement to the development of caste, communal and tribal conflicts, it would however be wrong to miss the equally disruptive role played by Hindu chauvinism. For, the basic attitude of Hindu superiority over other faiths and religious communities inevitably created bitterness and hostility among the non-Hindu social groups as well as low-caste Hindus towards high-caste Hindus. This became the fertile soil on which the seeds of the caste, communal and tribal disruption was thrown by the British rulers. That is why radical and progressive elements in our social life have always held the view that Hindu communalism is as dangerous as, if not more than, other brands of communalism and that Muslim, the Sikh, the Christian and

other forms of communalism cannot be combated if Hindu communalism is not eradicated.

Unfortunately, however, Hindu communalism has grown stronger, rather than weaker, after independence. All sorts of revivalist and obscurantist ideas are being spread and movements developed on the theory that Hindu Dharma is superior to all other religious faiths. Prominent individuals associated with the administration join this chorus and appear before the people as fanatical believers in the superiority of the Hindu faith. There are also parties and organisations which do not hide their hatred for other religious groups. Some of them even demand that non-Hindus, particularly Muslims and Christians, should be considered alien and denied rights of citizenship.

These are not the crankish but innocent ideas advanced by stray individuals here and there, but deeply-held and deliberately-propagated views of well-organised groups and parties. Furthermore, parties and groups who hold and propagate such views are strong enough to secure millions of votes at the time of successive elections and are, therefore, well represented in the Central parliament and in several State Legislatures.

It would be miraculous if, under these circumstances, non-Hindu communalism does not thrive and gather strength. Add to this the fact that the basic approach of the leaders of these non-Hindu religious groups is the same as that of the leaders of the revivalist Hindu movement. The difference is only that, while the Hindus consider theirs to be the true faith and every other a false faith, the others take the completely opposite view.

Both of them, therefore, in a way support and encourage the development of each other's communalism. While the revivalist Hindu leaders appeal to the narrow fanaticism of the Hindu masses and, to this end, recall the great and glorious past of ancient Hindu society, the religious leaders of Islam, Christianity, Sikh Panth, etc. appeal to the fanaticism of their followers and rouse them for action in defence of their faith.

Leaders of the tribal people too appeal to their followers to stand united and save their independent tribal way of life.

The unity and integration of the nation, therefore, cannot be secured by mere pious appeals and exhortations. Abstract denunciation of fissiparous and disruptive forces will not help. What are required are concrete campaigns against the various form of narrow sectional approach to national problems.

One of these campaigns is the concerted attack on the system of caste as a social organisation, referred to earlier. That, however, would leave communalism and tribal separatism untouched. The fissiparous trends originating from social tensions as between the Hindu and non-Hindu religious communities, and between the plainspeople and the tribals, do not come within the purview of the struggle against the caste system.

The mass movement for the elimination of caste inequalities should therefore be combined with two other broad movements.

(a) For the strict observance of the correct principle of secularism, the principle that, 'religion should not interfere in politics, nor should the state and political parties interfere in religious matters'.

(b) Against the attack launched by the plainspeople (who are drawn from all castes and religious communities inhabiting the plains) against the economic and other interests of the tribal people. The exploitation of the tribals by the plainspeople is the fundamental background against which tribal separatism is rising.

Unfortunately, however, these principles are not adhered to by the ruling party or most of the opposition parties. The leaders of almost all political parties (including even those who pay verbal tribute to the principle of secularism) invoke the aid of religious leaders to mobilise the votes of masses belonging to all religious communities. It is not unusual for the same political party to canvas the votes of people who follow a particular faith

on the basis of appeals made by the leaders of the respective religious communities. Nor is it rare for the State itself to arrange religious ceremonies and rituals as part of public functions, such as opening of a school or hospital, laying the foundation-stone, etc.

Such acts of defiance of the principle of secularism by the ruling party and by the administration strengthen the tendency of religious institutions and their leaders to interfere in politics. On the other hand, the operation of some legislations such as the Hindu Religious Endowment Acts bring the executive and legislative wings of the state into the day-to-day functioning of religious institutions. Such a mixing up of religion and politics gives all sorts of encouragement to casteism and communalism.

Similarly, the tribal problem is not dealt with by the administration and the ruling party in the spirit of safeguarding the interests of the tribal people against exploitation of the landlord, money-lender and other vested interests from the plains. The talk of "unity and integration of the nation" is often used to deny the tribals their inherent right of freedom from exploitation by vested interests from the plains. National unity is in other words equated with the complete absorption of the tribals into the plainspeople.

The mass of the tribal people naturally do not like this kind of national unity and integration for, this means the continuation of the process through which they are being uprooted from their natural surroundings and forced to migrate to other areas in search of jobs, precisely because the "civilising mission" of the plainspeople has led to the total loss of land and other properties by the tribal people and the disruption of their centuries-old tribal life.

This is not to say that the 'splendid isolation' in which the tribal people have been living for generations can continue. On the other hand it is certain to break up. The tribal people are bound to get integrated into the common life of the Indian people. The differences between them and the plainspeople are,

therefore, bound to get further and further narrowed down. While this is not only inevitable but even desirable, the leaders of the nation are in duty bound to prevent this process from leading to the total impoverishment of the tribal people.

Strict observance of the principle of secularism in politics and effective safeguards for the tribal people against exploitation by the vested interests in the plains areas are thus the essential pre-requisites for the integration of all religious communities and tribes into one nation.

## VII

The leaders of the ruling party and several publicists include, along with casteism and communalism, what they call 'linguism' in the category of fissiparous trends. As a matter of fact, it is not unusual for some of them to call the demand for the strict application of the linguistic principle to the formation of states and for the fixation of their boundaries as one variant of communalism.

This, however, is opposed to the best democratic traditions of our freedom movement. The necessity to use the mother-tongue for all political, administrative and cultural activities has always been recognised by the leaders of the freedom movement since the days of Tilak and other leaders of the radical national movement. This was further carried forward in the Gandhian phase of the freedom movement. It was in this new phase that the Congress organisation began to transact its business at the State level through the mother-tongue ; to this end it accepted the principle of linguistic homogeneity in fixing the boundaries of provinces for the organisational work of the Congress. At the all-India level too, Hindi was recognised as one of the two languages in which work was to be done, the other being English.

Our freedom movement respected all Indian languages, not as 'vernaculars' with inferior status, as they used to be under the

British rule, but as people's languages none of which is superior or inferior to any other language. Such an approach to Indian language has thus become part of the democratic consciousness generated by the freedom movement. It is not disruptive of national unity if those who speak any Indian language desire that their own language should have a status not inferior to either English or Hindi. It is, on the other hand, disruptive of national unity for the enthusiasts and advocates of either English or Hindi to demand that either of these or both should become the national language(s), all the other languages being relegated to the position of 'regional languages'.

Recognition of our country as multi-lingual with equality of status given to all the Indian languages as national languages does not, of course, mean denial of the necessity for a common language or languages to be used for inter-provincial communication and all-India contacts. Such a language or languages are obviously essential if different linguistic groups are not to remain isolated from one another, if the Indian people are to have a common economic, political and cultural life.

Such a common language or two common languages, however, cannot take the position which English used to occupy under the British regime. It [they] cannot become the language[s] of administration, at any level other than the central ; even at the central level, those who do not know enough of the common language[s] to speak and write in it should be permitted to use their mother-tongue. Business of the administrative and political organs at the state and lower levels should necessarily be transacted in the language of the State. Education too cannot be imparted in the common all-India language[s] but in the mother-tongue. In neither of these respects should the common language[s] have the status which English had under the British Rulers.

The recognition of the multi-lingual character of India and of the need for a common all-India language, or two All-India languages does certainly raise several practical problems.

Linguistic minorities are bound to exist in every State. They cannot be expected to get their children educated in the mother-tongue of the State in which they happen to live for business or for employment. Nor can they be fluent enough in the language of the State to use it in all their business with the Government. Some arrangements for the use of minority languages or the all-India language will, therefore, have to be made to meet the requirements of these linguistic minorities.

Again, in relation to the work of the Centre, while working towards the progressive introduction of the all-India language as the vehicle of consultation and administration, the use of other Indian languages will also have to be permitted. Deliberations of Parliament and other all-India bodies for consultation will have to be arranged in the way in which it is done in several multilingual countries : simultaneous translation of every speech into languages other than the one in which it is delivered. This will enable every member who cannot follow the common all-India language[s] to follow the proceedings and participate in them. (Contrast this with the present position when no less than 20% of Members of Parliament are unable to follow proceedings because they have no knowledge of either English or Hindi).

The secretarial and other work of the Centre too will have to be so arranged that, while keeping broadly to the use of the common language[s], the use of other languages are also permitted ; this would require the setting up of adequate machinery for the translation of notes, memoranda, etc. from one language to another.

In the field of education too, practical problems of a rather difficult nature would arise. For, while it is necessary that the mother-tongue should be used as the medium of instruction even for higher education, every student will have to acquire a high standard of knowledge in the all-India language and at least in one foreign language. Every linguistic area will also have to cater to the needs of linguistic minorities in that area, as well as of those students from the linguistic majority itself who want to



take the all-India language as their medium, since they would like to go in for all-India work.

Providing for all these requirements would naturally raise difficult problems. The question, however, is : are these difficulties to be stated in order to resolve them, or as arguments with which to prevent the recognition of India as a multi-lingual country ? If the difficulties are recognised with a determination to overcome them, everyone of these problems can be resolved.

Use of the mother-tongue as medium of instruction even at the University level ; provision of facilities for linguistic minorities to get their children educated through their own mother-tongue at lower levels and through the all-India language at higher levels : use of The Common all-India language as medium of instruction even for students belonging to the linguistic majority of a state if they so desire ; progressively greater but voluntary use of the common language by the administrative organs of the Centre even while use of all other languages is permitted and arranged for ; setting up the machinery for the simultaneous translation of all speeches delivered in Parliament—all these can be arranged if only the political leaders of the country recognise the multi-lingual character of the country with equality of status for all-Indian languages, even while using one of them as the all-India language. The real question is : do they recognise India to be a multi-lingual country and the need to assure to every linguistic group that theirs is not an 'inferior' language but has equality of status with other languages ?

In answering this question, however, the protagonists of Hindi agree with the protagonists of English. Neither of them would give the other Indian languages that equality of status which the freedom movement has always recognised. Both of them would consider these languages as 'regional languages' in more or less the same way as the British rulers used to speak of 'vernaculars'; while they can be used for 'local purposes', the 'business of the nation' should be transacted in one single

‘national’ language. The difference between them is : which—English or Hindi—should be this ‘national’ language ‘superior’ to ‘regional languages’?

This controversy would lose all meaning once the equality of status between all the Indian languages is recognised. For, opposition to the use of English or Hindi both for purposes of all-India communication will then cease to have the implications of deep national passions which it now has ; it will become purely a matter of greater convenience to larger sections of the people.

Looked at from this point of view, the non-Hindi people will voluntarily come to agree that, Hindi being the language spoken by the largest section of the population in the country, it has to be accepted as the common language for all-India communication and contact. People of the Hindi-speaking areas, on the other hand, would recognise the use of continuing English also as an additional language for all-India purposes ; not only is it one of the commonly-used international languages which therefore will be useful for the study of scientific and technological subjects ; it is also the language in which the present generation of the intelligentsia all over the country is equally proficient. They would, therefore, waive their objection to allowing English to be used as an additional all-India language till the present national passions on the question of language die down. Both the Hindi and English enthusiasts will therefore come to agree that the natural evolution of the country’s cultural-political life is towards Hindi being the common all-India language while English also will be allowed to continue for several years.

Such a common-sense solution of the language problem is what is demanded by the reality of the national situation. This, however, is denounced by the so-called champions of national integration as ‘linguism’ which is equated with communalism. The justifiable aspirations of all linguistic groups for development of their respective languages and for equality of status for them are condemned.

It is on the basis of such an open denial of the right of various linguistic groups in the country to be equal to the rest, on the theory that there is one 'national' language with several 'regional' languages, that they consider the formation of linguistic states to have been 'a mistake'. It is on this basis again that they oppose the rational solution of the problem of inter-state boundaries on the twin principles of homogeneity and village as the unit.

Such an attitude of opposing the application of democratic principles to the problem of language will hinder, rather than help, national integration.

## VIII

The last of the fissiparous trends which deserve consideration is 'regionalism' with its variant, 'provincialism'. It makes people of a particular region of the country, or a province, look upon the particular local interests of the country as a whole.

'Regionalism' as a tendency is quite natural under the social set-up of ancient and mediaeval times. For, human society was then not organised in larger nation-states but in village communities or at best petty principalities. It is only in modern times, when a common market is created that the various principalities and village communities are brought together and modern states of larger size formed.

The establishment of British rule created in India the basic pre-requisite for the formation of such a larger state—the establishment of relations of the common market. Thus was formed the united Indian state with centralised economic institutions and Central administration. But the development—economic, educational, administrative, etc.—which took place under the British regime was uneven.

Certain provinces and regions threw up considerable numbers of educated middle classes and professionals, while others supplied the major part of the manpower for the British army.

Some of the major cities became the centres of whatever trading and industrial activities were carried on by the British capitalists. They, therefore, gave rise to a class of Indian traders and small industrialists. The rest of the country remained virtually unaffected by such economic developments.

The major part of the country was under direct British rule (the so-called 'British provinces'), while the rest was under the Indian princes (the so-called 'Indian States') who ruled over their states under the British 'paramount power'.

These differences in the economic and political set-up of the various parts of the country gave a particular political complexion to every particular province and state. It, therefore, developed what may be called the provincial, State or regional outlook to the people of the respective regions.

The basis for putting an end to these diversities and thus unifying the nation was laid in the post-independence years. What remained of pre-independence India after the formation of Pakistan was constituted into a centralised state with a single Republican Constitution. All the former British provinces and Indian States were integrated and merged into it. This process was completed with the States Reorganisation Act of 1956 when all the Part B and C States (formed out of the former princely states) were abolished and homogeneous states were formed more or less on the linguistic principle.

An economic basis was laid for this political unification when a common plan of economic development was formulated. A series of Five-Year Plans and a Perspective Plan for long-term development came to be evolved and executed. Industrialisation, modernisation of agriculture, technological and scientific development—all these were to be carried out in the entire country.

In the actual execution of these development plans, however, provincial, regional and other discrepancies began to creep in.

Take, for instance, the progress of industrialisation, the key element in economic development. This is virtually concentrated in a few States and regions, rather than evenly dispersed throughout the country. Figures relating to issue of new capital show that companies which account for 70 to 80% of new investments are registered in four major centres—Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Facts relating to the physical location of the most important projects of industry, transport and hydro-electric development also show that development in every one of these respects is virtually concentrated in a few States ; within these very states, they are concentrated in a few regions or districts.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the people belonging to those states and which do not get an adequate share in the fruit of development get dissatisfied. Conflicts develop between peoples and even Governments of the various States, and within States between the various districts or larger regions, on questions of location of projects, distribution of waters, etc. The formulation of every Five-Year Plan becomes the occasion when the people of each State, and different districts or regions in the States themselves, fight for what they consider their legitimate share of development.

No useful purpose will be served by denying these realities of the situation. for, it is these disparities in development that give rise to passions leading to provincial and regional disputes. On the other hand, only by taking note of them and taking necessary steps to remove the disparities can provincialism and regionalism be made to disappear from the public life of the nation.

This is, of course, accepted in principle by the planning authorities who include the 'removal of regional disparities' among the objectives of planned development. The fact, however, remains that it is not applied in practice. The majority

of undeveloped States and regions continue to remain relatively undeveloped. The universal complaint voiced against the working of Five-year Plans that the rich are becoming richer applies as much to the States and regions as to individuals, economic strata and classes. The bulk of development still goes to those States and regions which were fortunate enough to be in the forefront even in pre-independence years.

While this is the material background against which it has developed and is developing, rarely does regionalism express itself as a single factor. It operates most often along with certain other forces.

Regionalism joined hands with the linguistic factor and gave rise to the movement for linguistic State. Out of this movement arose regional-linguistic passions. Questions of inter-state boundaries, allocation of river waters and location of projects roused the passion of regional-linguistic groups and developed into militant demands leading to bitterness and conflict.

The anti-Hindi movement and the demand for Dravidanad also arose out of this combination of regional and linguistic factors. It should however be stated that the idea of a separate Southern State composed of regions inhabited by four linguistic groups is a negation of the linguistic principle. In the matter of regional development too, the state of Madras is one of the developed states. Dravidanad is thus a slogan which distorts, rather than gives expression to, the regional and linguistic discontent.

In another part of the country, in the North-East, regionalism allied itself with the tribal factor and gave rise to the movement for the independent Nagaland. It has been partially conceded by the Central Government through the formation of such a state within the Indian Republic.

Again, regionalism allied itself with the religious community and gave birth to the movement for the separation of pre-independence India into two (Hindu and Muslim majority)

states. In the post-independence years, it led to the slogan of the Sikh homeland.

It should also be noted that regionalism does on occasions express itself not in combination with other factors but all by itself. For instance, regional rivalries between the Circar and Rayalaseema districts of Andhra Pradesh, the Travancore-Cochin and Malabar areas in Kerala, Vidarbha-Marathwada and the rest of Maharashtra, etc. have no connection of any kind with the tribal, communal or linguistic factors. Regional rivalries in such cases should indisputably be traced to the uneven development of the respective regions.

Even such purely regional rivalries rouse passions and lead to outbursts which have disastrous consequences. All the more serious therefore is regionalism when it is allied to some other factor, such as the linguistic group, the tribe and the religious community.

## IX

The foregoing discussion of the various socio-economic and cultural factors which lead to the emergence of fissiparous trends makes it clear that the unity and integration of the nation cannot be brought about by just denouncing certain political parties or organisations, or by making pious declarations regarding the need for integration.

The fact has, on the other hand, to be recognised that, India being in the process of transition from mediaeval to modern society, her social set-up, economy, cultural background and politics are undergoing unprecedentedly profound changes. This process of thorough change gives rise to innumerable problems, creates acute social tensions and leads to political disturbances and clashes. The forces working behind these disturbances, conflicts and tensions have to be understood in order that they may be brought under control.

We may, in this context, quote the leading sociologist of India, Prof. M. N. Srinivas of the Delhi School of Economics who makes the following assessment of what he himself calls "the Nature of the Problem of Indian Unity" :

"National self-consciousness does not come in a vacuum. It comes all along the structural points. Religion, sect, caste, language, region, town and village, all develop self-consciousness. Many, if not most, of these loyalties are more immediate than loyalty to a vast and heterogeneous entity like India. It will take some years before a proper hierarchy of loyalties is established and immediate loyalties not given priority over loyalty to India."

He makes particular mention of 'regionalism' which he points out, "can provide a powerful impetus to regional development...It means that they (the people of a region) no longer consider their collective poverty to be inevitable but as something which can be put an end to by their own effort and governmental aid. As far as the bulk of the people in our rural areas are concerned, this signifies a revolution in outlook. It also means that they identify themselves with a geographical area which is bigger than a village or *tehsil* and that they recognise a different type of allegiance from caste, or religion,...Once it is realised that 'regionalism' can become an important ally of development there will not be any hesitation to take account of regional considerations in planning. A real danger in this approach, however, is that the benefits tend to be spread so thinly that it will make extremely difficult a leap forward in the economy. But then democratic planning is beset with difficulties." (Introduction to "Caste in Modern India" pp. 13-14)

Agreeing with the above broad approach, we may now sum up our own discussion of the problem by repeating that the different forces which are said to be thwarting the process of national integration should be tackled in different ways.

Casteism should be so dealt with that, while for the period of



transition the former oppressed castes get sufficient opportunities for development, the main aim should be to destroy caste as an institution and its various manifestations.

The religious community, on the other hand, is a force which will continue to act on the minds of men at least for the foreseeable future. Nobody can, therefore, set before himself or herself the objective of destroying the religious community as an institution. In this sense, the solution for the problem of communalism is different from that of casteism. At the same time, the religious community cannot be permitted to step beyond its own field of activity (ministering to the spiritual requirements of man) and enter the field of operation of the state, political parties and other secular institutions.

As for the tribal factor, the major task of national integration consists in resistance to encroachments into tribal life by the forces of exploitation from the plains ; to this should, of course, be added the task of helping the tribal people to bring about a transition from mediaeval to modern conditions of life.

Coming to the linguistic factor, the solution lies in (a) the simultaneous fostering of all the Indian languages, (b) voluntary acceptance by all linguistic groups of Hindi as the ultimate common language for all-India communication and contact and (c) common agreement that, for such period of transition as can be commonly agreed to by all the linguistic groups, English will also continue to be used along with Hindi.

Finally, provincialism and regionalism cannot be tackled through any other means than of conscious removal of the provincial and regional disparities.

What is common to all these solutions is the recognition of the good old principle of 'unity in diversity'. Failure to recognise this is the source of all troubles connected with the process of national integration.

# **National Integration And The Communist Party**

## **I. Historical Presentation of The Problem**

1. The emergence of communal and regional separatism as a political force is not new. It is as old as 1952 when the first general election took place. Innumerable political parties based either on communalism or regionalism participated in the election. Some of them did get fairly good representation in the legislatures. But the majority which the Congress secured in the Central Parliament and in most of the State legislatures gave its leaders confidence that they could successfully meet the challenge posed by these parties. Subsequent to the election, the Congress leaders thought that the new orientation that they were giving to their policies—friendship and co-operation with the Socialist powers on a world-scale ; adoption of the Socialist pattern, and subsequently Socialism, as the goal of the nation ; the new perspective regarding planned economy, agrarian reform, etc.—would secure them such solid support from the people that a crushing blow could be dealt to communalism and regionalism.

2. Subsequent developments showed how misplaced was their optimism in this regard. Parties based on communal and regional separatism grew stronger, rather than weaker. They were able to cash in on the growing discontent of the people against Congress policies to a far greater extent than the Parties of Left Democratic Opposition. And by 1959, they had grown so serious that the then President of the AICC, Smt. Indira Gandhi, called a representative meeting of Congress workers to discuss the problem. That Conference decided to appoint a Committee to consider the whole question of what has since come to be known as National Integration. This decision, however, was not implemented. In the meanwhile, the language disturbances in Assam took place and showed the explosive character of the situation.

3. It was against this background that the Bhavanagar session of the Congress, held in January 1961, adopted a resolution on National Integration. That resolution stated : “democracy, with its wide-spread system of elections, which is vitally important and which is the very basis of our Constitution, has also resulted in some ways in encouraging certain disintegrating forces. Under cover of political and social activities, the old evils of communalism, casteism, provincialism and linguism have appeared again in some measure. Communalism which has in the past done so much injury to the nation is again coming into evidence and taking advantage of the democratic apparatus to undermine this unity to encourage reactionary tendencies. Provincialism and linguism have also injured the cause for which the Congress stands. Caste, although losing its basic force, is beginning to function in a new political garb. If these tendencies are allowed to flourish, then India’s progress will be gravely retarded and even freedom will be imperilled. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that every effort should be made to remove these evils and always to keep in view the unity and integrity of the nations. Adequate progress can only be based on a national scale, embracing all communities and states.”

4. The adoption of the above resolution was followed by the appointment of the Committee envisaged earlier. Headed by Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Committee held two sittings at the end of which it submitted a report to the AICC. The report is divided into four parts. The first part deals with “National Outlook in the Fields of Education and other Spheres” and makes 10 recommendations. The second is in relation to “Promotion of opportunities for Minorities in the Economic Field” and makes 8 recommendations. The third part is on “Maintenance of Security of personnel and property” with 9 recommendations. The last part explains “Role of the Congress Organisation” and has 9 recommendations.

5. In the meanwhile, the seriousness of the threat which communalism constitutes to national life was further underlined

by the riots which took place in Jabbalpur, Saugar and other places in Madhya Pradesh. The meetings of the Indira Gandhi Committee were themselves held under the shadow of these riots. This naturally influenced the deliberations of the Committee. It is doubtful if the Committee would have considered the questions dealt with in the second part of its report had it not been for the fact that these communal riots did break out. It may be further noted that, as it is, the report did not deal with what are known as 'Linguism', 'Provincialism' and 'Regionalism'.

6. The communal riots caused concern to progressive elements outside the Congress too. Our Party expressed its concern through the report and resolution adopted at the Vijayawada Congress. The resolution stated : "Fissiparous and separatist tendencies based on caste, community, province and region have grown apace in recent years. They threaten one of the most precious heritages of our freedom movement—the unity of the nation. The patriotic elements belonging to all parties are deeply depressed by these phenomena."

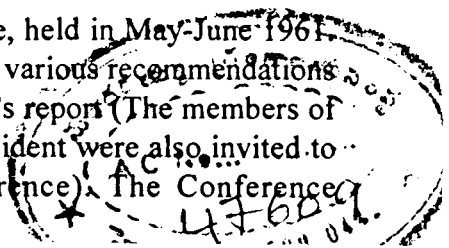
This was further expressed in the letter which Comrade Ajoy Ghosh wrote to Pandit Nehru on May 18, 1961, in which he said : "In the light of what happened in Jabbalpur and other places, it is evident that the Congress, by relying on its own influence alone, cannot wage an effective battle against communalism. Not merely is the influence of the Congress today considerably less than it was in the days of struggle for national freedom but also it is a well-known fact that many Congressmen themselves have come to imbibe communal ideas. At the same time, large numbers of Congressmen are definitely non-communal. There are non-communal and secular-minded men and women in other parties also and many of those who belong to no party. In this situation and taking into account the seriousness of the menace, we feel that an appeal should be issued by you and by the Congress Working Committee to ask Congressmen in all parts of the country to join hands with other

non-communal forces to wage a concerted struggle against communalism. Also we feel that it is high time that a Conference is convened of all the major secular parties and elements in the country to discuss the communal problem in all its aspects and evolve ways and means to eradicate it.”

7. The National Integration Conference held from 28th September to the 1st of October, 1961 was not of the type suggested by Comrade Ghosh in the above letter. What had been suggested by him was a Conference of secular parties. Actually, however, the conference included the representatives of some communal parties. The National Integration Council formed after the Conference also included the leader of the Jan Sangh. By the time the first meeting of the Council was to be held, another member was added to it—the representative of the Hindu Mahasabha. While thus including representatives of Hindu communalism, the Conference and the Council did not include representatives of the Muslim League, the Akalis, DMK, etc. This naturally led to legitimate criticism of the composition of the Conference, as well of the Council formed after the Conference. Our Party, however, did not consider this to be strong enough ground to refrain from participating in their work. Comrade Ajoy Ghosh and Dr. Ahmed participated in the Conference, while Comrade E. M. S. has been functioning in the National Integration Council and in the Sub-committee appointed by the Council. Comrade Hiren Mukherjee functioned in the Emotional Integration Committee headed by Dr. Sampurnanand.

8. In the meanwhile, the question of national integration has been dealt with by certain other bodies as well. These are :

(a) the Chief Ministers' Conference, held in May-June 1961. The Conference discussed in detail the various recommendations made in the Indira Gandhi Committee's report. (The members of that Committee and the Congress President were also invited to attend the Chief Ministers' Conference). The Conference



considered most of the recommendations made in part I, II and III of the Report (leaving out the last part which is concerned exclusively with the role of the Congress as an organisation). Having come to some conclusions on each of these recommendations, another Conference of the Chief Ministers was held on August 10th, 11th and 12th, 1961. The Conference had as the main subject for its discussion the question of language in its various aspects.

(b) the Emotional Integration Council with Dr. Sampurnanand as its Chairman and Comrade Hiren Mukherjee as one of its members. The Committee submitted a preliminary report on November 17, 1961. The Committee also submitted its final report in September this year. Comrade Hiren Mukherjee, as a member of the Committee, submitted a sort of supplementary note.

(c) the Committee on "Religious and Moral Instruction", appointed by the Ministry of Education with Shri Prakash as its Chairman, which submitted its report on December 21, 1959.

9. the above-mentioned bodies went into the question of national integration whether under direct governmental auspices, or under the auspices of the ruling party. The question has also been discussed by various non-official bodies, through Seminars, Conferences, etc. It is not possible to keep track of them all, or to bring together the various suggestions and recommendations made by them. Nor is it necessary, since a study of the above report will be sufficient to show the way in which official thinking goes on regarding the basic issues involved.

## **II. Fundamental Approach of Marxism to the Question**

10. A study of this voluminous material does not help us to understand the fundamental reason why such a threat to national integration should make its appearance now. The various

specific recommendations made in them, therefore, do not help to solve the most important problems connected with national integration. The fundamental problem was put as follows by Comrade Ajoy Ghosh in the speech he delivered at the National Integration Conference, held in September-October, 1961 :

“At the very outset we feel it necessary to emphasise certain contradictory aspects of the present situation. India is today administratively more united than ever in its history. Economic planning is carried out by a central body. Above all, state power is no longer exercised as was the case in the past by the British who were interested in keeping up and accentuating conflicts inside the country. All these are factors favourable for the consolidation of the unity of the country and of the nation. Yet, as would be denied by none, fissiparous and disruptive tendencies have grown alarmingly in recent years. They threaten one of the most precious heritages of our freedom movement—the unity of the nation. Why has this happened ? How has this happened ?”

Any study of the national integration, which does not try to find a correct answer to these questions will not help us. The analysis made and the series of solutions contained in such studies are bound to be superficial. This happens to be the case which all the recommendations made by the various official or Congress bodies mentioned above.

11. It should be recognised that our own Party is not free from the superficiality of approach mentioned above. While the Vijayawada resolution of the party Congress and the speech delivered by Comrade Ghosh at that Congress explain the political background against which these fissiparous and disruptive tendencies are emerging and growing stronger, our Party is yet to make a proper Marxist analysis of the growth of disintegrating forces in our national-political life. While the above-quoted passage from Comrade Ghosh’s speech at the National Integration Conference indicated an awareness of the

need for a sufficiently deep study of the phenomenon, no such study has actually been made. The result, therefore, is that the party is not able to take a unified stand on the problem of national integration in general, and its various aspects like Communalism, Casteism, Linguism, Regionalism and Separatism in particular. On every one of these questions, conflicting trends in theory and practice—revisionism in theory and right opportunism in practice, as well as dogmatism in theory and sectarianism in practice—have made their appearance and are preventing the Party from coming to correct conclusions. The enemies of the Party are naturally trying to take advantage of this situation in order to accentuate differences and to create a split in the Party.

12. It is, therefore, necessary for the Party to steer clear of these incorrect trends. It should take its firm stand on the solid ground of Marxism-Leninism on the question of national unity. None of these fissiparous and disruptive forces that are making their appearance now in our political life can be understood if we do not understand fundamental proposition of Marxism which Lenin summed up in “on the Right of Nations to Self-Determination”. He said :

“National movements did not first arise in Russia, nor are they peculiar to Russia alone. Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. The economic basis of these movements is that in order to achieve complete victory for commodity production the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, must have politically united territories with a population speaking the same language, while all obstacles to the development of this language and to its consolidation in literature are removed. Language is the most important means of human intercourse ; unity of language and unimpeded development are the most important conditions of a genuinely free and extensive commercial turn-over corresponding to modern capitalism, of a free and broad grouping of the population in all their separate classes ; finally, they are a



condition for the close connection between the market and each and every proprietor and petty-proprietor, seller and buyer. The formation of national states, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied, is therefore the tendency of every national movement. The deepest economic factors urge towards this goal, and for the whole of Western Europe, nay for the entire civilized world, the *typical*, normal state for the capitalist period is, therefore, the national state.”

13. This fundamental Marxist-Leninist approach to the phenomenon of development of nations and national movements should never be lost sight of by our Party when it deals with the question of national integration in our own country. Particular mention should be made of this now, when the bourgeoisie in our country is equating ‘linguism’ with casteism and communalism as ‘fissiparous trends’, and on that ground, even suggesting that the formation of linguistic states was a mistake. Any surrender to this bourgeois stand would be a departure from Marxism-Leninism.

14. Equally incorrect would it be to make a mechanical comparison of the conditions in Russia with those in India and to apply to India the principle of self-determination for all nationalities, including the right to separate. Lenin himself had warned against such mechanical application of the principle of self-determination of nationalities to all countries regardless of differences among them.

Polemising against Rosa Luxemburgh who argued that, since this principle is not included in the Programmes of West European Social Democratic Parties, it is wrong to put it in the Russian Party’s Programme, Lenin says : “A comparison of the political and economic development of various countries as well as of the Marxian Programme is of enormous importance from the standpoint of Marxism, for, no doubt exists as to the general nature of modern states and the general law of their development. But such a comparison must be drawn in a sensible way. The elementary condition required for this is the

elucidation of the question whether the historical epochs of the development of the countries contrasted are at all comparable.”

Regarding the national question itself, he says that Rosa Luxemburgh “has lost sight of the most important thing, i.e., the differences between countries where the bourgeois democratic reformation has long been completed and those where it has not yet been completed. This difference is the crux of the matter. The complete disregard of this differences transforms Rosa Luxemburgh’s exceedingly long article into a collection of empty, meaningless generalisations.”

Lenin goes on to refer to the comparison between Austria and Russia made by Rosa Luxemburgh, and says that under the circumstances in which the bourgeois democratic revolution was started and completed in Austria, it was perfectly natural for the Germans, Hungarians and Slavs in that country to gravitate “not towards separation from Austria, but on the contrary, towards the preservation of the integrity of Austria precisely in order to preserve national independence, which could have been completely crushed by more rapacious and powerful neighbours. Owing to this peculiar position, Austria assumed the form of a double centre (dual) state, and is not being transformed into a three centre (triune) state (Germans, Hungarians and Slavs).”

He then adds : “The peculiar conditions of Russia in regard to the national question are just the reverse of those we have in Austria. Russia is a state with a single national centre—the Great Russian. The Great Russians occupy a gigantic uninterrupted stretch of territory and number about 70 million.”

Analysing in detail the stand taken by Marx and Engels on the national question in relation to Poland and Ireland, Lenin says : “The conclusion that follows from all these critical remarks of Marx is clear : the working class should be the last to make a fetish of the national question, since the development of capitalism does not necessarily awaken *all* nations to independent life. But to brush aside mass national movements once they have started and to refuse to support what is

progressive in them means, in effect, pandering to *nationalistic* prejudices, that is recognising 'one's own as the model nation' (or we will add on our part, as the nation possessing the exclusive privilege of forming a state)."

15. Running like a red thread throughout Lenin's writing on the principle of self-determination for non-Russian nationalities, including the right of separation, is recognition of the basic fact that the then Czarist empire was a state of Great Russian domination. "The peculiarity of this national state (Russian)", he says, "is, in the first place, that 'alien races' (which, on the whole, form the majority of the entire population—57 per cent) inhabit precisely the border lands ; secondly, that the oppression of these 'alien races' is much worse than in the neighbouring states (and not in the European States alone) ; thirdly, that in a number of cases the oppressed nationalities inhabiting the border lands have compatriots across the border who enjoy greater national independence (suffice it to recall the Finns, the Swedes, the Poles, the Ukrainians, the Rumanians along the Western and Southern frontiers of the State) ; fourthly, the development of capitalism and the general level of culture are not infrequently higher in the border lands inhabited by 'alien races' than in the centre of the state. Finally, it is precisely in the neighbouring Asiatic states that we observe incipient bourgeois revolutions and national movements, which partly affect kindred nationalities within the borders of Russia."

To which he adds : "It is precisely the concrete historical peculiarities of the national question in Russia that caused the recognition of the right of nations to self-determination in the present epoch to become a matter of special urgency in this regard."

16. It will be idle to argue that these specific features which existed in Russia then exist in India today. The very manner in which capitalism developed in our country and generated the national movement is basically different from that of Russia. It is, therefore, necessary to analyse the specific features of the

development of capitalism and of the national movement in our country in order that we may be able to apply the general principles of Marxism-Leninism to our own conditions. But, before doing this, it is necessary for us to be clear in our minds that our approach to this question as to all other questions is opposed to the approach of the bourgeoisie.

National integration in general, and its various aspects like casteism, communalism, linguism and regionalism are not abstractions, as the bourgeoisie would have us believe when it speaks of these "fissiparous trends" in contraposition to "nationalism" in general. All these aspects of national integration, as well as the fact that problems of national integration have assumed importance at the present time, are the result of historical development. The working of this social, economic, political and cultural forces that led to the emergence of these separate problems, as well as the fact that the question of integration versus disintegration has come to the forefront now, have to be studied from a historical point of view. Furthermore, the study should be made not academically, but in a concrete way in relation to the class interests of the oppressed masses.

When such an approach is made, it will inevitably come into conflict with the approach of the bourgeoisie. There is, therefore, no question of our Party evolving a common programme of struggle against fissiparous trends and for national integration with the bourgeoisie, although, on several specific issues of struggle against fissiparous trends, we can and should have a common stand with it. In other words, our party should carry on a continuous, systematic struggle against the bourgeois approach to national integration, even while joining hands with it on issues in order to isolate and defeat the more disruptive forces.

### **III. India's Specific Conditions Analysed**

16. The essential difference between Czarist Russia, in relation to which Lenin worked out his principle of self-

determination for nationalities, and India is that capitalism became the dominant social system in our country not under the native bourgeoisie, but under foreign capital. The efforts to break the internal barriers for the exchange of commodities and thus to create a unified home market were successfully made in our country by the British rulers. Hence the domination of the bourgeoisie of the numerically largest nation within the country (which was the specific feature of the Czarist empire, where the Great Russian nationality which was not only numerically the largest but politically dominant in the country) is absent in India.

As a matter of fact, Indian capital developed in such a way that the territories occupied by that linguistic group which is numerically the largest—the Hindi-speaking people is economically less advanced than certain other territories. It is Bombay and Calcutta and not the cities of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan that became the base of such industrialisation as took place in the country during the British rule. In relation to other indices of capitalist development, such as the growth of a professional middle class, the Hindi-speaking region was behind Bengal, South India and Bombay. Finally, the Hindi-speaking region itself was not unified enough to become a dominant national group in the political, not to speak of the economic, life of the country.

Coming to language, literature and culture too, there was no question of the Hindi-speaking region dominating over the rest of the country in the days of the British rule. The question then was one of absolute equality of all Indian languages including Hindi, in that they all were equally suffering because of the domination of English. It was not till the 1920's that it became permissible among the educated middle classes all over the country to use the mother-tongue as the medium of communication.

17. Naturally, under these circumstances, the target of attack from all the democratic forces including the Marxists in India was the domination of the British ruling classes, as opposed to

the Great Russian in Czarist Russia. It was in this struggle against these foreign rulers that our national movement took shape, national unity forged.

It should, however, be noted that, as soon as the anti-imperialist movement penetrated to the mass of our people, there emerged a strong mass movement not only for the development of all Indian languages, but for the formation of linguistic states. The first big mass national movement in which the peasantry was drawn into the movement on a big scale—that of the non-co-operation and Khilafat movement—also had the idea of linguistic states inscribed on its banner.

It should be further noted that, as early as the Lucknow Congress which worked out the well known Congress-League Pact, it came to be accepted in the national movement that the Constitution of independent India should be Federal and not Unitary. At every phase in the history of discussions on the future set-up of the free Indian state, everybody had to agree to its federal basis. This principle has become such an integral part of the political consciousness of the people that, at the time of the framing of the Constitution after the attainment of independence, even those who were in their heart of hearts advocates of the unitary principle had to agree to the federal basis of the Constitution.

18. The acceptance by the entire anti-imperialist movement in the pre-independence period of these two principles, the federal basis of the Constitution and the formation of the linguistic states shows that, despite the above-mentioned differences between Czarist Russia and pre-independence India, the crucial principle laid down by Lenin regarding the formation of national states as an integral part of capitalist development, as well as the connection which he traces between language and national development, are applicable to our country also.

It is, however, these two crucial factors that are sought to be ignored by our bourgeoisie, when, in the name of national integration, they harp upon the theme of a strong centre which,

in practice, renounces the federal basis of our Constitution and carry out a persistent campaign against what they call the 'mistake' of having formed the linguistic states.

In our Party also it is natural that a trend should appear which ignores the historical significance of these two factors. This does in practice lead to trailing behind the bourgeoisie in its way of "fighting separatism".

19. While drawing attention to these specific features of the development of capitalism and national movement in our country, it is at the same time necessary for us to note that, despite their existence, the general tendency of our national movement was against the separation of the various linguistic groups inhabiting the country. The tendency of our national movement was for the utmost possible *unity* of the entire country *consistent with* the need for allowing all the linguistic and cultural groups to develop their languages and cultures as well as making *the states* (formed on the basis of language) *autonomous within the field of activities allotted to them. The unity of the country is not to be counterposed to, but integrated with, the widest possible autonomy for the states formed on linguistic basis.* It is this that is denied by the separatist elements like DMK whose ideology finds reflected in our ranks too.

20. The economic basis for the particular form of political consciousness of the anti-imperialist movement which is opposed to separatism lies in the fact that, created as it was by the British rulers, the home market in the country was one and indivisible. It was in the interests of the bourgeoisie in the entire country to have the unity and integrity of this all-India market preserved. Those bourgeois groups which were already developing under the British were not basing themselves on any particular territory inhabited by a single linguistic group. Everyone of them was interested in extending their activities to territories inhabited by other linguistic groups. As a matter of fact, the most developed among them—the Gujaratis and the marvadis—had connection as traders and industrialists with the

territories inhabited by almost all linguistic groups. A common India citizenship, as different from separate citizenships for each linguistic group, is, therefore, conducive to the development of the bourgeoisie as a whole : the right of every individual citizen of India to hold property, carry on trade, start industry and take up jobs in any part of the country is necessary for that “free and extensive commercial turnover corresponding to modern capitalism” in the interests of which, according to Lenin, development of language and the formation of national states are necessary.

21. At the same time, language being the most important means of human intercourse, its development is an unavoidable necessity if capitalism has to develop all over the country. The development of such democratic institutions as are necessary for genuine capitalist development is impossible if we continue to use a foreign language as the medium for education and for official work. Such a transition from English to the mother-tongue as medium of instruction and official work can be brought about only if the states are formed on linguistic basis.

It should also be noted that, while the bourgeoisie as a whole is interested in keeping the unity and integrity of the Indian market as a whole, there are undoubtedly developing elements in the various territories and regions of the country who are not strong enough to compete with the strongest and most dominant among the Indian bourgeoisie. A fully unitary Indian state, it is feared, would be so much in the hands of the dominant sections that these growing elements would be thwarted by them.

22. It was inevitable, under these circumstances, that the aspiration for a united country should take the form of the well-known principle of unity in diversity—the federal principle of the Constitution and the linguistic basis for the formation of States.

#### **IV. Post-Independence Developments**

23. The position, however, did not remain like this in the



post-independence years. The urge for united India began to get weakened and ideas of separatism grew. This was, of course, most serious in Madras, where the DK and DMK championed the cause of a separate Dravidanad and came on the political scene as serious forces as early as during the first general election. The same trend, however, appeared in different forms in other states as well. Particularly was this true of those areas which were predominantly inhabited by the tribal people, such as Jharkhand, Assam, etc. But, even in areas where it did not take the extreme form of separatism, tendencies towards regionalism made their appearance and grew strong.

24. This new phenomenon should be traced to the manner in which development of capitalism proceeded in the post-independence years and affected the economy and politics of the country. It is, therefore, necessary to analyse the major economic and political developments that took place during the last 15 years.

25. The first important development to be noted in this connection is that, for the first time in the history of the country, India became politically and administratively united. A centralised administration came into existence and all the petty principalities and 'Indian states' were integrated into it. Those economic factors which, even under the British, tended to unite the country were now supplemented by certain factors which made themselves, felt in the political and administrative fields.

26. This, however, was done by the bourgeoisie which was by no means single and indivisible. It was composed of various groups, each of which had its own special interests and had, therefore, mutual conflicts among them. Furthermore, the conflicts inside the bourgeoisie were ever-growing ; new sections were entering its ranks, while those that were already in existence grew in size. All this naturally led to competition between one group and another. Each of them, therefore, naturally tried to use the political and administrative machinery that had come into existence during this period in order to serve

its own specific interests and, therefore, against its rivals. The realities of economic life, therefore, generated the forces of conflict in a situation in which politics and administration were being increasingly integrated.

27. To these conflicts within the capitalist class as a whole should be added the fact that whatever economic development is taking place is extremely uneven. It is true that the formerly backward states and regions have started developing. It is, however, equally indisputable that the lag between some of these formerly backward regions and the more advanced regions is widening, rather than being bridged. There are whole states in the country, and within each state there are particular regions, whose development is below the average for the country as a whole and for the particular state respectively. This naturally leads to discontent in the states and regions which remain relatively backward. It is, therefore, inevitable that the whole people in such states and regions rally behind the bourgeoisie of these states and regions in demanding that the centre takes effective measures to overcome their backwardness.

28. It is inevitable that, led as they are by the bourgeoisie, such people's movements against the policy of the centre take undesirable and unjustified forms; they are bound to make unreasonable demands on the Central Government and to take a generally chauvinistic attitude, so long as the bourgeoisie is at their head. If this is what is meant by the usual denunciation of provincialism and regionalism, then that denunciation is justified. It, however, remains true that in most cases of provincialism and regionalism, the reason for the discontent is strong—the state or region concerned is, undoubtedly, being denied the legitimate share of the nation's overall development.

29. Developments in the political and cultural fields too tended to generate the forces of disunity, rather than of unity. No more is English foisted on the people by alien rulers; our own people are perfectly at liberty to throw it out in favour of their own languages. An end has, therefore, been put to the situation

in which all the languages in the country were equally being suppressed and the foreign language dominated the political, administrative and cultural life of the country. Being the language spoken by the largest number of people and, therefore, known in pre-independence years as national language. Hindi has come to be accepted as the language of Central administration and all-India communication. Hindi is eventually to replace English as the official language of the country and as medium of instruction at least in higher educational institutions.

This has led to two types of conflicts : (i) the conflict between those who are conservative enough to resist the very idea of change-over from English and who therefore demand that English continue to be used for an indefinite time, and those who want a rapid transition from English to Indian languages ; (ii) the conflict among those who are united on the need for replacing English but who differ on which should replace it as the all-India language. Some want Hindi to take its place, while others want to treat all Indian languages alike. The latter, however, is an impossibility since one language has to be used for all-India purposes and this has necessarily to be Hindi. The non-Hindi-speaking linguistic groups therefore contain a much bigger proportion of those who champion the continuance of English indefinitely.

30. This led to acute controversy on the language issue which was reached at the time when the Constitution was being framed and which continues even now. Passions are roused in all parts of the country—that in favour of Hindi in Hindi-speaking regions and ‘against Hindi imperialism’ in the non-Hindi-speaking regions. It is an index of the depth of feeling on this issue that those who are seeking a compromise on this issue have no other alternative than to suggest that English, together with Hindi, should continue to be an associate language and the link between various Universities until such time as the non-Hindi-speaking groups voluntarily agree to accept Hindi as the sole official language of the Centre and the link between various Universities.

31. The conflict, however, is not confined to Hindi *versus* non-Hindi languages. It extends itself to the relations between different non-Hindi languages, as shown in the Assamese-Bengali controversy in Assam in 1960.

32. Together with such a growth of 'linguism' should be noted another phenomenon—emergence of tribal separatism. The inevitable result of capitalist development is that forces of capitalism from the plains enter the hills inhabited by the tribal people. The economic and social life of the tribes, so far free from the penetration of capitalist forces, has now become subject to the working of the laws of capitalism. Land and other forms of property owned by the tribes begin to get alienated; the community life that binds the tribes together gets disrupted; pauperisation, if not proletarianisation, leads members of all tribal groups to leave the area of inhabitation of their tribes, leave their traditional jobs in the tribal community and seek jobs elsewhere. While the economic and social life of the tribal people is thus getting disrupted, exploiting classes and elements from the non-tribal areas are able to lord it over the territories and regions inhabited by the tribals. The conflict which consequently arises between the tribal and plainspeople takes various forms in various parts of the country. It has so far reached the most extreme form in the Assam hills where the violent movement developed between the Naga rebels and the administration on the issue of forming a fully separate independent Nagaland. In other places like Jharkhand, it has not taken this extreme form, but the fact that the demand for the formation of a separate Jharkhand state arose shows that the tribal problem is serious everywhere.

33. It is these economic and political factors that have led to the development of what is known as separatism. It has reached the most extreme form in Madras where the DK-MK slogan of separate Dravidanad has become a serious political force and in Nagaland where the slogan of separate Nagaland has created an explosive situation.

If the economic and political developments that have led to these separatist movements are not reversed, not only will it be impossible to arrest the growth of these separatist movements but it is even likely that other similar movements will arise in other parts of the country. For the disparity in economic development, the question of language or languages that should be used for administrative and educational purposes, and the conflict between tribals and plainspeople are agitating millions of people outside Madras and Assam as well. Even in those places where they have not reached the stage of demanding separation, it should be noted, violent passions are being roused on such issues as allocation of river waters, location of industry and other development projects, etc.

#### **V. Bourgeois and Proletarian Approaches to Separatism**

34. The bourgeoisie is blind to these realities of the economic and political developments in the country during the post-independence years. Neither the class as a whole, nor the different sections and groups into which it is divided, are able to see that the problem of national integration is in essence that of forging unity in diversity in a multi-lingual—if we are to use a strictly correct Marxian term, a multi-national—country in which capitalism is developing rapidly, but unevenly. Far from solving the real problems arising out of this situation, its leaders satisfy themselves by just denouncing linguism, provincialism, regionalism and separatism as disruptive of national unity. Having made such a denunciation of these outward symptoms of a deep-seated malady which has its roots in the process of social change, they come to the facile conclusion that the remedy for the evils lies in such administrative measures as putting a ban on the propagation of separatist ideology, if not a ban on the parties and organisations which propagate them.

Such an approach on the part of the dominant section of the bourgeoisie is matched by the approach of those sections of the bourgeoisie which are dominant in the non-Hindi-speaking

states, in those states and regions which are lagging behind others in economic and cultural developments, and among the tribal people. While the dominant bourgeoisie uses the slogan of 'national unity and integration' to justify its domination in the entire country, the other sections plead the cause of 'justice' and stretch it sometimes to the point of political and administrative autonomy, even separation.

35. Failure to see the class nature of fissiparous tendencies like linguism, provincialism, regionalism and separatism takes our party too towards the line of tailing behind either the dominant all-India bourgeoisie, or the bourgeoisie of the states, regions, linguistic groups and tribes.

The former leads a section of the Party to make a dogma of the slogan of 'national unity and integration' and repeat the same arguments as are advanced by the all-India leaders of the Congress. This, in practice, leads them to the position of supporting the Congress as against communal and separatist political parties. Such arguments and practices miss the basic and significant fact that the Congress approach to the question of national unity and integration is such as cannot be acceptable to broad sections of the people.

On the other hand, there is a section of the Party which makes a dogma of the particular point in Lenin's work which is related to the development of nations and right to self-determination and would try to mechanically apply it to our own conditions. This dogmatic approach leads them, in practice, to a policy of tailing behind the DMK and other movements which are based on separatism. Even in those states and regions where the local bourgeoisie does not put forward the demand for separation, this approach rallies the Party behind the local bourgeoisie with regard to location of projects, division of waters, etc.

The essence of both approaches is the same—dogmatism in theory and tailism in practice. The difference is only with respect to the particular principle which is to be made a dogma—'national unity' or 'self-determination of nations' ; also

which section of the bourgeoisie to tail behind—the dominant all-India bourgeoisie, or the bourgeoisie that is dominant in different states, regions, linguistic groups and tribes.

36. The National Council, therefore, calls upon the entire party to launch a determined struggle against every manifestation of these anti-Marxian trends. The unity of the entire Party has to be built through a systematic struggle against bourgeois trends of all varieties—(a) against the tendency of over-centralisation and domination, as well as against provincialism and regionalism; (b) against the efforts to so develop Hindi as to help it to dominate in the administrative and cultural life of the country at the expense of other languages; also against the refusal to recognise the special role of Hindi as the language of all-India communication ; (c) against the landlords and capitalists of the plains who want to dominate the tribal belt, as well as against the growing bourgeois element among the tribal people to set their people against the plainspeople.

Such a struggle against all forms of disruption practised by different sections of the bourgeoisie cannot be conducted if the Party adopts the line of building unity with the Congress against the forces of separatism, as is advocated by some comrades, or the line of fighting the Congress in alliance with the forces of separatism, as some sections within the Party would like to do. It can be done only if the Party independently comes before the people with a programme of building the unity of India on the basis of recognition of the real diversity which exists because of its multi-lingual character, the uneven economic and cultural development of its various states and regions and the existence of the various tribes inhabiting the various parts of India.

## **VI. Casteism and Communalism**

37. The same thing applies to the other two aspects of the problem of national integration, or rather the other two fissiparous trends which are talked of in connection with national integration—casteism and communalism.

Just as linguism, provincialism, regionalism and tribal separatism, so have casteism and communalism their roots in the concrete manner in which capitalist development has been and is still taking place in the country. These two phenomena can, therefore, be understood and their concrete manifestations dealt with only through a scientific analysis of the social institutions of the caste and religious community and how they are being changed in the process of capitalist development.

38. Caste is an ancient social institution. It grew and developed on the basis of relations of production existing under pre-capitalist social formations ; as a matter of fact, it was, by and large, a particular form of division of labour in an economy where commodity production had not yet become the dominant feature of social life. Such a form of division of labour being inconsistent with the requirements of commodity production—which began to become dominant in the economy of the country under the British regime—caste became an anachronism. It, therefore, should have ceased to exist the moment commodity production became the dominant feature of the economic life of the country.

39. This, however, did not happen because :

*Firstly*, the new relations of production being developed by capitalism involve acute competition among the various sections of the nascent bourgeoisie. In this competition between different sections of the bourgeoisie, bourgeois elements developing from particular castes have greater opportunities for advancement. It is true that individuals belonging to all castes are able to develop as capitalist farmers, traders, industrialists, government officials, etc. But the number of such individuals is much less among the 'lower' castes than among the 'higher' castes; in the case of such castes as are in the lowest rung of the caste ladder (scheduled castes and scheduled tribes), they are virtually absent. The result is that, by and large, the particular castes which were dominant in the pre-capitalist social formations are able now to appropriate a bigger share of the fruits of capitalist development; they, therefore, continue to be dominant in the new



set-up also. Furthermore, the development of capitalist relations in agriculture and industry leads to the ruination of the common people of the country belonging to all castes, particularly those in the 'lower' castes. Capitalist development does therefore appear to them as a process of enriching the 'higher' and impoverishing the 'lower' castes.

*Secondly*, even though the particular (caste) form of division of labour has ceased to exist, the social consciousness which is crystallised in the manners and customs of the people continue to be caste-oriented. Even those who have broken, and continue to break, the centuries-old rules of caste in relation to their professions, who do not observe the rules of caste behaviour when outside the home, strictly observe the rules of caste in the home and in respect of all social customs and manners.

40. These two factors are not unrelated to, but act and react on, each other. The first generates acute competitions and rivalries between sections of the bourgeoisie belonging to the 'higher' and 'lower' castes in general, and between the various castes in each category. The bourgeoisie belonging to each caste, therefore, seeks to secure advantages for itself at the expense of the other and, to this end utilises the caste sentiment. In doing this, they see a handy instrument in the second factor—the remnants of caste consciousness among the people. Caste consciousness and caste prejudices which exist among the masses are thus turned by the bourgeoisie into caste passions. On the other hand, it is just because caste consciousness and caste prejudices exist among the masses that the unequal development, which is the inevitable companion of the development of capitalist relations, becomes inequality between various castes in a new way. In other words, caste inequality which was the characteristic feature of pre-capitalist society in India is now further strengthened by inequality of development under capitalist development and gives rise to discontent and agitation on the part of various castes in relation to division of jobs and professions, opportunities for development in the lines of industries and trade, etc.

41. The struggle against casteism, therefore, should be based on a two-pronged attack: (a) against all remnants of the inequality between castes which was the characteristic feature of pre-capitalist society—for full equality of all citizens of the country irrespective of the caste into which they are born; for special measures to raise the level of life of those who belong to the formerly 'lower' castes; (b) against the uneven development which is inevitable if the process of modernisation is to take place under the domination of the bourgeoisie—for a just and fair division of all developmental opportunities among the various states, regions, and groups of people. Only by uniting the masses of people belonging to all castes, high and low, for such a two-pronged attack can the evil of casteism be fought and overcome.

42. Far from doing this, the bourgeoisie acts in such ways as to intensify the conflicts between the 'higher' and 'lower' castes. Here again, two sections of the bourgeoisie take two different stands which are contradictory to each other and, in the process, divides the people along caste lines. Furthermore, in the absence of a correct class approach, our own party is, to a certain extent, influenced by these different approaches.

43. The bourgeoisie belonging to the 'higher' castes uses the struggle against casteism as the means through which a formal, juridical equality between all castes is maintained but behind this is continued the real inequality between 'high' and 'low' castes. Such, for instance, is the struggle waged by the 'nationalist' sections in all parties and organisations who demand that reservations and other concessions to be given to the 'backward communities' should be based not on caste but on the economic condition. This argument misses the fact that there are certain castes which, due to historical reasons, have continued to be and still are backward *as castes* and that their backwardness can, therefore, be overcome only if they are helped *as castes* to become equal to other castes. In several other ways too, the formerly 'lower' and 'backward' castes have to be helped to overcome their low standard and backward conditions if casteism is to be liquidated.

44. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie belonging to the 'lower' castes refuses to recognise the fact that, if the inequality of their castes as castes is to be ended, they have to unite with the masses belonging to the 'higher' castes. For, the interest of the masses belonging to all castes, the interests of the country demand the abolition of the caste itself as an institution. The existence of caste consciousness, caste prejudices, discontent on the basis of caste inequalities—all these are impediments in the way of the development of the country as a whole and, therefore, of the development of the 'lower' and 'backward' castes themselves. Caste separatism, therefore, hinders, rather than helps, the advancement of the 'lower' castes themselves.

45. Our Party, therefore, should be vigilant against the ideological offensive launched by the bourgeoisie—either those sections of it which belong to the 'high' castes, or those who hail from the 'low' castes. Here again, the Party should launch a two-pronged ideological offensive—(a) against all forms and manifestations of 'high caste' domination masquerading in the name of struggle against casteism—for special measures to help the 'low' castes to advance more rapidly than the 'high' castes, so that they can shortly be equal to them; (b) against the petty short-sighted approach of the bourgeoisie belonging to the 'lower' castes who fail to see the immense harm done to the 'low' castes themselves arising out of the division of the masses as between the 'high' and 'low' castes. The Party should carry on systematic ideological and practical work among the masses belonging to all castes for eradication of all remnants of caste as an institution and to generate the unity of the masses of the working people through the process of class struggle.

46. The other fissiparous trend which has to be combated—communalism—is related to the religious community which is an institution not peculiar to India. Different religious communities, and even conflicts between them, exist in several other countries. But the problem of relations between different religious communities in India has its own peculiar feature. The two religious communities which may be said to be dominant in

our country—the Hindus and the Muslims—have behind them a history of continuous political conflicts. It is true that history is not a one-sided story of conflicts alone, as was sedulously propagated by British historians; co-operation and brotherhood had developed at various stages between the two communities. It is, nevertheless, a fact that conflicts have taken place between them at various phases in our history. All the more is this true of the days of the British rule when the rulers deliberately followed the policy of ‘divide and rule’. Political and administrative measures to keep them divided, and to incite quarrels between them, were supplemented by the ideological poisoning of the minds of the people by the one-sided distortion of Indian history. The result of all this was that, at the very time when the Indian people were more and more uniting themselves against the British, the relations between the two major religious communities were getting further and further strained. Every time a mass anti-imperialist movement reached the zenith of militancy, Hindus and Muslims were turned against each other; the unity of the anti-imperialist movement was thus weakened. This naturally led to the inevitable partition of India and all that followed the formation of two states on the religious basis.

47. Such a historical development of the relations between Hindus and Muslims—to a certain extent, those between Hindus and Sikhs and Sikhs and Muslims as well—has led to a mixing up of religion and politics. While everybody pays lip service to the modern concept of a secular state, religion, in practice, interferes in the political life of the nation. Extreme viewpoints among the Hindus lead to the concept of Hindu Rashtra which is openly proclaimed by certain organisations. Other religious groups too have given birth to their own variants of the anti-secular concept—Deen Ilahi; the superiority of the Panth; the Christian way of life and approach to all questions, including politics and education; etc. Organisations and parties which base themselves on these anti-secular concepts spring up all over the country and become a menace to the nation. Particularly is this true of the organisations and parties which speak in the name of Hindu Dharma, since not only is their approach anti-secular,

they chauvinistically demand the suppression of the freedom of conscience of minority religious groups.

48. Far from effectively combating these anti-secular trends, the bourgeoisie gives concessions to them and strengthens them. Its leaders do not take a consistently secular stand, but are themselves victims of religious obscurantism. They try to distort the whole concept of secularism : they would have the people believe that, instead of complete separation of religion and politics from each other, secularism means freedom for all religious faiths to equally interfere in the political life of the people. This approach of the bourgeoisie can be clearly seen in such official documents as the report of the Sri Prakasha and Sampurnand Committees referred to earlier. Furthermore, the concession that they give to the communalism of the majority community can be seen in the fact mentioned earlier that, in constituting the National Integration Council, the Central Government had no hesitation in appointing the representatives of the Jan Sangh and Hindu Mahasabha while scrupulously keeping out the representatives of non-Hindu communal organisations.

49. Our Party, therefore, has the duty to fight an uncompromising struggle for the consistent implementation of the principle of secularism. The slightest departure from that principle should be exposed and fought. While defending the right of every religious community whether it is the majority or minority—as well as of those who have no faith in any religion to believe in and practice whatever religion they like or to remain irreligious, the Party should fight against all forms of intrusion of religion in the social, economic, political and administrative life of the nation. Equally opposing the efforts of the leaders of all religious groups to interfere in the public life of the country, we should, at the same time, concentrate the fire on the chauvinistic leaders of the majority religious community—the Hindus. At the same time, we should continue to point out to the minority religious groups that their legitimate rights can be defended and protected only on the basis of a consistent application of the principle of secularism.

## VII. Tasks of The Party

50. It is clear from the above analysis of the concrete way in which fissiparous trends like casteism, communalism, linguism, regionalism and tribal separatism manifest themselves that our Party has to take independent stands on all of them. It will be suicidal for us to tail behind the bourgeoisie under the mistaken assumption that its leaders are putting up an effective and consistent fight against those forces which are disrupting the unity of the nation and preventing its integration. On the other hand, we have to sharply expose before the people the inherent weaknesses of the policies pursued by the bourgeoisie which accentuate the conflict on questions of language, provincial and regional inequality, caste, communal and tribal discontent. Against these policies pursued by the bourgeoisie, we should advance a programme which will help the nation to find proper solutions for all these questions. The elements of such a programme of building national unity are given below :

(A) *On the question of separatism* : We are opposed to all forms of separatism, such as the DMK slogan of Dravidanad, the slogan of an independent Nagaland, etc. We cannot, however, agree to the manner in which the Congress leadership and the Central Government seek to fight separatism. We have, on the other hand, to firmly oppose the tendency shown by them to consider India a unitary state with a highly centralised administration. The twin principles of linguistic states and maximum possible autonomy for the states should be firmly adhered to. Concrete slogans and demands calculated to bring about a consistent application of these two principles should be worked out.

(B) *On the question of language* : We firmly adhere to the principle of replacing English by the regional languages at the state level and Hindi at the centre as official language. The transition from English to Hindi at the centre should be simultaneous with the same from English to the regional languages in the states; the preparation for this transition which

is being made by the centre with regard to Hindi should also be made with all necessary central assistance in the states. At the same time, for the transition period (the duration of which should be decided with the consent of the non-Hindi-speaking regions), English should be given the status of an associate official language. The above guiding lines should be applied to the question of medium of instruction as well, the aim in this respect being as rapid a transition as possible from English to the regional languages with necessary guarantees for a high standard of knowledge in Hindi and English.

(C) *On the question of provincialism and regionalism* : This should be considered as a question of the most rapid reduction of provincial and regional disparities in development. The allocation of funds for developmental plans, location of projects, division of waters, etc. should be made on certain generally-known principles which would ensure that every state and region will receive approximately the share which is its due on the basis of population. As for the demands relating to recarving of the boundaries of states which have become serious in certain regions, all such questions should be solved on the principle of linguistic states whose borders are to be fixed with village as the unit and putting contiguous areas which have a majority speaking one language in that linguistic state.

(D) *The problem of tribal discontent* can be solved only if the Government bases itself on the need for protecting the tribal people from the exploitation of landlord and capitalist elements from the plains. Tribals should be assisted in modernising themselves, but the process of modernisation should be left to the Tribals themselves. The solution will differ from area to area and tribe to tribe; in some places it may be necessary to form autonomous areas within a particular state or region ; in certain other places, even while having no such local autonomy, special safeguards will have to be given to protect the property and social life of the tribal people.

(E) Our Party is opposed to *Casteism*. It, however, cannot endorse the stand taken by the leaders of the bourgeoisie

according to which any step taken to help the 'lower' castes to overcome their low status amounts to casteism. Not only educational concessions, but even reservation in government jobs will have to be continued for several years; the basis of this should be not economic condition but the degree of the hangover of social oppression which particular castes have been subjected to for centuries. At the same time, certain criteria should be laid down in order to fix the stage at which a particular caste may be considered to have freed itself from these hangovers of past social oppression.

(F) With regard to *communalism*, we have to take a firm stand on the principle of secularism and fight against all forms of intrusion of religion in the political life of the country. We should carry on a consistent campaign among the people against the tendency of religious leaders asking their followers to form themselves into political parties and organisations, to vote in a particular way, etc. as a community.

Various concrete questions arising out of the above have to be considered in detail by the National Council in so far as they relate to all-India questions and by the State Councils in relation to provincial questions.



## **Papers Submitted To The National Integration Committee—1962**

### **(a) Definition of Communalism**

Communalism is the tendency to look at administrative, political and economic problems from the point of view of a particular religious community. This should, however, be subject to the following qualifications :

(1) Communalism very frequently took on the garb of nationalism, which was most often possible in the case of the majority religious group. There was also the danger of Hindu culture being equated with Indian culture. It should always be remembered that the best tradition of Indian culture was the freedom the various religious communities enjoyed to lead their own chosen religious life.

(2) In view of the likely continuance of the religious communities for a long time to come, the sentiments and practices of all religious groups should be guaranteed and safeguarded.

(3) The special protection for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes should continue.

### **(b) Note To The Committee**

It was after I gave my tentative proposal, at the last meeting of our Sub-Committee, that Shri Vajpayee gave his proposal for defining communalism. I did not make any comment on it then. Subsequent to the meeting of the Committee, we have had two notes—one from Shri Sadiq Ali and another from Prof. Mujeeb. The latter too attempts to give a definition of communalism; but instead of defining communalism as such (which according to him is impossible) Prof. Mujeeb gives separate definitions of the communalism of the majority and that of the minority.

Having studied all these notes and definitions, I want to offer the following additional comments for the consideration of the Committee.

Why should we attempt at a definition of communalism ? In order that we may get a clear idea of what we are exactly against and then to devise ways and means of effectively fighting it.

The question then arises : With what are we going to fight communalism? What is the ideological basis in which communalism is to be combated ? We are interested in doing nothing which will encourage, doing everything which will discourage, the growth of communalism. But then is there anything that we want to encourage, if so, what is it ? Or, rather what is that should take the place of the communal outlook which is to be eliminated ?

Shri Vajpayee's answer seems to be : "Nationalism". He seeks to contrast communalism to "the common bonds of loyalty to the mother country, its people and their culture and heritage". Any tendency to oppose these "common bonds of loyalty" with "loyalties narrower and/or antagonistic to and subversive of the national entity" is to be deemed communalism.

This, according to me, is incorrect. For, such a definition does not make any distinction between communalism and other fissiparous tendencies. Casteism, provincialism, regionalism, linguism—all these are obviously "loyalties narrower and/or antagonistic to and subversive of the national entity". There would, therefore, have been no sense in the National Integration Council setting up two Committees—one on provincial and regional separatism, another on communalism—and taking the question of medium of instruction out of the purview of both if the approach made by Shri Vajpayee is to guide the Council. As a matter of fact communalism is only one of the "loyalties narrower and/or antagonistic to and subversive of the national entity". Our job is to give a precise definition of what this particular type of "anti-national loyalty" is.

This job can be done only if it is clearly understood that communalism is the negation of one of the essential features of our

political-administrative set-up—*secularism*, which has been clearly laid down in our Constitution. I would like to refer to Articles 15(1) and 15(2) which prohibit “discrimination against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them”; Article 25(1) which guarantees “freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion” ; Article 27 which bars compelling anybody “to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expense for the promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination” ; Prohibition of religious instruction being provided “in any educational institution wholly maintained out of state funds”. The Constitution and the People’s Representation Act also prevent “any candidate or his agent or any other person with the consent of a candidate” from “using or appealing to religious symbols for the furtherance of the prospect of election of any candidate”.

I would also like to mention that our Constitution seeks to maintain full equality not only among the various religious communities, but also between the religious and the irreligious. The third Schedule to the Constitution, for instance, gives two alternatives to the form of “oath” or “affirmation” to be taken by Central and State Ministers, Members of Parliament and State Legislatures, Supreme and High Court Judges. One of these alternatives is for the use of those who are religious-minded and who may, therefore, swear “in the name of God” ; the other to be used by those who are not religious-minded and who may, therefore, “solemnly affirm”.

The spirit of our Constitution is thus the absolute separation of religion from political and administrative affairs—non-interference of religion in political affairs and of administration in religious affairs. Religious faith is purely a personal matter for the person concerned. The State is not and should not be concerned with it. Everybody is free to follow, or not to follow, any religious faith; observe or, not observe, the religious practices of any community. But that should not have any influence on the administration in its dealing with the citizens or of the latter in their relations with the administration.

Whether one is a Hindu, or a Muslim, or the follower of any other religious faith, or an atheist, is not the concern of the administrative and other public authorities. The job of the administration is to see that :

(a) the economic, political and administrative matters are kept completely free from the direct or indirect influence of religious organisations;

(b) No one behaves in such a way as to directly or indirectly deny any citizen the right to follow the precepts of that religious community to which he belongs.

Absolute impartiality as between one religion and another : full protection for the followers of all faiths in the observance of their religious practices; firm determination to allow no religious group to interfere in the economic, political and administrative life of the country—such are the responsibilities of the State. Similarly, it is the responsibility of the religious community and its leaders to cater to the spiritual needs of their followers regardless of whether a particular person belongs to this or that economic or political organisation.

It should be the endeavour of the National Integration Council and this Committee to see that this secular spirit of the Constitution is strictly observed in practice. For, though secularism has been accepted in the Constitution as the basis of our political set-up, its spirit is unfortunately denied in the concrete day-to-day activities of administrative organs. I would like to recall that in the speech which the late Ajoy Ghosh delivered at the National Integration Conference, he pointed out how “the principles of secularism are often tampered with and compromised not only by non-official agencies but even by officials, and some Ministers”. He also pointed out how “the religious orders freely interfere in politics and even compel their followers to vote or not to vote in a particular way”. He, therefore, called on “secular parties” to “pledge themselves to do everything in their power not to mix up religion with politics under any circumstances and on any plea.”

The definition of communalism that our Committee suggests, and the concrete proposals that we work out to combat communal influences, should have as their aim the restoration and strengthening of this spirit of secularism. This, however, is not what Shri Vajpayee's definition does. On the other hand, the definition given by him would help to strengthen Hindu communalism. The direction in which that definition will lead us was brought home to us by Shri Bishan Chander Seth's demand that the Muslims and Christians who have clustered together in sizable numbers in certain pockets should be dispersed. This may well be stretched further and the suggestion made that non-Hindus Plot should be driven away from India. Such an approach is, in essence, not at all different from the two-nation theory advanced by Jinnah.

The basic mistake continued in the definition given by Shri Vajpayee is that it does not accept the secular basis of our State. The definition speaks of 'common bonds', 'mother country', 'its people', 'their culture and heritage', etc. But nowhere is it stated that loyalty to the mother country, its people, their culture and heritage, etc. should have nothing to do with religion but be entirely secular. Underlying the whole definition given by Shri Vajpayee is the concept that the 'Indian nation, its history, culture and heritage' are based on Hinduism. Non-Hindus therefore, should either remain loyal to the 'nation, its history, culture and heritage' based on Hindu Dharma or be considered disloyal to the nation. The practical proposal made by Shri Seth is where such a definition will lead us.

As against these implications of the definitions suggested by Shri Vajpayee is my definition which guarantees us against both types of communalism pointed out by Prof. Mujeeb in his note. It combats the idea which would equate nationalism with the domination of the major community. It also negates the communalism of the minority which takes the ostensible form of defending the fundamental principle of freedom of faith. Making no distinction between majority and minority, it gives to religion its appropriate place, its appropriate fields of activity where the State or political parties should not interfere; on the other hand, it clearly defines the field in which religion is not expected, and will

not be allowed, to interfere. My definition is, in fact, based on that very conception of secularism which has remained an inseparable part of our national movement and which has been incorporated in the various provisions of the Constitution.

It is necessary, in this connection, to point out that the three provisos to my definition are essential for a proper understanding of my approach to the definition of communalism, and to the task of eliminating its influence from our public life. The three ideas contained in the three provisos and the main part of the definition make an integrated whole of what I consider to be the correct approach to communalism. I would, therefore, like to restate and slightly modify what I stated at the last meeting and give the correct approach that should be taken by the following modified version :

Communalism is the tendency to import the point of view of a religious community into the administrative, political and economic problems facing the country – problems which can be successfully solved only from a purely secular point of view. This tendency is opposed to the ideal of building our nation on the basis of secularism and negates one or more of the following implications of secularism:

(a) Complete freedom for all religious communities, and for those who do not believe in any religion, to follow the religion which they like, and to follow no religion at all if they so like;

(b) Absolute impartiality of the administrative organs as between various religious communities, and between the religious and the irreligious. Complete non-interference of the administration in religious affairs;

(c) Special responsibility of the administrative organs to see that religious freedom is not tampered with by any group, particularly by the majority religious community in relation to the minorities, where the possibility of tampering is naturally greater;

(d) Responsibility of all political parties to allow

(i) no activity on the part of administration to interfere in religious affairs, or (ii) religious communities to interfere in political affairs,

(e) Responsibility of the administration and of political parties to see that giving expression to (i) the legitimate grievances of religious minorities in relation to protection for their religious rights if they are under attack, and (ii) of backward communities (including Scheduled castes and tribes) in relation to their social and cultural backwardness should not be considered a communal approach. On the other hand, it should be the responsibility of the State and of political parties to go to the aid of the religious communities when their rights are encroached upon and of backward communities in the matter of raising their social and cultural position.

I understand the apprehension given expression to by Prof. Mujeeb that the acceptance of my definition would "make every religious community feel that it cannot express its point of view if it is in disagreement with majority opinion without being accused of communalism." I, however, submit that the most effective way to remove this fear will be to accept the position that religion is supreme in its own (spiritual) field, while the State and other secular organisations are supreme in mundane matters. Genuinely to accept and sincerely to implement the good old principle of 'unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's, is the only way in which full religious freedom can be guaranteed without allowing religion to intrude into the economic, political and administrative affairs.

## LETTERS TO CHAIRMAN

6th August, 1962.

Mr. Ashoka Mehta, Chairman,  
Committee on National Integration and Communalism,  
New Delhi.

Dear Mr. Chairman,

In the course of our discussions in the Committee, you had asked me whether there is any basic difference between my definition and the definition prepared by Mr. Viswanathan. I had then answered that the latter does not convey the concept of secularism with which we have to fight the evil of communalism.

Having given a little more consideration to the matter, I felt that it is not just an omission of bringing the word 'secularism' into the definition. It may be stated that point (b) of the operative part of the definition conveys the essence of secularism.

A still more important defect of that definition is that it clubs together "religious, linguistic and other narrow considerations" and brings into the definition of communalism the intrusion of all these factors into the political, economic and other fields.

In thus attempting to put all fissiparous tendencies into communalism, it fails to make the distinction between communalism and other fissiparous trends. I would, therefore, like to give below what I consider to be the specific features of each of the fissiparous trends and how each of them has to be fought.

*Casteism* is the tendency to mould the present-day social life of the nation on the basis of caste, the outmoded mediaeval organisation of Indian social life.

In relation to casteism, therefore, it should be the endeavour of the nation to see that the system itself is abolished as speedily as possible. All means of realising this objective, including inter-caste marriages, should, therefore, be adopted ; those who adopted them should be given the maximum extent of co-operation and assistance



At the same time, positive help should be given to those, who belong to the oppressed castes and have, therefore, remained socially, educationally and economically backward to overcome their economic backwardness.

*Communalism* (see the definition given on page 128 in my note of 28-7-62).

*Linguism* is the tendency of one language to set itself above the others. It takes three distinct forms : (a) demand that English should continue as the medium of instruction and the language for official use; (b) demand that Hindi should replace English, thus denying the right of other regional languages to become official languages and media of instruction in the respective states; (c) refuse to recognise the special status which Hindi should occupy as official language to be used at the all-India Centre and look upon it as only one of the regional languages of India. All these tendencies can be combated only if the policy is one of simultaneous transition from English to Hindi at the Centre and to regional languages in the States and if English is kept as a compulsory subject.

*Provincialism and Regionalism* are tendencies which so distort the legitimate demand for the overcoming of provincial and regional disparities as to mean denial of the need for central co-ordination and direction. The remedy for this is not to try to work out a highly centralised economic and administrative set-up, but to (a) fairly and equitably distribute the resources utilised for national development among all the states and regions of the country ; (b) give practical shape to the idea of "decentralisation of power, combined with an effective Centre".

The definitions given above are, of course, not fully, satisfactory. But there is one idea which I would like to emphasise; with the possible exception of casteism, every other fissiparous tendency is a mixture of good and evil.

*Communalism*, for example, has behind it the legitimate desire of every religious community to see that no encroachment is made by the State on freedom of conscience, guaranteed by the

Constitution. In this sense, it is unexceptionable. Particularly is this true of minority religious communities if and when they are under attack from the majority. At the same time, there is another side of it: it divides the people on the basis of the religious communities to which they belong. Furthermore, it distorts freedom of conscience to mean that religion has the right to interfere in secular matters.

Similarly, *linguism* has its positive content to the extent that it emphasises the need to so develop regional languages as to make them official and educational languages. It can, therefore, lead to such a magnificent literary and cultural advance as has never been seen in our history. At the same time, it gives birth to a certain amount of narrow sectarianism which makes each linguistic group think that it is superior to the others. It, therefore, leads to conflicts between the various linguistic groups.

*Provincialism* and *Regionalism* too are expressions of the legitimate aspirations of the people of the various states and regions of the country for rapid development in their economy and culture. To this extent, it is healthy and should be fostered. Any attempt to denounce these provincial and regional demands as opposed to national integration will itself be opposed to integration. At the same time, these legitimate aspirations become disruptive of national unity when they are set against the need for central co-ordination and direction.

But when we come to casteism, there is very little that is positive and healthy. Even here, however, it should be pointed out that the aspirations of the people belonging to castes which have been socially and culturally oppressed for centuries should not be denounced as indicative of casteism. Their desire that they should become equal to the upper castes is legitimate and should be appreciated. Every encouragement should be given to them to overcome all manifestations of their backwardness. But the aim of our efforts for national integration should be to put an end to the caste system itself.

These differences as between communalism on the one hand and other fissiparous trends are not adequately brought out either in Mr. Viswanathan's or in Mr. Vijpayee's definition. I am sure you would consider these points and revise the definition accordingly.

Yours sincerely,  
Sd/- E. M. S. Namboodiripad

### **Language Crisis or National–Political Crisis ?**

The problem of India's educational and administrative language or languages is undoubtedly assuming serious proportions. It has led to a series of political crises in one or another part of the country on one or another occasion, such as

the upsurge in Andhra preceding and following the martyrdom of Potti Sri Ramulu;

the crisis in Bombay City, as well as in the Maharashtra and Gujarat regions, centring around the demand for the formation of Samyukta Maharashtra and Maha Gujarat States;

the prolonged tension in the Punjab over the question of the Punjabi Suba as well as on the relative roles of Hindi and Punjabi in that part of the country;

the clashes that took place in Assam which led to a large number of non-Assamese-speaking people from that state leaving their hearts and homes and becoming refugees outside;

finally, the recent disturbances in Madras which forced the hands of the Congress High Command to accept the principle of equality of all Indian languages to one another.

But is it correct to say, as the author of the book under review seems to imply, that our country is to-day going through a "language crisis"? Is it not true, on the other hand, that India is actually going

through a many-sided crisis, of which the "language crisis" is only a part ?

The view held by the late Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and other leaders at one time was that the crisis being faced by the nation touched not only the language but such facets of our social life as caste and communal relations, the tribal problem, provincial and regional disparities, etc. That was why they talked of the problem of National Integration which covered what were called Casteism, Communalism, Tribalism, Provincialism and Regionalism along with linguism as the forces of disintegration. Smt. Indira Gandhi, the Chairperson of the National Integration Committee set up by the Congress High Command, wrote as follows in her introductory note to the report of the Committee presided over by her :

"In recent years many thinking people have been greatly distressed to note that the fissiparous and separatist tendencies which had seemed to merge in the upsurge of Nationalism during the freedom struggle were again becoming aggressive. It appears as if almost every move in the country is being exploited, by some section or another of the people, for appealing to the narrowest group loyalties..... Starting from the first General Elections, these tendencies have been gaining strength in every election. The reorganisations of States, boundary disputes and the concern over language have played up local pride to limits which verge on the dangerous, from the point of view of National unity."

It was this understanding that led the Central Government to convene a National Integration Conference. One of the participants at the Conference was the late Ajoy Ghosh who, in his speech at the Conference, posed the problem as follows :

"India is today administratively more united than ever in its history. Economic planning is carried out by a Central body. Above all, State power is no longer exercised, as was the case in the past, by the British who were interested in keeping up and accentuating conflicts inside the country. All these factors are favourable for

the consolidations of the unity of the country and of the Nation. Yet, as would be denied by none, fissiparous and disruptive tendencies have grown more alarmingly in recent years. They threaten one of the most precious heritages of our freedom movement—the unity of the nation. Why has this happened? How has this happened?"

Ajoy Ghosh in his speech naturally dealt with the Punjabi Suba, linguistic minorities, status of Hindi and other aspects of what the author of the book under review calls "language crisis". He however did not do this in isolation from communalism in general and Hindu communalism in particular; the grievances of minority religious communities and backward castes; the problem of the tribals; and so on. He on the other hand pointed out how all these (language and other) crises are the result of the basic political weaknesses of the freedom movement in the pre-independence period which have been further accentuated in the post-independence years. The essence of the solution offered by him to the problems of National Integration consisted in "a determined and uncompromising struggle against powerful vested interests"; for, "in the final analysis, National Integration is a problem of democracy and of far-reaching socio-economic transformations".

Absence of this correct approach to the problem of India's language[s] problem, the consequent attempt at treating the problem of language[s] in isolation, detracts from the value of the book as a study of the problem about which we are all concerned.

To make this criticism of the book is not to deny the valuable contribution which it makes to an understanding of how the problem of our National Language [s] developed from stage to stage. On the other hand, the book would undoubtedly help the reader to understand the intricacies of the problem in the limited field in which it attempts to study it. It brings together the story of how the alien rulers of pre-independence India foisted English on the Indian people whose own languages were prevented from developing as they should; how the freedom movement had included in its programme the replacement of the alien language by the languages

of the Indian people ; how the concept arose of Hindi as the link language (rather than as the National language—this latter role was to be taken by the mother-tongue of the people of states formed on the linguistic basis; how the implementation of the above concept of National Language[s] was not applied in practice and how this created a series of intricate problems; etc.

Bringing the story uptodate right up to the developments of 1965 (January-February) the author in his concluding chapter pleads for "the elevation to a sovereign position of the languages of the masses of our people, the ancient languages of our land". One of the appendices added to the book is on "the experience of the USSR" in which the author tries to point out the similarities and differences between India and the Soviet Union.

The book would thus have been an admirable guide to the understanding of India's languages problem if we were concerned with the problem of language alone. Unfortunately however, we are not. The emergence of the problem of languages in our country (as in every other country in the world) is integrally connected with the growth of modern nations which, in its turn, is connected with the development of capitalist society. Let us recall how Lenin formulated the problem of languages and nationalities in the epoch of transition to capitalism.

"Throughout the world, the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with national movements. The economic basis of these movements is that in order to achieve complete victory for commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the home market, must have politically-united territories with a population speaking the same language, and all obstacles to the development of this language and to its consolidation in literature are removed. Language is the most important means of human intercourse. Unity of language and unimpeded development are the most important conditions of a genuinely free and extensive intercourse on a scale commensurate with modern capitalism, for a free and broad grouping of the population in all their separate classes and lastly, for the

establishment of close connection between the market and each and every proprietor, big or small, seller or buyer. Therefore, the tendency of every national movement is towards the formation of national states under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied. The profound economic factors drive towards this goal and therefore, for the whole western Europe nay for the entire civilised world, the typical, normal state for the capitalist period is the national State" ("On the Right of Self-determination").

The problem of language[s] is thus part of the manysided transition from feudel (or pre-capitalist) to capitalist society. That is why the problem of 'linguism' has come to be associated with such other 'problems of national integration' as 'casteism', 'communalism', 'tribalism', 'provincialism' and 'regionalism'. The writer of these lines had occasion to deal with these problems elsewhere (in a series of articles printed in the Sunday Standard in 1963 and in the forthcoming book, "Economics and Politics of India's Socialist Pattern"). His views on this question may, however, be summarised here, since it would bring out what, according to him, are the main weaknesses of the book under review.

(1) The beginnings of capitalist development in the field of Indian economy could be seen long before the British rulers came to India and established their rule here. As Dr. B. B. Mishra points out in his "The Indian middle-classes : their growth in modern times" : "Institutions conducive to capitalist growth were not lacking in India before British rule.... (there existed organisations) comparable to mediaevel European traders' associations which exercised a great measure of autonomy in the regulation of commerce....The Indian traders employed what might be called a sort of managing agency which operated throughout the country....a money economy had developed in India at an early period of her history....The Shroffs, a class of money changers were an ancient community who specialised in coinage and issued drafts (Hundis) or letters of credit against the money deposited with them—a freedom which greatly facilitated the movement of trade."

(2) Parallel to the growth of elements of capitalism in the economic field was the linguistic and cultural upsurge which swept

over the country from the 12th century onwards. Known as the Bhakti movement, it led to a regeneration and development of all the Indian languages. In place of two developed languages, one in the north (Sanskrit) and another in the South (Tamil) and innumerable undeveloped folk languages which had been the pattern till then, a new pattern emerged—the simultaneous development of several languages both in the north as well as in the south. Furthermore, the spirit animating this religious-cultural upsurge was one of revolt "against forms and ceremonies and class distinctions based on birth". This religious revival, says "a well-known Indian historian" quoted by Ramakrishna Mukherji in "The Rise and Fall of the East-India Company" was the work also of the people, of masses and not the classes. As its heads were saints and prophets, poets and philosophers, who sprang chiefly from the lower orders of society—tailors, carpenters, potters, gardeners, shopkeepers, barbers and even mahars (scavengers)—more often than from Brahmins.

(3) The two-fold development of capitalist economic relations and the national cultural upsurge as represented by the Bhakti movement had to face two obstacles :

Firstly, "the limitations arising from the existence of caste, the foundation of the Hindu social system", and other aspects of pre-capitalist society which, together with the despotism of the feudal rulers of the time, created a situation in which "in spite of the potential of a middle-class bourgeoisie development, the immobility of the caste organisation and the despotism of the bureaucracy precluded such a development" (Dr. B. B. Mishra in the above-quoted book).

Secondly, the British Rulers who established themselves in India for over a century and a half arrested the natural process of capitalist development in the economic, political and cultural life of the country. India was transformed into the backward agrarian hinterland of the developed metropolis, rather than itself developing into an independent capitalist society. In order that such a process may be facilitated, the British Rulers preserved and protected the



backward forces of pre-capitalist society in all fields. Above all, the natural development of Indian languages was thwarted by the imposition of English over all the linguistic cultural groups of the Indian people. The natural process of capitalist development leading to the formation of national states was thus distorted into a "United India" whose unity depended on the strength of the British bayonet.

(4) The freedom movement whose growth was partly facilitated by capitalist development which continued (though in a distorted way) under British Rule was therefore objectively an attempt at resuming the thread of capitalist development which had been broken by the establishment of British Rule. The movement was consequently an attack on the pre-capitalist institutions (such as caste society, joint family, inequality between men and women). Its programme included the demands of tenancy and other reforms of an anti-feudal character. The movement for replacing English by the people's own languages in the cultural and administrative fields, leading to the demand for the reorganisation of States on the basis of language, was also integrated into the programme of national freedom.

(5) The leadership of the freedom movement, however, was in the hands of a class (bourgeoisie) which, due to various objective reasons, could not take an uncompromising stand either in the field of social reforms or in that of the national-cultural regeneration. The hold of mediaeval obscurantist ideas and institutions on the bourgeois leaders of the national movement was so strong that a concerted all-sided attack on caste and other precapitalist institutions could not be launched. Nor could it carry on a principled fight for giving all the national languages their due place. As for the demand for the formation of linguistic provinces, the clear-cut line of equality of all Indian languages was replaced by the supremacy of Hindi and the consequent denial of the need for states reorganisation.

(6) These weaknesses of the freedom movement which prevailed even in the pre-independence period got accentuated in the post-independence years when, once again to quote Ajoy Ghosh, "something like an ideological vacuum came into existence. Old

ideas which stirred those fighting for national freedom did not have the same appeal now. No new modern idea had taken their place. In this situation, antiquated and even obscurantist ideas which had been never completely rooted out began to operate on the minds of men. Certain elements made full use of this situation and of the popular mood of frustration and discontent".

It would thus be totally unrealistic to consider the question of language[s] as a question in itself. It should be seen as part of the problem of building the unity of the Indian people belonging to various castes, having faith in various religious beliefs, speaking various languages, etc. into one unified political community. This unified political community has to carry forward the struggle for freedom by consolidating the political independence won in 1947 into a state which completes the democratic revolution and lays the basis of the socialist revolution. It is this that the author of the book under review fails to see.

All the more serious is the author's failure in this respect in that he himself hails from, and is dealing with, a State where the connection between the social reform (anti-caste) movement, the movement for linguistic-cultural autonomy if not independence (anti-north), provincial, regional rivalry of one group of big bourgeoisie against another (the Madrasi against the Marvari-Gujarati) and so on merged themselves into the Justice Party (twenties), Self-respect movement (thirties), the Dravida Kazhakam (forties), and Dravida Munnettra Kazhakam (fifties and sixties). Not a word about these developments in the whole book which looks upon the present crisis as a "Language crisis", rather than as a "National-Political Crisis".

## **Mohan Kumaramangalam On Dogmatism**

I am, according to Sri Mohan Kumaramangalam a “dogmatist”. My criticism of his book on “Language Crisis”, it seems, is “escapist”.

The reason for this characterisation of my person and my comments on his book is that I pointed out the very serious limitations of the effort he was making to isolate the “Language Crisis” of Congress Government’s National Policy as a whole. I pointed out that the “Language Crisis” is only a part of the national crisis whose other forms are the crisis of casteism, of communalism, of tribal separatism, of provincialism and of regionalism.

In making this criticism of his book, he complains, I “distorted both the purpose and the scope of (his) book. Necessarily when dealing with the language crisis and not with other aspects of the crisis in our country’s life, it is all aspects of *this problem* that are discussed and developed. Hence the charge made at the end of (my) review that (he is) looking upon the present crisis in our country as a language crisis, rather than as a ‘national-political crisis’ is a charge which, I feel, is neither fair nor correct”.

I agree that the purpose and scope of his book is limited to the discussion of the language crisis. That precisely is the point of my criticism. It would not, according to me, help the understanding or the solution of even the limited question of language without relating it to the other aspects of what has come to be known as the “problem of national integration.”

I may once again draw the attention of the author of the book to the last paragraph of my article where I pointed out that the language crisis in Tamilnad (with which his book is particularly concerned) is connected with the anti-Brahmin and the anti-north movements which, together with the movement for Tamil language, lie at the root of the DMK.

Does Sri Kumaramangalam agree or disagree with this understanding of the DMK movement (which stands behind the

language crisis in Tamilnad) as given above : Does he agree that the initial form of the Tamilian revolt which culminated in the emergence of the present DMK was the anti-Brahmin movement whose origins should be traced to almost half a century ago ? Does he agree that it was the anti-Brahmin movement that subsequently developed into various forms such as radical social reforms and rationalist thinking represented by the Self-respect Movement; the all-caste Tamilian revolt against North Indian domination; attempts at establishing the superiority of Tamil culture over the Northern, Aryan culture; and so on ?

Does he agree or disagree with the formulation in my article that Madras is a state where “the social reform (anti-caste) movement, the demand for linguistic cultural autonomy if not independence (anti-north), provincial and regional rivalry of one group of big bourgeoisie against another, (the Madrasi against the Marvari-Gujarati) and so on, merged themselves” into the present-day DMK ? If he agrees with it, he will also agree with the utter futility of examining this problem in isolation from the other aspects of the problem on National Integration.

I am rather surprised that Sri Kumaramangalam should quote Togliatti against me. After all, the essence of what Togliatti says is that one should not satisfy oneself with “the consideration of general subjects” but should go on to “concrete problems of our current policy”. This can be quoted against me only if the phenomena of casteism, communalism, tribal separatism, provincialism and regionalism are not “concrete problems”, but “general subjects”. The ridiculousness of the whole thing can be seen from the fact that these concrete problems, together with the problem of language, came before the people and led to the outbreak of so many crises that the late Prime Minister decided to call a National Integration Conference. Would Sri Kumaramangalam contend that it was “dogmatism” and “escapism” on Nehru’s part to consider “linguism” not in itself, but together with casteism, etc. ?

However pleasant and self-satisfactory it might be for Sri Kumaramangalam to dismiss me as a horrible “dogmatist” and

“escapist”, he cannot deny that I have made my humble contribution to the application of the general principles of Marxism-Leninism to the problem of National Integration which is the totality of several “concrete problems of our current policy”. The conclusion arrived at by me is that the various aspects of the problem of National Integration are inter-connected and that none of them can be examined in isolation from the rest.

I hope it would not be immodest on my part to claim that the work I did as a member of the National Integration Committee and the articles and documents written by me on the basis of my experience of this work, are a serious contribution to that very type of serious study of concrete problems for which Togliatti pleads. Sri Kumaramangalam would have done well if he had tried to point out the defects of my study in this respect. That would have done him good as much as it would have done me good. That would also have helped the process of that serious discussion on the problems of National Integration for which I have pleaded in my article on the problems of National Integration published in the *Sunday Standard* in 1963. Let me here quote the relevant para from that article :

“It is proposed in the following pages to make an objective study of the issues involved in what is called the problem of National Integration. It is necessary at the outset to state that the conclusions arrived at by the writer are tentative. They are offered with a view to provoking discussion rather than by way of giving final conclusions. It is hoped that the points made here will be subjected to serious criticism by those who hold different views and that the writer will be able to profit by such serious criticism.”

Sri Kumaramangalam has not cared to make his critique of my work on the problem of National Integration. I do not know whether he considers it so “dogmatist” and “escapist” as to deserve no consideration, no comment at his hands. Does he perhaps consider it beneath him even to read the work of such a horrible “dogmatist”? How otherwise could he have asked me whether I agree or disagree with the concrete detailed solution that he has put forward for the

solution of the language crisis in our country ? After all, I have dealt with the language problem, offered solutions for it, in the course of my articles and documents on National Integration.

From the way he put the question to me, it would appear as if Sri Kumaramangalam considers himself to be the first and only person in India who put forward such propositions as the equality of all Indian languages, the need for elevating the mother-tongue in the states to the sovereign position, the necessity for abolishing the supremacy of English, the role of Hindi only as a like language and not in any position superior to other Indian languages, etc. Let me humbly point out to him that he is a little immodest in making this claim.

These are propositions which have been the basis of the practical work of the Communist movement for the last several years. As for myself, let me quote several parts from my article on National Integration published in the Sunday Standard in 1963 :

“The leaders of the ruling party and several publicists include, along with casteism and communalism, what they call ‘linguism’ in the category of fissiparous trends. As a matter of fact, it is not unusual for some of them to call the demand for the strict application of the linguistic principle to the formation of states and for the fixation of their boundaries as one variant of communalism.

“This, however, is opposed to the best democratic traditions of our freedom movement. The necessity to use the mother-tongue for all political administrative and cultural activities has always been recognised by the leaders of the freedom movement since the days of Tilak and other leaders of the radical national movement. This was further carried forward in the Gandhian phase of the freedom movement. It was in this new phase that the Congress organisation began to transact its business at the State level through the mother-tongue ; to this end it accepted the principle of linguistic homogeneity in fixing the boundaries of provinces for the organisational work of the Congress. At the all-India level too, Hindi was recognised as one of the two languages in which work was to be done, the other being English.

“Our freedom movement respected all Indian languages not as ‘vernaculars’ with an inferior status, as they used to be under the British rule, but as people’s languages which are neither superior nor inferior to any other language. Such an approach to Indian languages has thus become part of the democratic consciousness generated by the freedom movement. It is not disruptive of national unity if those who speak any Indian language desire that their own language should have a status not inferior to either English or Hindi. It is, on the other hand, disruptive of national unity for the enthusiasts and advocates of either English or Hindi to demand that either of these or both should become the national language[s], all the other languages being relegated to the position of ‘regional languages’.

“Recognition of our country as multi-lingual with equality of status given to all the Indian languages as national languages does not, of course, mean denial of the necessity for a common language or languages to be used for inter-provincial communication and all-India contact. Such a language or languages are obviously essential if different linguistic groups are not to remain isolated from one another, if the Indian people are to have a common economic, political and cultural life.

“Such a common language or two common languages, however, cannot take the position which English used to occupy under the British regime. It (they) cannot become the language[s] of administration at any level other than the central ; even at the central level, those who do not know enough of the common language[s] to speak and write in it should be permitted to use their mother-tongue. Business of the administrative and political organs at the state and lower levels should necessarily be transacted in the language of the State. Education too cannot be imparted in the common all-India language[s] but in the mother-tongue. In neither of these respects should the common language[s] be equated with English.

“The recognition of the multi-lingual character of India and of the need for a common all-India language or two all-India languages does certainly raise several practical problems. Linguistic minorities

are bound to exist in every State. They cannot be expected to get their children educated in the mother-tongue of the State in which they happen to live for business or for employment. Nor can they be fluent enough in the language of the State to use it in all their businesses with the Government. Some arrangements for the use of minority languages or the all-India language will, therefore, have to be made to meet the requirements of these linguistic minorities.

“Again, in relation to the work of the Centre, while working towards the progressive introduction of the all-India language as the vehicle of consultation and administration, the use of other Indian languages will also have to be permitted. Deliberations of Parliament and other all-India bodies for consultation will have to be arranged in the way in which it is done in several multi-lingual countries : simultaneous translation of every speech into languages other than the one in which it is delivered. This will enable every member who cannot follow the common all-India language[s] to follow the proceedings and participate in them. (Contrast this with the present position when no less than 20% of Members of Parliament are unable to follow proceedings because they have no knowledge of either English or Hindi.)

“The secretarial and other work of the Centre too will have to be so arranged that, while keeping broadly to the use of the common language[s], the use of other languages is also permitted ; this would require the setting up of adequate machinery for the translation of notes, memoranda, etc. from one language to another.

“In the field of education too, practical problems of a rather difficult nature would arise. For, while it is necessary that the mother-tongue should be used as the medium of instruction even for higher education, every student will have to acquire a high standard of knowledge in the all-India language and at least in one foreign language. Every linguistic area will also have to cater to the needs of linguistic minorities in that area, as well as of those students from the linguistic majority itself who want to take the all-India language as their medium, since they would like to go in for all-India work.



“Providing for all these requirements would naturally raise difficult problems. The question however is : are these difficulties to be stated in order to solve them, or as arguments with which to prevent the recognition of India as a multi-lingual country ? If the difficulties are recognised with a determination to overcome them, everyone of these problems can be resolved.

“Use of the mother-tongue as medium of instruction even at the University level; provision of facilities for linguistic minorities to get their children educated through their own mother-tongue at lower levels and through the all-India language at higher levels; use of the common all-Indian language as medium of instruction even for students belonging to the linguistic majority of a state if they so desire; progressively greater use of the common language by the administrative organs of the Centre even while use of all other languages is permitted and arranged for; setting up the machinery for the simultaneous translation of all speeches delivered in Parliament—all these can be arranged if only the political leaders of the country recognise the multi-lingual character of the country with equality of status for all-Indian languages, even while using one of them as the all-India language. The real question is : Do they recognise India to be a multi-lingual country and the need to assure every linguistic group that theirs is not an ‘inferior’ language but has equality of status with other languages ?”

Several months before I wrote the above, I submitted a note on the National Integration Problem to the National Council of the Communist Party of India in which I said :

“*On the question of language* : We firmly adhere to the principle of replacing English by the regional languages at the state level and Hindi at the Centre as official language. The transition from English to Hindi at the Centre should be simultaneous with the same from English to the regional languages in the states. The preparation for this transition which is being made by the Centre with regard to Hindi should also be made with all necessary central assistance in the states. At the same time, for the transition period (the duration of which should be decided with the consent of the

non-Hindi-speaking regions), English should be given the status of an associate official language. The above guiding lines should be applied to the question of medium of instruction as well, the aim in this respect being as rapid a transition as possible from English to the regional languages with necessary guarantees for a high standard of knowledge of Hindi and English”.

The above passage with some modifications and several additions has been included as item 18, changes in the state structure, outlined in the programme of my Party. Ideas not dissimilar in content have also been incorporated in the programme of the Party to which Sri Kumaramangalam belongs. To conceal all these facts and to claim that it was Sri Kumaramangalam who for the first time offered “a solution for the language crisis” is, to say the least, the height of arrogance.

Anybody who is unprejudiced and patient enough to study what I have written on the problem of National Integration will see that I am the last person to deserve the epithets used by Sri Kumaramangalam against me. It will, on the other hand, be recognised that I have given thought to the many-sided problem of National Integration which I have tried to understand through painstaking study of its different aspects. It is this study that brought to me the conclusion stated in my critique of Sri Kumaramangalam’s book. That conclusion, it may be recalled, is that—

“It would be totally unrealistic to consider the question of language[s] as a question in itself. It should be seen as part of the problem of building the unity of the Indian people belonging to various castes, having faith in various religious beliefs, speaking various languages, etc. into one unified political community. This unified political community has to carry forward the struggle for freedom by consolidating the political independence won in 1947 into a state which completes the democratic revolution and lays the basis for the socialist revolution.”

This probably is not acceptable to Sri Kumaramangalam. If so, he would better try to challenge my conclusion by doing what precisely is suggested by Togliatti—making a serious study of such

“concrete problems of our current policy” as casteism, communalism, tribal separatism, provincialism and regionalism, as well as their relation to the linguistic-cultural factor. I would have respect for Sri Kumaramangalam if he had done this and if, on the basis of such a painstaking study of the problems of National Integration, he were to prove that I am such a horrible “dogmatist” and “escapist” as he now calls me without any proof.

## Our Mission

**Jyoti Basu, Editor, PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY**

**Central Organ of C.P.I.(M) \***

*Despite the massive attack against our Party by the Government of India and the detention without trial of about a thousand of our leaders and active workers, we take legitimate pride in being able to publish People's Democracy as the central organ of our Party. This has been made possible by the help and sympathy which we have received in abundance from our Party members and sympathizers. We are confident that we shall continue to receive such support in the future also.*

### Why People's Democracy ?

We have chosen the name PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY for three very compelling reasons :

- (i) We have set for ourselves the immediate task of achieving a People's Democratic State by replacing the present State which represents the interests of a handful of vested sections of society.
- (ii) An ignorant or designing Home Minister has described this objective as 'Peking's prescription' and poured venom on it.
- (iii) The concept and basic ideas of People's Democracy have been rejected by the Dange group of revisionists.

Our Party considers the objective of People's Democracy as a necessary and noble aim the realization of which will pave the way to putting the country on the road to Socialism. Such a State

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\* This was a signed Editorial written by Jyoti Basu and appeared on the front page of the first issue of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Weekly, dated June 27, 1965.

will represent the interest of the workers, peasants, middle classes and the non-monopoly national bourgeoisie which will not rely on imperialism to build our economy.

The leadership in such a combine will be in the hands of the working class. This new State will replace the present State of Capitalists and landlords dominated by the big capitalists and monopolists who are collaborating with imperialist capital in pursuing the capitalist path of development.

The ignorant and designing Congress Home minister has denounced our Party as a treacherous party because, among other things, we have proclaimed as our objective the achievement of PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY which is purported to be a Chinese prescription.

But since when has it become a crime to adopt ideas and institutions from outside India if they are conducive to our interests? Fortunately it has not been the tradition in India to shun revolutionary and progressive ideas in struggling for freedom and building up our country.

*Need I remind the philistine Home Minister that neither the tri-colour flag nor parliamentary institutions for instance have been handed down to the rulers from the Ramayana or Mahabharata. Apart from revolutionary ideas and traditions of Europe, even our colonial masters made their contributions to many ideas and institutions which our rulers cherish in India.*

But the concept of People's Democracy was in existence in the world Communist movement before the Chinese revolution and our Party adopted it before the Communists came to power in China.

## **THE REVISIONIST LINE**

The concept of People's Democracy has also created a gulf between us and the Dange group of revisionists who have rejected it particularly because they were averse to accepting the idea of working class leadership in the alternative State and Government which will replace the present State and Government.

According to them, the present State is the organ of the class rule of the national bourgeoisie as a whole. But the leadership of this State is not in the hands of the big bourgeoisie though they wield considerable influence on the Government.

The revisionists, therefore, dream of effecting fundamental changes under the leadership of a section of the Congress representing the national bourgeoisie which will oppose monopolists and condescend to share power with the working class. Thus it is not a question of individuals or groups of Congressmen joining the democratic front, it is their objective to work for some sort of a coalition government with a section of the Congress party and in this combine the working masses to begin with will be junior partners. They are afraid to visualise working class leadership lest the national bourgeoisie is frightened.

It shall be our persistent endeavour through our columns to debunk such revisionist theories and misleading ideas in order that the people may realise the true nature of revolutionary tasks which have to be carried out and thus prevent the working masses from tailing behind the Congress Party, its Government and the bourgeoisie.

Our weekly will be guided by Marxism-Leninism and the decisions of the SEVENTH CONGRESS of our party held in Calcutta. We are aware that vigorous ideological struggles are essential in order to free the masses from the influence of bourgeois ideology and draw them to the positions of scientific Socialism.

Our ruling class distorts the Marxist doctrine and uses the weapon of anti-Communism in order to isolate us from the democratic forces. It shall, therefore, be our purpose to expose and fight anti-Communism through the columns of this paper in the interest of the nation.

### **With The People**

We do have an important mission to fulfil and we are publishing our journal at a time when not only the Communist

party has been attacked by the Government but democracy, rule of law, parliamentary institutions, free and fair elections have all been assailed. Unable to solve the crises which it has created and afraid of the mounting protest and resistance of the people, the Government is taking recourse to such despicable measures.

*Our weekly will mirror the trials, tribulations and struggles of the masses of our peoples. It will reflect their true interests in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres. It will help to raise the consciousness of our people and to expose the anti-people, undemocratic measures of the Congress Government.*

We are also aware that contradictions exist and will arise again and again between the Indian bourgeoisie and the imperialists. Therefore the Congress Government will find itself opposed to the imperialists on various issues in the economic and political spheres as also on question of world peace and anti-colonialism.

Whenever such situations arise and the Government takes a stand against imperialism, we shall not hesitate to lend support to such measures in the interest of our people, whilst entertaining no illusions of united front with the Congress Party.

Our weekly will place facts and truths before the people about ourselves and our policies as against the slanders and lies which have become the stock in trade of the Congress rulers and their servile Press. We are confident that Goebbels' 'big lie' theory adopted by the Congress rulers will fail much sooner here than it failed in Germany and truth will prevail.

Our paper will be not only an instrument for propagating our views but also for unifying and organising our party throughout India. It shall be our bounden duty to listen to the views and criticism of our readers in order to improve our paper and carry out the tasks which we have undertaken to discharge.

## The Gap Our Weekly Will Fill \*

E. M. S. Namboodiripad

*We have very great pleasure in joining the ranks of political weeklies dealing with international and national problems on an all-India basis.*

*We are sure that the people will recognize in us a paper which is an urgent necessity. The particular point of view which it will be our privilege to represent has so far remained unrepresented in the journalistic world.*

It is more than a year since the statement of the thirtytwo members of the formerly-united National Council of the CPI gave a call for the repudiation of the Right-revisionist leadership of Dange and his colleagues.

That call was then denounced by the entire bourgeois and revisionist Press as the “splitting action” of a small minority of “pro-China” Communists. The claim of those thirtytwo members of the national Council that they represented the will of the majority of the members and sympathizers of the Party was derided and ridiculed.

The columns of the central English weekly and the provincial weeklies and dailies of the once-united Party (which the revisionists continued to control) were full of attacks and slanders against what they called the “pro-China splitters”.

While these attacks made by these “official organs” were used by Home Minister Nanda to denounce Communists as “traitors” and to put them behind the bars, the point of view represented by the champions of struggle against revisionism had no forum through which these base slanders could be

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replied. They had to satisfy themselves with whatever publicity was allowed to them in the bourgeois Press, apart, of course, from a few smaller weeklies and, after a time, a daily in one of the languages.

### **Repeated Successes**

*Despite these handicaps, however, the cause which they represented—struggle against revisionism—has registered success after success. The reason for this lies in the fact that they represent truth, while their opponents are the champions of falsehood.*

It must now have become clear to all truthful observers that the majority of those who belonged to the once-united Communist party of India are with what is termed in the daily Press as the “Left wing” of the CPI. All the claims made by the revisionists in their “Organisational Report”, presented to their Congress held in Bombay, have been proved to be nothing but outright lies. The Right-revisionist leaders themselves have had to admit in their review of the recent election in Kerala that the bulk of the Party members and the masses loyal to the Party had shifted their loyalty to the “Left”.

That this is not an exceptional position in Kerala but is indicative of the general trend will be clear to all who objectively examine the position in such strong centres of the Communist movement as Andhra, West Bengal, Tamilnadu and Punjab. The Right-revisionists can, at best, claim the support of one-fifth of the total members who at one time belonged to the united Communist Party of India.

It is nevertheless this minority in the Communist movement of India who claim to represent the entire movement and who, through their “official organs”, claim to be giving their interpretations of current developments in India and abroad from the point of view of India’s Communist movement.

Many of the fraternal Communist and Workers’ Parties had believed the lies and slanders spread by this small minority to be the real voice of India’s Communist movement. Many of them

must have done some rethinking after they heard about the brilliant electoral victory of the real CPI in Kerala. They, however, have even now no means of familiarizing themselves with the genuine views of those who represent the majority of India's Communist movement.

The same is true of those non-Communist democrats inside India who want to familiarize themselves with the standpoint of India's genuine Communist movement. They, too, had to take whatever is written and spoken by the Right-revisionists in their "official organs", as the voice of India's Communist movement.

### **Struggle Against Revisionism**

*People's Democracy* will try its utmost to fill this gap. It will try to express the point of view of those who are carrying on a determined struggle against Right-revisionism within the Communist movement and firmly set India's Communist and workers' movement on the correct path of Marxism-Leninism.

We would do our utmost to carry on a firm and determined struggle :

- \* *For the unity of the World Communist movement* through a principled struggle on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, and it will be carried on in a dispassionate manner.
- \* *For united action of the entire World Communist movement* against colonialism, for genuine disarmament, for full and complete ban on all forms of nuclear tests, destruction of all nuclear and atomic stockpiles, etc.
- \* *For securing peaceful and honourable solutions of India's disputes with her neighbours*, particularly with China and Pakistan—disputes which have continued to do great damage to India's national interests and given a big handle to imperialist Powers in their efforts to dictate their terms to us.
- \* *For firm and determined struggle against the landlord-bourgeois ruling circles of the country* on every issue that affects the life of the people—economic, national-cultural,

social and political—even while showing no hesitation in supporting those particular measures of the ruling classes which weaken imperialism and internal reaction even to the slightest extent.

- \* *For the political-organisational line of building strong united trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and organisations of all other sections of the toiling people, as the only sure way of weakening international and internal reaction.*
- \* *For further strengthening and rebuilding the Communist party of India free from revisionism and all other alien trends— trends which are incompatible with Marxism-Leninism.*

In discharging these tasks, we know that we will have to contend against the ideological offensive not only of the landlord-bourgeois ruling circles, but also of the Right-revisionists who, through their various media of publicity, are trying their best to disrupt the unity of the Communist and working class movement.

*We are, however, confident that the large mass of our working people, all those democrats who from their own experience have seen the necessity of unity against Congress rule, will give their sympathy and support to us in this struggle.*

### **Appeal For Support**

It was their sympathy and support that helped us to launch this venture. It was their generous financial help which enabled us to make necessary arrangements for starting the paper, even while the mass of our leaders and comrades who could have helped us in this regard are being detained by the Government without trial.

We are sure that they will continue to give this sympathy and support, so that we may continue to bring out the paper to the advantage of the entire working class and democratic movement in the country.

## Release Our Comrades \*

*In the early hours of the morning of December 30, 1964, nearly a thousand of our Party's leaders and activists were arrested in a countrywide swoop and detained under the Defence of India Rules. To this day, neither the Government of India nor its Home Minister has been able to give one valid reason to justify the arrests and detention. Nor has the Home Minister dared to accept our demand that the arrested Communists be brought to trial in a court of law. All the fairy-tales he cooked up to defend the indefensible have already been exposed for what they are both by our leaders who are behind the bars and by those who are outside. Six months after the arrests, with all the more firmness we assert : the detentions are totally unjustified, they should not continue for another day.*

*This is not a demand made by us and our friends alone. Liberal democratic opinion in the country has unequivocally condemned the arrests as militating against the Constitution and rule of law and a violation of all democratic principles. Even many Congressmen have found it difficult to defend the Government's action.*

*In many of the jails, the treatment meted out to these political detenus is indescribably shocking. Invidious classification, no proper food and clothing, lack of medical aid, inadequate or no family allowances, overcrowding in cells and barracks—the list runs on. A number of detenus in various jails have fallen ill due to these conditions and the tragic death while in detention of B. D. Parab, veteran trade union leader of Bombay, has shown the extent of the callousness of the Government and its vindictive attitude towards its political opponents. It is a shame that such jail conditions continue to exist eighteen years after independence.*

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\* Published in the FIRST ISSUE of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", June 27, 1965, Central organ of the C.P.I.(M). Quotation from the Document covered under Item No.1 of this Volume also appear in this Document.

*Contrast this with the treatment given to Sheikh Abdullah and his colleague who have been detained in a posh bungalow in one of our finest hill stations with his own cook and bearer and what-not, with all freedom to move around in the town. This the Government of India justifies in the name of the past service to the nation of the Sheikh.*

*Many of our leaders and activists who are today kept in miserable conditions in jail have done better service to the country and the people than Sheikh Abdullah—why only Sheikh Abdullah, better service than even most of the Congress leaders who are the rulers of India today.*

*WE DEMAND that our comrades be released immediately—there is no justification for keeping them behind the bars for one more day.*

*WE DEMAND that as long as they are detained, they should all, without any discrimination, be given special class treatment and all other amenities and prompt medical attention.*

*WE DEMAND that immediate orders be passed for the granting of allowances to the families of the detenus with retrospective effect.*

On January 1, 1965, Union Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda made a broadcast speech over All-India Radio in which he sought to justify the countrywide arrests of Communists which had taken place two days earlier. Not having a single fact to advance, he had to necessarily resort to fabrications, distortions and political arguments. On January 7, five members of the Polit bureau of our Party, P. Sundarayya, M. Basavapunniah, A.K. Gopalan, P. Ramamurti and Harkishan Singh Surjeet, in a letter to prime Minister Shastri from the Viyyur Central Jail where they were then detained, replied to these charges made by the Home Minister and exposed the hollowness of his case.

### **Nanda's Fairy-Tales Cannot Hide The Truth**

**PATH TO SOCIALISM :** Nanda said in his broadcast that the object of our Party is to promote an internal violent revolution "to synchronise with a fresh Chinese attack." The members of the Polit bureau stated in reply : "Except for cooked-up cock and bull stories which are all figments of the imagination and

have been the traditional stock-in-trade of the ruling class whenever it was faced with opposition to its policies he (the Home Minister) had no concrete proof to advance. In the circumstances he sought to make worse stories sound plausible by doling out political arguments.

“He said that the Calcutta Congress of the Party held in 1964 ‘laid stress on the necessity of pursuing the non-peaceful path to socialism and characterised any talk of peaceful path in this country as nothing but self-deception and deception of others.’ A more brazen-faced lie cannot be imagined. We challenge Shri Nanda to point out any passage in either the Draft Programme or the Political-Organisational Report or any resolution or documents adopted at the Congress to substantiate his claim.”

After quoting the two paragraphs from the Programme dealing with this question, the members of the Polit bureau continue : “An identical passage can be found in the Draft Programme that was released to the Press as early as March 1964 and later published in printed form and also translated and published in many languages. This Draft Programme was discussed for months at all levels of the party, local, district and state conferences, before its final discussion at the Calcutta Congress. As stated above, there has been no change in this section dealing with the means of achieving People’s Democracy and socialist transformation.

“It should also be pointed out that an identical passage was put forward in the Draft Programme drafted by P. Ramamurti and Bhupesh Gupta for discussion at the Vijayawada Congress in 1961. This was bodily lifted into the alternative draft by S. A. Dange, G. Adhikari and P. C. Joshi. The Vijayawada Congress, however, did not discuss these drafts and forwarded them to the National Council.

“It should also be stated that a similar formulation is found in the draft programme of the Dangeite National Council and their Bombay Congress did not change the formulation in any way.”

“All these documents have been published and sold in the country. And hence this clear and unambiguous statement could not have escaped the attention of Shri Nanda or his Central Intelligence. It is not fortuitous that Shri Nanda has chosen not only to conceal this clear and unambiguous statement about the means of transition but actually sought to justify his stand as stated above. For the truth would knock the bottom out of the political arguments he seeks to build for his case.”

Nanda also said in his broadcast that the Calcutta Congress of the Party amended Constitution adopted at the Amritsar Congress in which the possibilities of peaceful transformation to socialism had been emphasized. “Shri Nanda out to know,” say the Polit bureau members, “that the Constitution of the Communist party deals with the structure of the party, the functioning of its organs, duties and rights of members, etc. It does not deal with the aim and objects and the means of achieving them.” After narrating how an extraordinary situation arose when the preamble came to be inserted in the Constitution after the Palghat Congress in 1956 decided to keep in abeyance the current Party programme and the two subsequent Congresses at Amritsar and Vijayawada could not adopt any new Programme, they continue : “Now that the party has adopted a full-fledged and detailed Programme which clearly defined the aims and objects as well as the means, as stated above, the need for the stop-gap arrangement by way of a preamble to the constitution disappeared and hence it was deleted from the Constitution to restore it to its normal form and content at Calcutta.

“That the Home Minister should give a sinister meaning to this simple procedure only shows the dire straits to which he has been reduced in his attempt to prove a patently absurd story.”

**Armed Struggle** : Nanda said in his speech that our party has been engaged in preparing for armed struggle. This statement, say the five members of the Polit bureau, “can only be based on reports of agent-provocateurs and their forged or

cooked-up documents.” Pointing out to Paragraph 112 of the party programme which deals with the question of interim slogans and utilising “all opportunities that present themselves of bringing into existence of governments pledged to carry out a modest programme of giving immediate relief to the people,” they comment :

“It is in pursuance of this understanding and line that the Party gave the slogan of defeating the Congress Party in the coming Kerala election and forming an alternate Government of left parties. In the face of this can anyone believe that our Party is preparing for armed struggle? It is clear that the Government wants to prevent such a Government from coming into existence: Hence, all the slander and cooked up stories.

“By the way it may be pointed out that we do not believe that the Home Minister honestly believes that the Programme adopted at the Seventh Congress bears a ‘striking resemblance’ to the thesis adopted at the Second Congress in 1948. Anyone even cursorily reading the two documents can see the gulf that divides the two in their analysis of the Indian situation and the tasks facing the Communist party. Can the Home Minister concretely point out that ‘striking resemblance’?”

### **India-China Dispute**

Nanda again referred in his broadcast to the India-China border dispute. The members of the Polit bureau state : “As early as 1959, at the meeting of the National Council at Meerut our Party had adopted a resolution that the area south of the McMahon Line, which was under Indian administration should be in India. As a matter of fact this position was reiterated in the alternative resolution by P. Ramamurti at the meeting of the National Council towards the end of October 1962 after the Chinese forces has crossed the McMahon line.

“However, our Party’s acceptance of the India-China boundary as disclosed by the Government of India does not solve the problem. We have to reckon with the existence of a



dispute with China over the boundary. It is our firm conviction that no military solution can ever be found to this problem and that a political solution by peaceful negotiations will have to be found. This we urge in the interests of our own people and the country.

“True, China has not accepted the Colombo proposals in toto; what is to be done under the circumstances? Statesmanship does not consist in drifting and allowing the deadlock to continue. For, quite apart from the larger cause of peace and Afro-Asian solidarity, the continuation of the deadlock brings immense harm to our country and people.

“The Tenali convention of our Party met when it was reported that Sirimavo Bandaranaike had enquired whether India would consider it a fulfilment of the Colombo proposals if the Chinese withdrew the civilian posts in the demilitarized twenty-kilometre area in Ladakh. There were indications that the Government of India was inclined to agree.

“In the circumstances, Tenali Convention noted these developments and urged the Government of India to take the initiative by directly contacting the Chinese Government and explore the possibilities of starting negotiation on this or any other basis acceptable to both India and China.

“Only a prejudiced person, or who is deliberately bent upon creating prejudices, can see in this resolution an attempt to blame anyone. Nothing of the kind. What we were and are interested in is breaking of the deadlock. India has diplomatic relations with China. Then what is wrong and dishonourable in exploring a mutually acceptable basis for starting negotiations through these diplomatic channels? On the other hand, we are convinced such an initiative on India’s part will add to its prestige as a nation seeking ways and means of breaking the deadlock and ensuring peace.

“And what is the alternative? Endless missions to the USA, Britain and other countries seeking arms aid and missions from

Britain and the USA to our country which tell us what we require and do not require for our defence, certainly are no edifying spectacle which adds to our prestige. And in the bargain, with the diversion of a thousand crores to the military budget, we have a spiral of inflation, everrising prices and intensification of misery and poverty for the common people. And yet in spite of all this, it is admitted on all hands that the problem has no military solution.

“Shri Gulzarilal Nanda’s dubbing us as anti-national and shutting us up behind prison bars will not deter us and we will continue to urge this course. We know that some day or other the Government of India will come to the realization of the need for a peaceful negotiated political settlement and when that realization comes, the Government will explore the basis acceptable and honourable to both for starting negotiations. Voices in support of this as the only sensible course have been raised during the last few months from Sarvodaya leaders like Acharya Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narain to others including Congress members of Parliament. It would be the height of absurdity to dub them anti-national and pro-China because they advocate this course.

“Shri Nanda states that the object of the Party now is to promote an internal revolution to synchronize with a fresh Chinese attack destroying the democratic Government of India.

“Any sane man would see that if this is true then we must be anxious that there should be no settlement of the border dispute with China, we must be anxious for the mounting of tension and for a renewal of armed clash between the two countries. But, in the same breath, he blames us for urging the Government of India to take the initiative to break the deadlock and explore a mutually acceptable basis for starting negotiations on the border dispute. If this is done, obviously, the possibilities of armed clash would disappear. Why should we advocate such a course, if we are interested in a renewal of armed clash ?

“Shri Nanda can only resort to such ridiculous absurdities and contradictory arguments for he had to justify and unjustifiable case.”

Nanda charged that the party receives “other forms of assistance”. He did not specify what these other forms of assistance were, says the letter and adds: “But under the inspiration of official spokesmen, newspapers have carried the canard that we are receiving financial assistance through the Bank of China. This story has been going on for the last two years. Even in Parliament innuendos were made to this effect.

“For over two years now, the Special Police has been investigating the affairs of the Bank of China. The Finance Minister has been announcing from time to time that after completion of the investigation, the findings would be placed before Parliament. And yet in the last session, the Finance Minister announced that the Government considers it would not be in public interest to place the findings of the investigation. If these allegations which the Government allowed to spread, had been borne out by the investigations, is it not highly in public interest to let them have the findings that some people in our country’s public life have so debased themselves as to sell themselves to a foreign Power ?”

*Why The Attack ?* The members of the Polit Bureau write : “The real purpose behind this attack came out, though unconsciously, when the Home Minister said ‘they have been expecting their followers to organise a massive agitation to create an atmosphere of disorder in which the party can resort to violent methods.’”

“And later on he says that the Government could not allow a party ‘to disorganise economic life generally’.”

“We have openly called upon our people to carry on agitation against the anti-people policies of the government on the question of prices, for stringent action against hoarders and blackmarketeers, for dearness allowance to workers, against

revision by Government in favour of employers of the Bonus Commission recommendations, against the eviction of peasants, for distribution of waste lands to the peasants and for real land reforms. This call is embodied in the resolution of the Calcutta Congress. This agitation is intended to secure relief to the people and for the reversal of the Government policies which continuously go on heaping more burdens and inflicting more misery on the people. It is a figment of the imagination to state that these are intended to create an atmosphere of disorder.

“May we ask who has disorganised the economic life of the country, with soaring prices, and foodgrains not available to the common people at reasonable prices ? And who allowed this state of affairs to grow in the country ? Did we make the condition in Kerala where the people had to go without any food-grains for days, and even now have to be satisfied with just 4½ oz of rice and 6 oz of wheat per day in the rural areas ?

“It is clear that the Government is bent upon inflicting more misery and starvation on the people. Even the Fourth Plan memorandum does not hold out any hopes that the prices will be reduced. It only talks of efforts to arrest any future rise. But even during the last two months since that memorandum was accepted by the National Development Council, prices have continued to rise. The Government knows that under the policies it is bent upon pursuing it cannot even arrest the prices from rising. It is to strike terror into the hearts of the masses who in the coming period will inevitably oppose these policies with greater vigour that the Government has made this attack on our Party.

“It is for the same purpose that the Government has been continuing the state of emergency two years after virtual ceasefire has come into being. The records of the use of the powers invoked under the Emergency is the clearest proof of this purpose. In every struggle of the workers, peasants and the common people against rising prices and exploitation, the Defence of India Rules have been freely used for detaining

without trial the active workers. But the hoarders and profiteers went scotfree. Even when employers locked out factories illegally and continued it after the lock-out was declared illegal, they went on starving the workers with a view to forcing them to submit to their terms. The Government took no action. But strikes are suppressed on the plea that there is Emergency!

“It is clear that all these slanders are nothing but an attempt to conceal the real purpose of the attack on our Party. In this there is nothing original. The very slanders that Dange indulged in when he could not face up to the political charges that we made against him have been repeated.”

## **Indians Demonstrate Before Prime Minister Shastri in London Demanding withdrawal of D.I.R. and National Emergency in India \***

Holding placards demanding an end to Emergency, Indians in Great Britain demonstrated before Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri when he arrived at Marlborough House for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference on June 17.

A memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister on behalf of the Indian Workers' Association, Great Britain, said, "To continue Emergency rule in peace-time and to put people in jails indefinitely without trial is not only alien to democracy but also a flagrant violation of the spirit of the Indian Constitution. We, therefore, demand an immediate end to the Emergency rule in India and restoration of full civil liberties. We also demand that all political prisoners should be released immediately or brought and tried before the courts of law where the Government should substantiate its charges."

In a Press hand-out the same day, the Association explained the reasons for its protest :

- Although more than two-and-a-half years have elapsed since the border clashes ceased, the Emergency was being continued.
- Hundreds of political prisoners were being kept in jail under the DIR depriving them of any recourse to justice.

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\* Published in *PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY* July 4 1965

- Emergency and the DIR were being used to suppress the just demands of the Indian people such as against food shortage, high prices, heavy taxation, unemployment and corruption.

The Press release stated : “The Government has put political leaders in jails without trial and levelled serious charges and accusations without proving them. By doing so the Government is acting as the prosecutor, judge and jury at the same time. This is a challenge to the conscience and integrity of every Indian who believes in civil liberties and democratic rights. We, therefore, appeal to the Indian people to rise up to the occasion and challenge the government to prove in a court of law that the political leaders in jails are a threat to the security of India.

“If this is not done, then, in our opinion, the biggest threat of them all, not only to the security of India but also to democracy, will be the men responsible and the Government whose policies after seventeen years of independence have landed us in economic chaos and political isolation.”

## 1965 - "Blackest Year" for India : Civil Liberties Convention in Bombay (Mumbai) Demand Release of Political Prisoners \*

*The inaugural session of Bombay Civil Liberties Convention in the evening of June 12 marked a new stage in the struggle for civil liberties and democratic rights which are being brutally attacked by the Congress Government. Addressing the largely attended session, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee George Fernandes, well-known trade union leader of the city, touched the very core of the problems that citizens of India are living with.*

"It is unfortunate but true that in no other country, claiming to be democratic, does individual liberty suffer so much as in India," he said.

*"Unfortunately, in India we have the sad and sickening spectacle of the Government of a party equating itself to the nation and often considering an act against the ruling party's interests as an act against the security of the State, and any danger to the ruling party's interests as a danger to national security."*

"How this thinking can ultimately lead to the destruction of democracy in India and the gradual introduction of a fascist State was demonstrated by the recent events in Kerala. First, the Communists who posed a real danger to the interests of the Congress party in that State were arrested under the DIR. And when even these mass arrests coupled with the propaganda that

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", July 4, 1965.



every arrested person was an agent of Communist China failed to give the Congress party a majority in the elections to the State Assembly, then the newly elected Assembly was dissolved without even being given a chance to meet to find out if any of the groups in the Assembly could form a democratic government. And all this in the name of an 'Emergency' that does not exist."

The thoughts and experience of every democratic-minded citizen in India were echoed when Fernandes expressed : "The Civil Liberties Association must no more confine its role to that of an annual debating society or a statement-issuing body. It must become a live and vigorous organization that will fight to preserve civil liberties and individual freedom.

"Whenever the State transgresses the individual liberty of the citizen, the Civil Liberties Association must be there not only to raise its voice of protest but to give all assistance—legal and monetary—to the victims of the transgression. In fact, it should, with assistance from trade unions, political parties and other peoples' organizations, launch mass movements to preserve civil liberties and thereby save democracy." S. B. Kolpe, a noted journalist and Secretary of the Preparatory Committee, made a detailed report on the activities of the Bombay Civil Liberties Committee.

S. A. Dange inaugurated the Convention.

N. C. Chatterjee, President of the All-India Civil Liberties Union, delivering his presidential address characterized 1965 as the "blackest year" for the country from the point of view of civil liberties.

### **Threat To Democracy**

"One-time leader of the opposition in Parliament, A. K. Gopalan, is behind the bars, the opposition in various State Legislatures is beheaded by the Executive on suspicion. The Sanker Ministry in Kerala had set the pace by detaining Members of the Legislature on the eve of a no-confidence

motion against it. Nanda followed it up by dissolving the Kerala legislature itself after the verdict of the electorate had gone against him and the people had rejected his judgement that leaders of a political party were traitors.

*“Today more than a thousand leaders of eminence and workers are detained under orders of the Central Government, the various State Governments, the District Magistrates and even the Commissioners of Police. On the pretext of Emergency, powers have been assumed by the executives to end democracy itself. Democracy cannot survive at the mercy of the Executive.”*

Pointing out to the fate of the letter A. K. Gopalan send to him from jail, Chatterjee said, Gopalan had asked him to examine what action could be taken against the Government for withholding the letter. He voiced the demand that the Government would have to answer for the violations of fundamental rights after the Emergency was over.

Freedom of speech and of the Press were the first casualties of the Emergency, he said. The “tyranny of the Executive” has assumed menacing proportions. Fundamental rights had been reduced to mere “pious platitudes”. The Kerala Governor’s action in not allowing the leader of the largest single party to form a Ministry and in not summoning the legislature were unconstitutional.

“If the democratic process is allowed to be subverted,” Chatterjee said, “the parliamentary system of Government itself will end and a totalitarian rule will emerge.”

Voicing the demand for release of all political detenus, Chatterjee added : If the public trial of detenus was not considered proper, the Union Home Minister should refer their cases to a tribunal comprising of the Chief Justice of India and M. C. Mahajan and S. R. Das.

Concluding his address, Chatterjee appealed to all democrats in India to rise in defence of the democratic way of life and demand an immediate ending of all detentions without trial.

The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Prof. Arvindan Nair.

### **Resolutions of The Convention**

The resolutions passed at the Delegates' Session on June 13 demanded amendment of those articles in the Constitution which infringed the fundamental rights of the citizen ; sought protection of freedom of the Press against detrimental acts like "official secrets", "privileges of the legislative bodies", and other irksome, restrictive processes brought under the plea of Emergency and the DIR to bear on the day-to-day free and fearless functioning of the Press.

Dealing with present-day control and management of the Press, the resolution stressed : "Freedom of the Press assumes particular significance in this country since the ownership and control of many newspapers are in the hands of big industrial and trading monopolies who have large vested interests. They are generally identified with the ruling party."

The resolution demanded that control should be divested from ownership and that editorial direction of the newspapers should be vested in a committee with effective representation to working journalists.

Another resolution protested against the undemocratic act of the Kerala Governor in dissolving the State Legislature even before it had an opportunity to meet and called upon the Union Government to hold fresh general elections in Kerala.

Other resolutions demanded an end to Emergency and release of all political prisoners detained without trial.

The resolution on "Treatment of Political Prisoners" strongly protested against the discriminatory and vindictive treatment meted out to the majority of political detenus by classifying them as Class II.

*The resolution demanded immediate and total abolition of classification and placing of all political detenus, irrespective of*

*any distinctions whatsoever, in one class, with identically uniform and proper conditions of detention which should be in keeping with their dignity and status as political leaders.*

It further held the Government which had detained them without trial, responsible for maintaining their families at an adequate standard of life and to that end sanction to the family of each detenu a satisfactory monthly allowance as also an allowance for the detenus to meet their personal expenses in jails. The resolution on "Civil Liberties and trade Union Movement" condemned the enactment by the Government of such legislations which deprive the working class movement of its fundamental rights of collective bargaining and strike.

The resolution on "Police Firing" protested against the recurrent use of fire-arms by the Police and demanded judicial enquiry into all police firings.

The Convention mourned the death of B. D. Parab while under detention.

The Convention decided to form a Bombay branch of the All-India civil Liberties Union, with George Fernandes as its Chairman, S. B. Kolpe and M. N. Nair as Secretaries and Prof. Arvandan Nair as Treasurer. It also elected a 26-member committee.

The two-day convention concluded with a public rally.

Speaking at the public rally, S. M. Joshi, Chairman of Samyukta Socialist Party, voiced that a non-party effort should be made to rouse the people to fight for the preservation of civil liberties. He said that civil liberty had a connotation larger than that of merely ensuring that no one was arrested and detained without trial. It meant, he said, ensuring equality and justice – political, social and economic.

He said, though India was officially in a state of Emergency, the common man did not feel its existence in his daily life. Nor was it reflected in the functioning of the ruling party and the

Government. The ruling party was, however, using the “Emergency powers” for partisan ends, he stated.

Madan Phadnis, explaining the resolutions passed by the Convention, called upon all the political parties and democratic citizens of India to unite their efforts to realise the demands set forth in the resolutions.

## Food Crisis is deepening in West Bengal : 1965 \*

C.P.I.(M) West Bengal State Committee

### Place Six Point Demands

*Contrary to the tall claims of the Government, the food situation in West Bengal is worsening day by day with alarming reports pouring in from all parts of the State.*

THE rationed area covers only the six million people of greater Calcutta. Outside this area live more than thirty million people and there rice is being sold at Re.1.30 to Re. 1.50 per kg. and even more. And in many places, rice has just vanished from the open market.

For the non-rationed area where the needs of more than thirty million people have to be catered to, there is either no arrangement at all or only inadequate number of modified ration shops. In quite some cases rice is not available even from the few modified ration shops.

*Taking advantage of the absence of any Government control over the trade, the big jotdars, big traders and speculators have successfully managed to withhold the stocks of foodgrains and create an artificial scarcity in the open market.*

As if in sympathy with rice, prices of other daily necessities of life such as mustard oil, kerosene, pulses, etc. have also registered a sharp and steady rise.

This sharp rise in the prices of essential commodities has created an abnormal situation in the State. Eighteen years of

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", July 4, 1965.

Congress rule had already created a number of distress pockets in some districts. This year's food crisis is leading to the extension of these distress pockets.

### Starvation Deaths

In 24-Parganas, the second largest district of West Bengal, starvation and semi-starvation conditions prevail in the Sundarbans area. The price of rice reigns very high and Government arrangements for modified rationing and test relief do not even touch the fringe of the problem.

Several cases of deaths from starvation have already been reported from this area. Lalmoni, a woman agricultural labourer of Lalkhali village in the Sundarbans, after going without food for a number of days, went to the house of the local jotdar to beg some rice from him in lieu of labour. But before the jotdar who went out to bring the paper to be signed by her, came back, Lalmoni died.

There is no work for agricultural labourers in the distressed areas and they are migrating to Calcutta in search of jobs. And in Calcutta they face even worse days.

Competent observers have already said the food crisis this year will be even more severe than last year. If prices are so high just three months after the arrival of the new crops in the market one can easily imagine what the situation is likely to be in the lean months of September-October.

*The food crisis in this State has become acute at a time when, according to the claims of the Government, West Bengal has produced a bumper crop in 1964-65.*

According to a statement by the Chief Minister (who is also the Food Minister) in March this year, total production of cereals in 1964-65 amounted to 6.1 million tons. If we put the consumption need in this State at 6.2 million tons (this is also the Government estimate), the internal deficit is only 100,000 tons.

Even this deficit is wiped out if it is remembered that the Central Government has undertaken the partial responsibility of feeding the people of greater Calcutta.

A recent statement by Union Minister of Food said that 100,000 tons of rice had already been supplied to West Bengal, 200,000 tons more would be sent; 190,000 tons of wheat had already arrived from Central stocks and the remaining 510,000 tons would soon be coming.

Why then has the food situation taken a serious turn this year? One has to search for the causes in the anti-people and pro-vested interest policy of the Congress Government—the policy of appeasing and protecting the big jotdars, big traders and speculators.

### **Revisionist Approach**

The revisionists in West Bengal have a different approach. According to the Dangeites, the Congress Government has adopted a progressive food policy, the hoarders and blackmarketeers are conspiring to sabotage this progressive policy, so the Government has to be helped to implement its policy and for this, the main attack has to be on the hoarders and black-marketeters.

Thus the Dangeites want to absolve the Government of all responsibility and divert the people from the path of struggle against the anti-people policies which have generated hoarding and blackmarketing, scarcity and famine.

A statement issued by the leader of the Dangeites in West Bengal, Bhowani Sen, on June 22 is remarkable in many respects.

The statement is significantly silent over the anti-people policies of the Government. None can have any objection to a campaign against hoarders. In fact, this is one of the demands put forward by the Communist Party and other leftist parties.



*But the fight against the hoarders can be effective only in the background of a developing people's movement against the Government policy of protecting the big hoarders.*

The big hoarders with ample protection from the Government, have already hoarded stocks for sale in the blackmarket. Despite a good deal of fanfare, the Government has not caught a single big hoarder.

In the name of unhoarding, what the Government is doing is to harass the common people who have stocked a few kilograms of rice against the rainy day. The policy of the revisionists of not attacking the Government's pro-hoarder policy but only demanding de-hoarding would in effect enable the Government to launch another round of attack on the people.

### **Statewide movement**

The West Bengal State Committee of the Communist party of India has, in a recent statement, called upon the people to build a strong Statewide movement to expose and defeat the anti-people food policy of the Congress Government. Preparations are already on for launching such a movement.

The demands on the basis of which the movement for food and against high prices are to be developed include among others :

- (1) Introduction of State trading in foodgrains for ensuring fair price to the cultivators, breaking the monopoly grip of the traders and supplying food to the consumers at cheaper rates.
- (2) Introduction of statutory rationing throughout West Bengal. Other essential commodities, besides rice, wheat and sugar, like mustard oil, pulses, kerosene should be made available through the ration shops.
- (3) Test relief work in all the distress areas.

- (4) Radical land reforms in the interest of the peasantry, as this is essential for increasing food production.
- (5) Immediate steps to enhance the emoluments of low-paid employees.
- (6) Unhoarding of hoarded food stocks at the disposal of big hoarders, with the help of popular and democratic organizations.

## **Organise Mass Struggle for Food and Against High Prices \***

THE CONGRESS Government has created chaos and disorder in the country, with food articles disappearing in the blackmarket and prices of all essential commodities skyrocketing beyond the reach of the common man. Limitless suffering is being imposed on the vast masses of the people whilst a handful at the top are minting millions under the protective wings of the Government. India has become the paradise for the hoarders, profiteers, blackmarket tycoons, adulterators, swindlers and parasites of every description. The power of these enemies of society has increased manifold due to the Emergency and the infamous Defence of India Rules which are used to curb and crush all movements of the people against injustice and the imposition of heavy burdens.

The government has by its disastrous policies increased our country's dependence on the Western powers, particularly on the US imperialists for food and 'aid'. This is the path along which the country's sovereignty and independence are being steadily corroded.

The people are made to pay dearly for the sins of the government in not carrying out land reforms in the interest of the peasantry, in not helping them with adequate irrigation facilities, fertilizers, loans and credit on easy terms, in not organizing state monopoly of wholesale trade, in not severely dealing with hoarders and profiteers and in not building up an effective distributive machinery.

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\* *Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", July 25, 1965.*

Reports are pouring in from Kerala, West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, UP that prices of food articles are beyond the reach of the people. Rice is selling at Re.1.50 to Rs.2 per kg. in West Bengal and in Kerala ; the prices of vegetables in West Bengal have reached record figures due to the operation of profiteers and traders ; fish, meat, eggs and mustard oil are articles of rarity for the common Bengali home. West Bengal has also been plunged into darkness due to non-availability of kerosene.

These run-away prices are prevalent at a time when the Government of India has claimed that "the overall picture of the foodgrain production during 1964-65 (i.e., 87.2 million tonnes according to recent estimates) is very encouraging and a sizeable increase over the previous record level of 81 million tonnes attained in 1961-62".

Further, according to Government estimates there is bumper rice crop and import of foodgrains from the West as never before.

The pressure of the people and the fear that the situation may get out of control was the impelling reasons for the Government to announce some measures like formation of State Foodgrains Corporation, credit squeeze (at least on paper) for grain-traders and rationing in some places. But bluster, propaganda announcements and tinkering with the problem cannot provide food to the hungry millions nor keep in check the fantastic rise in prices.

There is no way out of the crisis except to undertake long- and short-term plans of genuine land reforms, supplying more fertilizers and cheap credit facilities to the peasants, more irrigation projects and full utilization of the present ones, nationalization of banks, state monopoly of wholesale trade, guaranteed fair price to growers and buyers by means of subsidies, efficient distribution machinery, statutory rationing on a large scale, inter-State movement of food articles under Government control, exemplary punishment to hoarders and profiteers. This must be part of the overall planning for the country for every sector. Hence Prime Minister Shastri's

reported panicky acceptance of the World Bank's "advice" to concentrate on agriculture for a year before the Fourth Plan is no panacea for the all-sided crisis of our economy.

The Government will not take even some immediate measures unless the people compel it to do so. All sections of the people, the workers, peasants and middle classes must unite to resist the bankrupt policies of the Government. The people are learning through suffering and trials that no basic lasting solution is possible with the present Government continuing on the saddle. But they also know from experience that massive movements in the towns and villages under the aegis of the Left political parties, workers, peasants, students and women organizations can compel the Government to concede some of the pressing demands of the people and to give them relief.

## **The Huge Demonstration In Kerala Demands Release Of Communist Detenus\***

*The demonstration that was held in Trivandrum on July 11 1965 immediately after a deputation of the Kerala Committee of the Communist Party of India led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad submitted the memorandum to the Governor demanding the release of Communist detenus was one of the most militant and colourful seen in recent days in the capital city. (Briefly reported in our last issue.)*

The memorandum was signed by over three lakh persons in the course of the last one month.

At a Press Conference which he addressed before he went to meet the Governor, E.M.S. Namboodiripad said that the memorandum and signature collection was only the first stage of a big campaign planned for winning the release of the Communist detenus.

The next step in the programme can be seen when Home Minister Nanda arrives in Trivandrum on July 26 to attend the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Kerala. Asked what this step would be, E.M.S. said it would be decided by the extended meeting of the State Committee to be held on July 12 and 13.

By the time the deputation returned after meeting the Governor, processions from all over Trivandrum district had arrived at the Museum Junction and led by 150 representatives from all the districts who had brought the signatures to the capital, this huge demonstration began its march through the main streets of the city. A large contingent of women participated in the demonstration.

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", July 25, 1965

For the next couple of hours all that Trivandrum city heard were slogans like "Murderer of democracy, Nanda Resign", "History will not forgive the assassins of democracy" 'Release people's leaders", "Increase the rice ration", etc. Thousands and thousands of people gathered on pavements on both sides of the road to see the colourful demonstration with placards, Red Flags and banners and photographs of the leaders who are in detention.

The demonstration culminated in a mammoth public meeting in the Pazhavangadi Maidan which was addressed by E.M.S. Namboodiripad.

In the course of his speech, E.M.S. said that if there was any sincerity behind the oft-repeated appeals of Government leaders for unity to face the grave situation faced by the country, the first thing they should do is to create the right atmosphere by releasing the leaders of the main opposition party.

Democrats cannot but oppose this detention without trial of Communist leaders. It is not a question of what Nanda says or what Nanda feels, said E.M.S. There are courts of law in this country. And as long as Nanda does not produce the detained leaders in the courts and prove the charges against them, the people will not believe what Nanda says.

Nanda arrested the Communist leaders in the name of the border problem. But Nanda does not have the courage to prove what we have done against the interests of the nation.

Recently President Radhakrishnan said that the border problems should be settled peacefully. "You can imagine what would have happened to me if I had said this a month ago", said E.M.S.

Why cannot India solve her dispute with China through negotiations in the same way as is being done in the case of the dispute with Pakistan, asked E.M.S. Just as British Prime Minister Wilson put forward his proposal on the Kutch issue, Nasser has put forward a proposal to settle the India-China dispute. The Government should accept this proposal.

The proposal which Nasser has now made is contained in the resolution which we adopted at our Tenali Convention. We had then demanded that India and China should find a basis acceptable to both to start negotiations to settle the dispute peacefully. Even Shastri has now begun to say that the dispute cannot be settled by force. Yet our leaders are kept in jail.

Speaking in detail about the food and other acute problems of Kerala, E.M.S. said that the people can be rallied to face these problems only if the leaders came back into their midst. "We do not believe" he said, "that this can be done by signature collections and memoranda alone. This is only the beginning of a long campaign". He appealed to the people to build a powerful movement to get the leaders released.



## **Release Sundarayya Unconditionally**

**"People's Democracy", August 8, 1965**

It is over a week now since P. Sundarayya became ill in Hyderabad Jail and was admitted to the Osmania Hospital.

He started vomiting in the morning of July 23 and by 3 O'clock in the afternoon he was vomiting blood. The Jail Superintendent sent him to the Osmania Hospital for admission and as the abdominal bleeding continued and became more severe, the Jail Superintendent sent Dr. J. Sessa Reddy, another detenu and a nephew of Sundarayya, to the hospital to be with him.

When the bleeding was continuing even at 9.30 p.m. the doctors found that Sundarayya's condition was serious and decided on blood transfusion. After the blood transfusion, the Hospital Superintendent Dr. Ramesh Pai announced that his condition had improved and that blood pressure and pulse had returned to normal.

Since then his condition has not deteriorated but the doctors, including the Hospital Superintendent, have expressed the opinion that Sundarayya needs to be operated on and have suggested that this should be done in Moscow where he had his earlier operation.

E.M.S. Namboodiripad and Jyoti Basu met Sundarayya in the hospital to discuss arrangements for the medical treatment.

Jyoti Basu was arrested and detained immediately on his return to Calcutta and was not able to consult expert medical opinion there.

E.M.S. Namboodiripad is planning to meet the Prime Minister in New Delhi on August 2 to urge upon him to order Sundarayya's release immediately so that arrangements can be made for his treatment at the most suitable place.

The Andhra Pradesh Committee and District and Town Committees of the Party, mass organizations in the State and many Panchayats have sent telegrams to Prime Minister Shastri, Home Minister Nanda and Chief Minister Brahmananda Reddy demanding Sundarayya's immediate release. Meetings are being held all over Andhra Pradesh to press the same demand.

Telegrams are pouring into the office of the Andhra Pradesh Committee of the CPI from all over the country and also from Party leaders detained in jails in other States enquiring about Sundarayya's condition.

Members of Parliament Dinen Bhattacharya, S.M. Banerji and Bhupesh Gupta have called on the Government to release Sundarayya.

N. Rajshekhara Reddy, Pillalamarri Venkateswarlu, Dr. Raj Bahadur Gour, G. Yellamanda Reddy, Arutla Kamala Devi and other leaders of the revisionists in Andhra met Sundarayya in the hospital and afterwards Rajshekhara Reddy in a statement demanded that Sundarayya should be released immediately.

The President of Andhra Pradesh Republican Party and the Civil Liberties Committee have also issued a statement demanding Sundarayya's immediate release.

Among others who called on Sundarayya in the hospital were Chief Minister Brahmananda Reddy, Finance Minister M. Chenna Reddy, Speaker B.V. Subba Reddy, Chairman of the Legislative Council Gottipati Brahmayya and Health Minister Y. Sivarama Prasad.

### **Govt. of India Warned**

At a public meeting held in Secunderabad on July 31, E.M.S. Namboodiripad demanded *immediate* and *unconditional* release

of Sundarayya so that he may have proper medical attention in a free and congenial atmosphere. He warned the Government of India and Home Minister Nanda in particular that they would be responsible if anything happens to Sundarayya. E.M.S. asserted that the CPI and Sundarayya himself would not agree to any conditional release which amounted to humiliation. He appealed to the people to develop a massive movement to force the Government to release Sundarayya *unconditionally*.

## S. V. Parulekar \*

### Condolence Message On His Death In Detention Sent By Communist Party of India (Marxist) \*

With deep sorrow we announce the death in detention of S.V. Parulekar, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

A detenu of the Congress Government since November 7, 1962, Parulekar had a heart attack on August 3 and died immediately afterwards.

Elected first to the Central Committee of the Party by the Second Congress in 1948, Parulekar was elected to the National Council by the Fifth Congress of the Party in Amritsar in 1958 and again by the Sixth Congress of the Party in Vijayawada. He was elected to the Central Committee by the Seventh Congress in Calcutta in October - November 1964 while he was in detention.

Parulekar is also among the oldest leaders of the All-India Kisan Sabha — having been its General Secretary once and a member of the Central Kisan Council since then. He was also at one time Assistant Secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress.

His is the second death in the jails of Maharashtra — the first was that of B.D. Parab. The Congress Government has to answer for a lot to the people.

We send our heartfelt condolences to Godavari Parulekar who is also in detention since November 7, 1962.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) dips its Red Banner in homage to the departed leader.

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, August 8, 1965.

## Salute Calcutta \*

Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", August 8, 1965.

The people are fighting against a conspiracy hatched between the British-owned tramway company and the West Bengal State Government to impose another additional burden on their hard pressed shoulders.

### Conspiracy

That it is a conspiracy no one doubts any more. Only a few days ago, the State Minister for Transport had announced that the State Government had rejected the company's proposal to abolish the second class in trams and "rationalize" tram-fares. But soon it was known that the Government had fallen in line with the company's proposal. Even then the date from which the new fares were to be introduced was kept secret and only on July 25 the notification was issued saying fares would be collected according to the new rates from the next day.

Explaining the Government's *volte face* the same Transport Minister said that the new measures were being taken in the best interests of the citizens. He wanted the people to believe that for once the British monopolists were forgetting all about the company's balance-sheet, profits and dividends and giving priority to the best interests of the citizens by reducing the fares in most of the stages. How can the Congress Government which has the best interests of the citizens alone at heart reject such a benevolent move by the tramway company ?

But from what the Minister said further, it was clear that the benevolence of the British company would increase its revenue by Rs. 25 lakh a year through this so-called rationalization of fares and the concern of the Government for the best interests of the people would be shown in using the entire repressive

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\* This Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY" is on the movement against rise in Tram fare and against repression and for release of the Political detenus.

machinery of the State apparatus to collect this Rs. 25 lakh from the citizens for the British company.

The plea of the Government that the new rates would help it to nationalize the tramway company in 1971 by setting aside the part of the increased revenue in a reserve fund for paying compensation at the time of nationalization is not a plea taken seriously by anybody, Since 1951, every time the fare was increased, this plea has been put forward and yet there is not a single paisa in this reserve fund.

### **No Compensation**

The more important question is why this company should be paid any compensation at all. In the years that it has existed and has been fleecing the citizens of Calcutta it has made millions of rupees in profits and exported it to Britain. Why should the people be made to pay again through their noses to pay compensation to this company which has already robbed the people of many times more than whatever it invested originally. If the Indian Constitution does not permit it, amend the Constitution. The Indian Constitution is meant to protect the interests of the Indian people not, at the sacrifice of these interests, to protect the wealth of British monopolists who have been looting this country for more than two centuries.

The path the Congress Government of West Bengal has chosen is the path of protecting British wealth and allowing it to swell by picking the pockets of the citizens of Calcutta.

Their pockets have been picked so much in the last few weeks by the hoarder, the blackmarketeer, the profiteer, there is nothing much left there. They have had to cut down on the food and clothing of their families, they have had to deny nourishing food and even milk to their children. And so when the Government decided to heap still more miseries on them so as to swell the profits of the British company, the people had perforce to say : *Enough, Not A Paisa More!*

That is the resistance we have been witnessing in Calcutta in the last few days, the people defying the terror machine of the Congress Government.

## Repression

The Government has imposed Section 144 on Calcutta and surrounding areas, it has misused the Defence of India Rules and swept into jail the leaders of the Left parties and mass organizations leading the people.

It has imported armed constabulary from neighbouring States and mobilized its own police force to the full and told them to ruthlessly suppress the popular movement. The result is that the people, especially the students, are being brutally beaten up on the streets of Calcutta and even inside colleges, offices have been entered into and their staff assaulted, tear-gas shells are thrown indiscriminately whenever the police feel like doing so, firings on demonstrators have been resorted to and hundreds have been arrested, many of them remanded into police custody on various charges, others let off on bail.

But the resistance of a people who have no other way out but to resist cannot be crushed with such measures.

The Left parties had proposed to the Government to at least postpone the introduction of the new fare-scheme till the tramway company's financial affairs were scrutinized by a commission, but the Government arrogantly rejected this demand and the Left parties had to call for the boycott of trams, refusal to pay the new fares, the hartal on July 30 and now the General Strike on August 5.

The demands of the people are simple:

- Postpone the new fare-scheme pending the enquiry proposed by the Left parties;

- Stop police repression and withdraw Section 144;

- Release the arrested;

- Withdraw all cases instituted in connection with the people's movement.

*People's Democracy* pledges all support to the popular movement for winning these demands.

## Resistance Movement Against Rise in Tram Fare in Calcutta \*

### A Day-by-Day Chronicle

**JULY 26** : Not one of 415 trams are operating in Calcutta today—the tramway workers are on a complete strike in response to the call jointly given by the Tramway Workers' Union (BPTUC) and the Tram Mazdoor Panchayat (HMS) to protect against the introduction of the new fare-scheme.

**JULY 27** : Popular resistance begins. Early in the morning, volunteers of the Left parties and hundreds of school and college students with their flags and posters took up their positions at all important street corners.

They raised slogans and urged tram passengers not to pay the enhanced fares. Innumerable meetings are being held right on the tram tracks. Tram passengers are responding favourably to the appeal of the volunteers.

### Police Imported from Outside

Government has mobilized its entire State machinery to crush the movement. Armed police pickets and home guards are all over the city in large numbers. The daily press has reported that in addition to this full mobilization of its own machinery, the Government has telephonically requested the neighbouring States of Bihar and Orissa to send immediately six companies of armed police forces for stand-by duty in Calcutta. These reinforcements are expected to reach the city by day after tomorrow.

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, August 8, 1965.



In an attempt to break the morale of the people, the tramway company, with the help of the Congress, has hired about a thousand persons at a daily rate of ten rupees per head to go around in the trams and purchase tickets paying the enhanced fare. The Company had adopted such tactics at the time of the anti-fare-increase movement in 1953 also.

Students under the leadership of their Action Committee are playing a vital role in the popular movement.

At 11 o'clock this morning, students of the Surendranath College came out and began picketing on the tram-line. This demonstration was quite peaceful, yet the police made a sudden lathi-charge on the students. People in the area were agitated by this unprovoked police attack on the people. Trams had to be withdrawn after that.

The students then formed into a procession and marched to the Vidyasagar College. Here the police broke into the College premises and made a brutal lathi-charge. Many students were severely injured but they stood their ground and the trams had to be withdrawn completely from North Calcutta area.

The protest demonstration then began in front of Calcutta University. University students joined the other assembled students. Here again, the police made a lathi-charge. In other centres also, the police were wielding lathis. With all that, trams had to be withdrawn from the whole city by 2 p.m.

### **Students' Strike**

To protest against the police brutalities of the day and against the increase in tram-fare, the Action Committee of students has called for a strike on July 28.

July 28 : The students' strike has been very successful.

About 6,000 students from various institutions gathered at a meeting inside the University campus. After the meeting, the students formed into a procession and began marching to the Government Secretariat at Writers' Building. By this time, trams from most of the routes had been withdrawn.

At Esplanade, the police stopped the students' demonstration and indulged in an orgy of violence. The students were mercilessly assaulted. Among the many injured were Bimal Kar Gupta and Biman Bose, both Vice-Presidents of the Bengal Provincial Students' Federation.

After lathi-charging the main body of the demonstration, the police began chasing the people who were in the area. A large number of the people took shelter in the near-by divisional office of the Life Insurance Corporation.

### **Attack inside Office**

What happened inside the building is best described by the statement issued in the evening by the Joint Secretary of the Calcutta Division Life Insurance Employees' Association. He has stated that a police squad entered the office at about 2.30 p.m. while work in the office was going on normally and pounced on the employees.

An employee, injured by the police beating, rushed to the Divisional Manager's room to seek safety. Orders were then issued to close the gates of the office as a measure of security. But the members of the staff who tried to close the door were again beaten and about 20 persons were injured.

The Joint Secretary's statement has charged the police with firing three tear-gas shells inside the office premises, even in the air-conditioned underground basement and with hurling brickbats at the building, breaking window panes.

Another section of the demonstration squatted before the tramway company's office in Mission Row and dispersed only after about two hours.

In Gariahata, South Calcutta, about 2,000 persons started picketing trams at 1.30 p.m. and immediately afterwards all the tram cars in that area were turned back to the depots.

The police also resorted to a lathi-charge on demonstrators in front of Sealdah Railway Station and injured a number of

persons including opposition member of the Calcutta Corporation Prasanta Chatterji.

### **Call for Hartal**

To condemn the police action of the day, nine Left parties have jointly called for a hartal on July 30.

At a rally on the Maidan in the evening, Amar Basu of the Forward Bloc (Marxist) presiding, leaders of the Left parties condemned the police lathi-charge on the students earlier in the day.

They reiterated the Sangram Samiti's demand for a high-power commission to examine the tram-fare rationalization scheme and pending this enquiry staying of the new scheme. They appealed to the people of Calcutta not to pay the increased fares and to carry on the agitation till the Government and the tramway company rescinded their joint decision to increase the fares.

Abdul Halim of the CPI moved the resolution which was seconded by Nikhil Das of the RSP.

Up till this evening, arrests in Calcutta and Howrah in connection with the fare-rise resistance movement number more than 700.

July 29 : Calcutta woke up this morning to find that the Government has imposed section 144 on the city and suburbs banning all processions assembly of five or more persons. This morning Calcutta presents the picture of a besieged city virtually under the control of armed police forces.

### **Arrests of Leaders**

Early in the morning, 22 leaders of the Left parties and mass organizations were arrested and detained by the Government under the Defence of India Rules. Jyoti Basu who was not in the city then was arrested on his arrival at Dum Dum airport from Hyderabad later in the evening.

The fare-rise resistance movement has taken on a massive character and has spread to the entire city. The most serious

incident of the day took place around the University's new Senate building following police attack on students after their meeting inside the University campus.

For three hours, College Street was the scene of one of the most brutal police actions during this movement. More than 500 armed policemen had been posted there to organize this terror against the people, and apart from the lathi-charges and assaults, the police used nearly a hundred rounds of tear-gas shells. The students and demonstrators sought safety in various places and tried to protect themselves and this was what was later characterized by the Press as "pitched battle" and "barricades".

Though not of such an intense nature, such incidents took place all over the city and by mid-day all the tram cars had been withdrawn. Six tram cars and one police jeep are said to have been burnt during the day.

#### **Vindictiveness of State Govt.**

The United Left Front leaders in a statement have strongly protested against the promulgation of orders under Section 144 in the city and parts of 24-Parganas district and demanded its immediate withdrawal.

The statement referred to the arrests of political leaders and workers and said that it showed how vindictive the State Government had become and also the extent of the shameless collusion between the Government and the tramway company. The statement demanded the immediate release of the arrested political leaders and workers and appealed to the people to observe the hartal of July 30 peacefully.

The AITUC, West Bengal branch of the SSP, and the United Citizen's Committee Municipal Association representing main opposition in the Calcutta Corporation have in statements sharply criticized the police action to suppress the movement against the fare-rise and strongly protested against the arrests of Leftist leaders.

The Central Joint Committee of the tramway-men has appealed to workers and employees of all departments to abstain from work on the day of the hartal.

JULY 30 : Calcutta city is paralyzed, the people have magnificently responded to the call for hartal. Trams, buses and taxis are all off the road, shops are closed everywhere and attendance of offices is so thin as to be negligible

### **Successful Hartal**

In the early hours of the morning itself, train services were held up in two sections by people squatting or demonstrating on the tracks. The police opened fire at two places—one at Gobra on the Sealdah-Balligunj line and the other at New Barrackpur Halt on the Sealdah-Bongaon section. Three of those who sustained injuries in the firing died later.

In the industrial belt, factories remained idle due to non-attendance of workers and other staff.

Over 200 persons were arrested during the day bringing the total number of arrests to over a thousand.

Chief Minister P. C. Sen has described the people's agitation as a "political movement". He has said that it is not necessary to appoint any commission to enquire into the finances of the tramway company. He has also declared that the new fare-structure will stay.

Leaders of the nine Left parties have in a statement congratulated the citizens of Calcutta for their response to the hartal call. They reiterated that the peaceful movement of resistance to the tram-fare-rise would continue until the authorities agree to keep the question of fare-revision in abeyance pending proper scrutiny of the Company's financial position by a high-power commission.

### **Call for General Strike**

The BPTUC, UTUC, HMS and the Rashtriya Sangram Samiti have called on the workers in the State to go on a one-day general strike on August 5.

These organizations have demanded, among other things, the cancellation of the decision to revise tram-fares pending scrutiny of the Company's finances, withdrawal of the orders under Section 144 and release of all the arrested persons.

The United Front of Left parties have jointly appealed to the people to respond to this call of the trade union organizations.

The West Bengal State Committee of the Communist Party of India has made the same call in a statement.

## Total strike in West Bengal on August 5, 1965 Against Rise in Tram Fare \*

Despite arrests of about 3,000 including about 1,000 in Calcutta alone, on the eve of the General Strike, jointly called by the Rashtriya Sangram Samiti and the Hind Mazdoor Sabha and supported by all the Left parties, as a protest against the enhancement of tram-fares, the citizens and the workers of the Calcutta industrial belt including the districts of 24-Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly responded heroically and observed a complete strike on August 5, 1965.

Never before—*not once since 1947*, according to a spokesman of the state Government—the State machinery was so active in the matter of suppressing the strike : Government employees were threatened with grave consequences in case of non-attendance, shops and bazars were visited by police officials asking them to keep open, 7,000 policemen including the Home Guards and the Special Police Force were employed to man the 235 police pickets and 268 police patrols, hundreds of private cars were requisitioned to carry additional patrols, provocative running of State buses with two or three fake 'passengers' in each of them were resorted to.

But the AIR—whose news-bulletins on such occasions are taken with a pinch of salt—had to admit the success of the strike. Preliminary reports reaching us from Tollyganj, Behala, Kidderpur, Howrah and Belgharia confirm the spontaneous participation of the workers. The grand success of the strike has

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta August 8 1965  
Complete report published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY" of August 15 1965  
covered under Item No.16A of this Volume

inspired the people for still more concerted movement to force the hands of the government to postpone the rationalization scheme and appoint a high-power commission; withdraw all repressive measures and release all the arrested leaders and workers.

The Left parties have, in a statement, greeted the people for their splendid response to the strike call and have urged them to refuse to pay enhanced fares and boycott trams, if necessary.



## Total General Strike In West Bengal \*

### Anti-Fares-Rise Movement Gathers Momentum -

The General Strike on August 5 against the increase in tram-fares called by the BPTUC, HMS, UTUC and the Rastriya Sangram Samiti and backed by all Left parties in West Bengal was a resounding success—all life coming to a standstill in Calcutta City and the surrounding industrial areas.

The success of this complete and peaceful General Strike becomes all the more striking when the almost unprecedented police arrangements, the most elaborate since 1947—according to Calcutta's Police Commissioner—that had been made to terrorize the people are kept in mind.

About 7,500 policemen had been pressed into service for the day as against the 5,000 on duty on the day of hartal on July 30. Over 1,500 persons were arrested on August 4 alone.

The Chief Secretary of the West Bengal Government sent round a threatening circular making it obligatory for Government employees residing within a radius of three miles to come to office even on foot, if necessary.

Just a few minutes before the strike ended at 4 o'clock in the evening of August 5, Chief Minister P. C. Sen hastily called pressmen to the Writers' Building and told them : "I may say without fear of any contradiction, there was no public support behind it." The Press taking the cue from him headlined next day that the strike was only a partial success. But even the carefully written reports could not conceal the success of the strike.

For instance, The Statesman which printed a picture on the front page with the caption, "Despite the Leftist call for a

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, August 15, 1965

General Strike in Thursday, the streets were by no means as empty of life as on previous occasions" had another picture on the back page with the caption, "With shops closed and comparatively little more traffic on the streets, citizens in some areas on Thursday preferred the unwanted luxury of walking on the roads instead of on uninviting pavements."

### **Industrial Area at Standstill**

And the report in the same paper had to admit : "Office attendance was thin", "Shops and bazars in many areas were closed", "There was no bank clearance", "Some big jute mills were closed by the management", "Engineering firms were most affected", etc.

Behind these grudgingly admitted facts is the real story of the tremendous success of the strike.

The whole of the industrial area virtually came to a standstill—the most significant aspect being participation by jute mill workers in the strike on an unprecedented scale. Almost all the engineering firms were paralyzed.

In Calcutta, the tramways company could bring out only three tram cars with the help of the INTUC and with heavy police escort : The State Transport Corporation did not ply its buses on the scheduled routes. Rickshaws were not available and very few taxis came on the streets.

Attendance in offices was not even ten percent. Shops and bazars were closed.

In the districts, too, the picture was the same with transport paralyzed and hats, bazars and shops completely closed.

Thus, twice within a week—first with the total hartal on July 30 and then with the successful General Strike—the people of West Bengal have given their verdict against the increase in tramfares and answered the Government's efforts to make the people pay more to swell the profits of the British tramways company.

## **All-Round Support to Movement**

The movement against fare-increase is assuming wider proportions as days go by.

In Calcutta, prominent artistes, writers and journalists like Satyajit Ray, Narayan Ganguli, Vivekananda Mukherji and others have in a statement asked the Government "to give up its seeming reliance on repressive methods and try to make out a more convincing case if possible for the need to enhance tram-fares". This could best be done, they said, by keeping the "proposal for enhancement in abeyance for the time being and referring it to a tribunal with powers to go into all aspects of the tram-ways company's financial position".

A similar statement has been issued by a number of educationists among whom are principals of a number of city colleges.

A conference of citizens of Calcutta on August 8, addressed among others by N.C. Chatterjee, M.P. demanded the setting up of a high-power commission to make a thorough scrutiny of the entire financial structure of the tramways company and review the fare-increase.

A number of West Bengal MPs have made the same demand in a letter to Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

## **Resistance Is Successful**

Meanwhile, the movement to resist the fare-increase continues and that the overwhelming majority of the passengers are refusing to pay the enhanced fare can be seen from the fact that the tramways company's daily earnings from ticket sales have fallen from Rs. 80,000 to about Rs. 20,000 since the movement started.

People who refuse to pay the enhanced fare are being arrested by the police and the arrests in the State in connection with the movement now total about 4,000.

The West Bengal State Committee of the CPI has urged upon Party members, sympathizers and the people to prepare for a long-drawn movement against the fare-rise.

## **Restore Democracy In Kerala \***

### **Kerala State Committee of C.P.I.(M) Submits Memorandum On Urgent Problems of the State**

The Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in its memorandum submitted to the Consultative Committee of Parliament for Kerala which met in Trivandrum on July 26 and 27 last, listed the undemocratic attitude of the Congress High Command and the "consequent denial of democratic rights and liberties to the people of Kerala" as the "most important burning problem before our people".

Referring to A.K. Gopalan's forced absence from the meeting, the memorandum stated :

"You all know him very well and can, therefore, realize how useful his presence at the meeting would have been to you as well as to the people of Kerala. Indefatigable champion of people's causes that he is, he would have thrown much more light on the problems of Kerala than any other single individual could have done.

"Being the leader in Parliament of that party which in the recent election to the State Legislature was returned as the biggest single party, he would have been in a much better position to voice the demands and aspirations of the people of this State than anybody else. May we point out that your Committee is so constituted that this is the one party which does not find a place among those who are participating in its deliberations?"

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, August 15, 1965.

Detailing the "circumstances in which it became necessary to constitute this Committee," the memorandum said :

"The dissolution of the Kerala State Legislature in March this year took place under very extraordinary circumstances. It was not a 'breakdown of the normal constitutional machinery', as is provided for in the Constitution.

"For , the 'normal constitutional machinery' was not functioning at the time. It had already broken down on September 10, 1964, as a result of which the President had taken over the entire State administration.

"The Governor thus was not the Head of a State in which the normal constitutional process continues. He was the agent of the President who combined in himself the functions of the Head of State in the country as a whole with the functions of the Head of State and of the administration in the State of Kerala.

"In other words, the functions of the President of the Indian Union, the Governor of Kerala and the Chief Minister of Kerala were all simultaneously combined in the same person—the President—who was discharging his responsibilities through the Governor. How then can the latter as Head of State 'report to the President on the breakdown of the normal constitutional process' and the President 'take over the administration' on the basis of that report ?

"The President on the advice of the Election Commission ordered fresh elections to the State Legislature, the first act in the process of ending his rule had started. It went a step ahead when the elections were over. It then became the responsibility of the President to see that the process started with the ordering of fresh election was complete.

"Our Party as well as other non-Congress parties had categorically told the agent of the President (and through him the President himself) that they were making utmost efforts to see that a new Ministry was formed and the constitutional process restored. The demand was made that a regular meeting

of the Legislature should be convened, so that the claim made by the opposition parties (that a non-Congress Government could be formed) and the counter-claim of the Congress Party (that no Government could be formed) could be put to the acid test of a positive vote of the legislature.

"The agent of the President, however, turned it down and 'reported' to the President that 'the normal constitutional machinery has broken down—forgetting that he was not the constitutional Head of the State who alone has the right and the duty to report to the President on the breakdown of the constitutional machinery."

### **Indirect Congress Rule**

The memorandum then charged against "the Congress High Command under whose advice the Prime Minister and Home Minister advised the President to dissolve the Legislature that they have used their actual control on the Governor and President to dissolve the legislature in the narrow sectional interest of their Party.

"The dissolution of the State Legislature is thus not the inevitable result of an actual breakdown of the normal constitutional process, but a decision artificially imposed on the people of Kerala by the central leadership of the Congress Party which is not interested in anything but perpetuate itself in power.

"We cannot but draw your attention, in this context, to the reported move now being made by the ruling Congress Party to put off the election which is due in a few weeks' time and hold it only along with the countrywide fourth general elections. Here again, the argument is that there is no possibility of the elections leading to any better result than what happened in the last election.

"This argument is further buttressed by the declaration of the Government that in no case would the Communist detenus be released. The game obviously is to have indirect Congress rule (what else is President's rule but indirect Congress rule?)

extended indefinitely, since the Congress High Command cannot expect to have direct Congress rule in this State.

"This undemocratic attitude of the Congress High Command and the consequent denial of democratic rights and liberties to the people of Kerala are, according to us, the most important burning problem before our people. We would, therefore, request you, as people responsible to give guidance and advice to Parliament on matters affecting Kerala, to do your best to see that this unnatural state of affairs is immediately put an end to and the normal constitutional process restored as quickly as possible.

"If this is possible by the simple and straight expedient of cancelling the President's order and restoring the Assembly elected in March, that would be the best. If, however, that is not possible, then we would request you to see that elections are not postponed but organized as soon as possible.

"In either case, it is absolutely necessary that the order of detention on the leaders and members of the Party which came out as the biggest single party in the Kerala Legislature be cancelled and they be released forthwith."

### **Nanda Has No Case**

On the question of these detentions, the memorandum pointed out to a recent development—the indication of rethinking on the question of India-China relations—which has "a direct bearing on the attack made on our Party."

On India-China relations "some serious rethinking seems to be taking place. Prime Minister Shastri has not given a categorically negative reply to President Nasser's proposal that he should have a direct meeting with Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai, though he has not given a positive reply either.

"This incident was followed by the Prime Minister's broadcast to the nation on July 1, in which he made a very general statement that no problem can be solved through the use of force.

"This general statement of the Prime Minister was later followed by a more categorical and forthright statement of the President that the Rs. 900-crore military budget being too heavy a burden for our people to bear, it is necessary for us to think of ways and means to come to a settlement with Pakistan as well as with china.

"Indications are available that the leaders of the Government have begun to realize that our country does not stand to gain, but only to lose, materially as well as spiritually, if we continue to take the inflexible position that the Colombo Proposals are the last word in our negotiations with China."

This rethinking on India-China relations "knocks the bottom out of the case made by Nanda's Home Ministry that China was on the point of attacking India. But strangely enough, Nanda does not seem to be considering it necessary to have any rethinking on his decision to keep our comrades in detention without trial."

The memorandum appealed to the members of the committee "to do your best to make the Shastri-Nanda Government retrace the steps which it has taken in this regard".

### **Other Urgent Problems**

The memorandum then made "some brief references to some of the other immediate problems which the people of Kerala are facing today".

FOOD : "This quantity of rice now being supplied is totally inadequate. It is the unanimous demand of the entire Kerala people that the quantum of rice ration should be raised to twelve oz. per head per day. We are not concerned here with the method by which the Government proposes to increase the quantum of ration of us. Various suggestions are being made in this regard ranging from full statutory rationing and total procurement to removal of all controls.

"We do not propose to enter into an argument as to which of these proposals is correct. What we are more concerned with is



that the Central Government should undertake the responsibility of assuring a guaranteed supply of twelve oz. of rice per head per day."

**FOURTH PLAN :** "We are seriously concerned at the reported decision of the Central Government and Planning Commission that Kerala's case, put forward by the State Government, is not to be accepted. The reported decision of the Centre that every State Government, whether of a relatively advanced or backward State, should have a Fourth Plan twice the size of its Third Plan is, according to us, the surest way of perpetuating and even widening the gap between advanced and backward States. We record our emphatic protest against this attitude of the Central Government."

**THERMAL PLANT FOR KERALA :** "It is a matter of great disappointment to the entire people of Kerala that the Centre is reportedly opposed to the setting up of a thermal power plant in the State. This attitude of the Centre will perpetuate the present situation in which several industries are closed down on account of shortage of power."

**EVICCTIONS FROM PROJECT AREAS :** "A very serious situation is developing in the High Ranges of the State where some important projects (hydro-electric, afforestation, etc.) are to be carried out. It is agreed on all hands that the implementation of these projects would involve the displacement of a large number of people from their habitations and places of work.

These people themselves and the rest of the people in the State would fully cooperate with the Government to enable the early starting of work on these projects. It is, however, unfortunate that the Government is not providing alternate sites and giving fair compensation to the people who are displaced. Such an indifferent attitude by the Government is likely to lead, as it used to in the past, to very explosive situations which all of us would like to avoid."

**GOVERNMENT FOREST AND REVENUE LAND :**  
“Eviction of people living in Government forest lands and revenue lands has become common. Eviction from such lands should be immediately stopped and the land distributed to the peasants who are in possession now. Though the steps were initiated by the Communist-led Government during its term of office to give ownership rights to peasants possessing forest and revenue lands, subsequent Governments have not done anything in the matter.”

**LABOUR DISPUTES :** "Workers of the cashew industry, one of the most important industries in the State employing several thousands of workers, are on the point of going on strike. There are disputes in other industries and establishments like the Bidi industry, Boat Corporation, PWD, Devaswam Board, National Rubber, etc.

"All these disputes can be settled if only the State Government itself adopts a proper attitude and makes the employers adopt a reasonable attitude towards the legitimate demands of the workers and employees. It is the absence of such an attitude in the Government that has created the present difficulties."

The memorandum pledged that "we for our part want to assure you that we would do our best to persuade the workers and employees to reciprocate to any initiative which the Government takes to end this state of affairs, if it meets the reasonable demands of the workers and employees who are going through very difficult times."

## Release The Communist Detenus

Editorial of "People's Democracy", August 22, 1965

*The Statesman* of August 14 carried the following news-item:

"Mr Manik Jha, Secretary of the Malda district unit of the Left CPI, who had been ailing in detention, was transferred from the Alipore Central Jail to the Calcutta Medical College Hospital for treatment on Tuesday, reports *UNI* .

"Mr Jha's condition was stated to be serious and the Alipore Jail authorities have informed the next of kin."

This disturbing report raises a number of questions : When did Manik Jha become ill ? Why was he not removed to the hospital till his condition became so serious as to necessitate the informing of the next of kin ? Why is he still in detention despite his serious condition ? Why are the next of kin not allowed to take him and arrange for his medical treatment in a more congenial atmosphere instead of the Jail authorities informing them of his condition ?

Perhaps we are wasting our breath asking these questions since what has happened in this case has become a rather common occurrence under the Congress regime.

Till the time of writing this, almost a month after he was taken ill, the Government has still not ordered the unconditional release of P. Sundarayya.

S.S.Mirajkar has been seriously ill for some months now—he is still on parole, the Government has not thought it necessary to release him unconditionally.

B.T.Ranadive was quite seriously ill (some time ago—the Government did not think it necessary even to release him on parole. Same is the case with a number of detenus in West Bengal including such aged and respected leaders as Muzaffar Ahmad, Mohit Moitra, and Satish Pakrashi.

Many of these leaders have sacrificed some in the cause of Indian freedom and the Indian people than most of those are the present rulers of the country. Long years of hard life, police repression and incarceration in jails had already shattered the health of many of them.

About a dozen of the top leaders of the party in Maharashtra have been in jail since November 1962, comrades in West Bengal have been in detention since October 1964 and the rest of the Communist detenus since December 1964. This time the Congress Government has been treating the Communist detenus extremely vindictively. In most of the States no proper food is given, very low pocket allowances and no family allowances, no facilities for getting books and newspapers etc.

What is still more disquieting is the Government's refusal to give adequate and timely medical assistance.

When the detenus are ill they are taken to the hospital for check-up and taken back to the jails. By the time the authorities decide that the condition of a detenu is serious and that he has to be hospitalized, it is too late. S.V. Parulekar and B.D. Parab lost their lives because of this. Even after this, the Maharashtra Government has given only fourteen days' parole to Godavari Parulekar whose condition according to the doctors is quite serious.

We have always said that there is no ground for the detention of our comrades. We have all along demanded that they should be either tried in a court of law or released forthwith. Home Minister Nanda dare not meet this challenge, but he continues to keep our comrades in jail.

What is happening in Congress jails today is nothing short of liquidation of political opponents. We demand an end to this ! We demand the immediate release of all political detenus !

We appeal to the people who have already been demanding the release of detenus to make their demand irresistible ; it is no longer only the freedom of the Communist detenus that is involved ; in many cases it is their lives.

## People's Glorious Action In Bihar \*

### Government Unleashes Terror

Police firings, lathi-charges, tear-gas, Section 144 and curfew, mass arrests—all the weapons in the repressive armoury of the Congress Government failed against the determined people of Patna and the rest of Bihar who on August 9 and in the days following registered their strongest protest against the anti-people policies of the Congress Government.

Patna Bandh on August 9, organized by the Communist Party and the SSP, RSP and the Dangeites, was a complete success and would have remained completely peaceful but for the decision of Congress Government to punish the people who had dared to stage such a massive protest.

The first attack was made on the students who were demonstrating in front of the Legislative Assembly against the recent increase in secondary school fees.

The police indiscriminately lathi-charged the student demonstrators, then attacked them with tear-gas and resorted to firing. While this brutal attack on the students was going on, some legislators have charged that the police dragged out some of them from inside the Assembly premises and assaulted them.

In the evening the police again resorted to firing near Patna Junction station when the students were returning after their demonstration in front of the Secretariat.

Orders under Section 144 were imposed on the city, but defying these orders, people gathered on the Gandhi Maidan in

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, August 22, 1965.

one of the biggest rallies in the city to protest against the police attacks on the people.

A call for hartal in Patna City the next day was given by the rally and the students also called for a General Strike. The Government imposed curfew on the city, called out troops and arrested the leaders of the parties organizing the protest including Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia who had addressed the meeting on the Gandhi Maidan in defiance of Section 144.

All this only made the people more determined and not only in Patna but all over Bihar August 10 saw huge protest demonstrations.

Police opened fire against demonstrators in a number of places - at Begusarai, Bihta, Jamalpur, Sultanganj, Nanbatpur, Barauni and made lathi-charges and tear-gas attacks in a number of places.

In Patna City, police lathi-charged a meeting held in defiance of Section 144. SSP leaders Ramanand Tewari and Karpoori Thakur and Dangeite leader Chandrasekhar Singh were made special targets of police fury.

Reports from the districts show that demonstrations are continuing in many places.

## Anantapur Civil Liberties Meet \*

The Anantapur District Civil Liberties Conference was held on August 8 at Anantapur, six hundred delegates participating in the session. Over a thousand people participated in the demonstration and about seven thousand people attended the public meeting held at the end of the delegates' session.

The delegates' session was presided over by Advocate Subramanyam. T. Ramdas Reddy, President of the Reception Committee, gave a report on the work of the Committee and read out messages wishing the Conference success from N.C. Chatterjee, MP, President of the All-India Civil Liberties Union, Tenneti Viswanatham, MLA, well-known Telugu writer Kodavatiganti Kutumba Rao and others.

Kadiyala Gopala Rao, General Secretary of the Pradesh Civil Liberties Union, inaugurating the conference, spoke in detail how civil liberties were being curtailed in India even after independence and how unreasonable and undemocratic it was to detain political leaders without trial. The Government had no respect for the Constitution, he said.

K.V. Subba Rao, Vice-President of the Pradesh Civil Liberties Union, explained how the Government was violating the Constitution and how it was using the Defence of India Rules to strengthen the ruling party and deny democratic rights to the opposition parties.

Advocates Nanjunda Shastri and Subramanyam spoke on the need for united action against the Government's policy of detaining political leaders.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, August 22, 1965.  
Anantapur is in Andhra Pradesh.



The main resolution adopted by the Conference condemned detention without trial and demanded the immediate unconditional release of P. Sundarayya.

An executive committee for the District Civil Liberties Union with T. Ramadas Reddy as President, Nanjunda Shastri and Subramanyam as Vice-Presidents and L. Krishna Rao as Secretary was elected by the Conference.

The Nazar Burrakatha Dalam gave a burrakatha performance at the conclusion of the public meeting.

## **The Struggle for Food in West Bengal : 1965 \***

The food situation in West Bengal has already become very alarming. The nature of the crisis this year is such that unless immediate action to solve the problem is taken, the situation will get out of hand leading to an unprecedented disaster. The Government refuses to recognize the seriousness of the situation and even if it is recognized, its present food policy is incapable of meeting the situation.

The price of rice has already risen to Re. 1.50 per kg. in many parts of the rural areas - even Rs. 2 in some places. Rice has also become scarce. Similar is the case with other essential articles like mustard oil, vegetables, fish, etc. Crop failure, especially of jute and aus due to drought, has added to the crisis.

Recent reports from Murshidabad, Malda, Nadia and other places indicate that many parts of these districts are on the brink of famine conditions. Starvation and semi-starvation conditions prevail in many areas and deaths from starvation are also reported.

### **Govt.'s Callous Attitude**

Chief Minister P.C. Sen's radio broadcast on July 26 hardly showed any awareness of this serious situation. He only talked about the number of people who were covered by rationing but not a word as to whether this was sufficient or what his Government intended to do to provide food to the millions not covered by statutory rationing. The Chief Minister, earlier, actually remarked at a meeting of District Magistrates that the price of rice was dropping. This attempt to paint the picture bright only brings out the callousness in the Government's attitude.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, August 22, 1965.

This callous attitude is not accidental, it is in the very nature of the Government's food policy. This year West Bengal's food production is 5.6 million tons, the highest reached so far. Taking per capita consumption at eight chataks (about 17 oz.), the total requirement is 6.2 million tons and including the requirement for seedlings it comes to 6.7 million tons. The deficit is thus 1.1 million tons. The Central Government is committed to supply to the State about 1.2 million tons of wheat and rice. This covers the entire deficit and there is no reason why West Bengal must be going through the present crisis.

### **Foodgrains Flow into Blackmarket**

Chief Minister P.C. Sen who also holds the food portfolio took credit for himself for introducing statutory rationing in Greater Calcutta. When he introduced this he also promised to supply foodgrains to deficit areas in the mofussil districts whenever the need arose and imposed a levy at fifty per cent of the total rice mills production. He banked for the success of his food policy on just these steps, ignoring the fact that a major part of the foodgrains had been left in the hands of big traders and speculators.

It did not take long for bitter experience to show how powerful the grip of these sharks on the food market is. The crisis this year came earlier than usual and all that P.C. Sen could do was to express wonder. A major part of the marketable surplus or 1.4 million tons which he had estimated flowed into the hands of the traders and speculators. The Government could collect only less than three lakh tons.

The price of rice began soaring from about March and has gone up to such an extent by now that it is beyond the capacity of the majority of the rural population to buy rice.

Government now pleads inability to supply foodgrains to the affected areas as it does not have sufficient stocks. It is doubtful whether the State Government will get from the Centre the

stocks it needs because the Centre also does not seem to have sufficient stocks.

### **Build Up Strong Movement**

Government now is sitting with folded hands allowing the food situation to take its own course. And P.C. Sen is feeding the people with a different set of statistics.

According to him, about ten million people grow their own food, another 19.1 million people are under either statutory or modified rationing. (He, of course, did not mention that arrangements for modified rationing are so inadequate that there are no modified rationing shops in many places and in many of the shops where they exist, there are no stocks.) So, according to the Chief Minister only about five million people remain who might in some way or other be affected by the crisis!

Except this jugglery with statistics, the Chief Minister seems to have no plan either to dehoard the major portion of the marketable surplus or to supply foodgrains to the affected areas and people. Unless the Government is forced to change this attitude, West Bengal is surely heading for a disastrous situation.

The strongest food movement has to be built without losing any time if the people are to be saved from this disaster. The movement has to spread out to the entire State and the widest mobilization should be its aim. Food Committees drawing in all sections of the people have to be set up everywhere.

The most important task of this movement is to force the Government to unearth the hoards with the cooperation of the people. Government should be compelled to accept the authority of people's vigilance committees to dehoard the stocks. As a part of the struggle it is necessary to develop self-help movements so that people come to each other's help to face distress conditions.

Success of the movement depends primarily on a Statewide

campaign on food exposing the Government's callous, pro-monopolist attitude. Until this policy of the Government is exposed clearly and the people made to realize the real nature and seriousness of the situation, the movement cannot make much advance. The immediate need, hence, is to enroll volunteers in all parts of the State to launch such a wide movement.

## Congress Rulers Are Playing With Fire \*

The rule of law was abandoned when the National Emergency was declared and the Defence of India Rules became a weapon in the hands of the Congress Government to protect itself and the vested interests it represents from the rising wrath of the people and suppress political opponents. Now the rule of the lathi, tear-gas and bullets has been introduced to reinforce the hands of the ruling party.

The picture our country presented in the fortnight preceding Independence Day was one of armed and lathi-wielding police showering bullets on peaceful demonstrators and pouncing on them leaving behind a trail of blood and broken heads and bones.

It began in Calcutta when the P.C. Sen Ministry entered the field to suppress with brute police force a popular movement.

The K.B. Sahay Ministry of Bihar followed with calling out troops, imposing curfew, mass arrests, firings and lathi-charges.

In Hyderabad, in Andhra Pradesh and in Tiruchi in Tamilnad it was students whose heads were broken, in Bangalore in Karnataka it was the ribs of youth demonstrators.

Why are the people being attacked so mercilessly, so vindictively?

In Calcutta, the people were demonstrating peacefully against the Government's decision to impose an additional burden on them in the form of increased tram fare. The people's demand was simple : Let a high-power commission enquire into

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, August 22, 1965.

the entire financial affairs of the British-owned tramways company and till then the fare-increase should not be enforced.

This was the last cry of despair of a people who had been crushed by ever-increasing taxes and sky-rocketing prices, who just could not pay anything more to travel to their places of work and come back home every day, and who rightly believed that the Government was seeking to pick the last paisa from their pocket only to swell the already high profits of the British tycoons.

The Government refused to listen to the people's demand and established police raj in Calcutta to protect British profits.

In Patna and the rest of Bihar, the people were demonstrating peacefully demanding food. With their own eyes they have seen that foodgrains are available and are being sold at prices beyond their buying capacity. All they wanted the Government to do was to clip the wings of the hoarders and profiteers who were making money out of people's misery and take the urgently needed steps to ensure that the available foodgrains are properly distributed to the people.

The Government refused to shoulder its elementary responsibility of feeding the people, turned down their extremely reasonable demands and established police raj in Patna and the whole of Bihar to protect the ill-gotten wealth of the hoarders and profiteers.

The students in Bihar were peacefully demonstrating against the increase in secondary school fees. Many of them would have had to give up their schooling if this increase in fees is enforced. All that they wanted was that the Government should not deprive them of their future education.

In Hyderabad, similarly, the students were demonstrating against detention in three-year degree courses and increase in examination fees.

In Tiruchi, it was sheer provocation from the Government's side. After arresting, without any rhyme or reason, student

leaders under the Defence of India Rules, the Government provocatively posted policemen in front of colleges on the eve of Independence Day. And it is this provocation that led to the incident in Tiruchi.

In Bangalore, the demonstration organized by the Karnataka Youth League was only for marching to the US Cultural Centre to express the Indian people's indignation at the US aggression in Vietnam and its barbarities against the people of the country. The police were called to savagely suppress this anti-imperialist demonstration of the youth.

The Congress Government in the first fifteen years after Independence had already broken the British record of two centuries in the matter of ordering police firings. And now the Congress rulers seem to be engaged in a mad race to surpass their own record.

What they do not seem to understand is that their repression is only making the people more determined.

It was the brutal attack on the students in Calcutta that sparked off the hartal and the subsequent attacks on the people that sparked off the General Strike.

It was the firing on the students in Patna on August 9 that sparked off the hartal next day and the spread of the movement to the rest of the State.

The Congress rulers do not want to understand why the people refuse to be cowed down by all the might of their police machinery. Congress policies in the last eighteen years of Independence have pushed the people into the corner and they have either to go down without putting up any resistance or turn round and face lathis and bullets to assert their right to live as human beings.

All glory to the people who have chosen the path of struggle to defend their existence.

It is time the Congress rulers learnt that it is their policies which have generated this wrath in the people and their stiff



resistance and that no police repression, however savage, can beat them down. The Indian people fought and won national Independence, they will also fight to win the conditions in which they, and not a handful of the vested interest, enjoy the fruits of Independence.

## **New Phase in Resistance Movement Against Tram-Fare-Rise Calcutta : 1965 \***

The movement against the increase in tramfare called by nine Left parties of the State has entered a new phase after the successful general strike of August 5.

In the first phase, the people defying lathis, bullets, tear-gas—the entire repressive machinery of the Congress Government, had magnificently responded to the call of the Left parties not to pay enhanced fares or to boycott trams till the demand for a high-power commission to go into the financial affairs of the British-owned tramways company was accepted.

But the Congress Government, committed as it is to safeguard the interests of this British company, refuses to learn any lesson and submit to the verdict of the people and rescind its decision to allow the tramways company to enhance the fares in the name of rationalization of the fare-structure.

### **Struggle till Victory**

In such a situation the united front of Left parties has called on the people to carry on a sustained and broadbased movement till victory is won. The Left parties have warned the people that the struggle will be hazardous, the Congress Government, with the State's coercive machinery in its hands, will not yield so easily.

It is the same Government which has created the food crisis and soaring prices that has also allowed the enhancement of tramfares and the struggle against the fare-rise is as much a part

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of the struggle to defend the interests of the people as the struggle for food and other essential articles at reasonable prices.

The West Bengal State Committee of the Communist Party of India has already drawn up a programme to launch a Statewide movement against the policy of the Government. Led by the Party, the people's movement for food and against high prices is forging ahead in the form of peaceful defiance of law, meetings, demonstrations, gheraos, etc.

The Rashtriya Sangram Samiti in West Bengal has also drawn up a comprehensive programme to initiate a movement to defend the vital interests of the common people.

The united front of Left parties is expected to chalk out a similar programme soon.

### **Activities in New Phase**

The main objective of the tramfare-rise resistance movement in the new phase is to carry on a sustained and systematic campaign amongst the citizens not to pay the enhanced fares and to boycott the trams through house-to-house approach in the localities, holding of local and central conventions, intensive postering and handbilling, deputations to the Government, picketing in trams and peaceful defiance of Section 144.

On August 10, when the new phase of the movement began, 36 volunteers—students and workers of the Left parties—courted arrest in four batches defying law in different parts of the city. Before courting arrest the volunteers appealed to the people not to pay the excess tramfare and to boycott the trams.

The same evening, another batch of four student volunteers including a girl student defied law and courted arrest.

On August 11, 24 volunteers of the nine Left parties courted arrest in various parts of the city while urging the people to boycott the trams.

On August 12, 34 volunteers of nine Left parties, including a woman were arrested while demonstrating in defiance of Sec.144. Tram passengers are responding to the call of the United Left Front to boycott the trams. Thousands who used to travel by tram are now going on foot to their offices.

The police are still active in their mission of suppressing the movement. On the Bowbazar Street, an important thoroughfare of the city, police pickets have been posted every ten to twelve yards and they are harassing the pedestrians asking them either to travel by trams or get into the police van.

Despite all this repression the movement is going forward.

### **More Facts about the General Strike**

- The Congress Ministry of West Bengal deployed thousands of hired men in Calcutta and other areas to break the General Strike on August 5. According to one reliable estimate, about 100,000 people consisting of policemen brought from other States, special police force, armed police, home guards, Congress Seva Dal volunteers, plain-clothed informers and hired goondas were posted that day in Calcutta alone.

- Not confident that the mass arrests they had made would affect the strike, the authorities collected hundreds of private cars jeeps and got them to run in various areas of Calcutta to give the impression that life in the city was quite normal. The passengers of these vehicles were mostly armed policemen, officers of the home guards, police informers and leaders of notorious goonda gangs.

During the hartal on July 30, some trucks had plied in Calcutta but on August 5 no trucks were seen on the streets.

- State buses in Calcutta ply on 31 routes. But on the day of the general strike the buses did not ply on these scheduled routes but on eleven "special" routes. In the place of the usual 721 buses, only 298 buses were brought out that day for patrolling. Eighty of the buses ran without conductors. Eighty more moved around for half an hour and then went back to the

depots. A large number of buses were lying idle in Dalhousie area for want of drivers and conductors.

- In the Sealdah Division up and down trains ran to schedule but there were almost no passengers. In one train there were just sixty passengers of whom ten to fifteen were armed policemen and 15 to 20 men of the Intelligence Branch of the police.

## Rethinking On India-China Relations Are The Revisionists Immune To It ? \*

E.M.S. Namboodiripad

One would not like to take an 'I told you' - attitude when the line advocated for a long by one is accepted by others who are now prepared to fight for it.

Such a self-righteous attitude would obviously not help the cause for which one has been fighting for long—the cause whose success may alter the whole course of political development in the country.

I would therefore refrain from recalling the various abusive epithets used against us in the columns of *Blitz* and like-minded periodicals—epithets based on the same assessment of our Party as had been made by the Shastri-Nanda Government.

I would, on the other hand, show an appreciation of the fact that some "rethinking" (the word is exactly what has been used by *Blitz*, June 19, in its feature "News Behind News") has started in the ruling circles.

### Mood of Give and Take

"The old Attitude," says the author of the above mentioned *Blitz* article, "that there be no talks with Peking until it accepts the Colombo proposals *in toto* has worn out, and there is visible desire to come to an agreement."

"There is a mood of give and take," *Blitz* continues, "a keen desire to settle the border dispute on terms which were unthinkable a few years back :

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"For example, it is being seriously suggested that the recognition of the McMahon Line was far more important than Aksaichin. This is a distinct change from the past because when China had proposed concession in Aksaichin in lieu of accepting the McMahon Line, India had then said 'No'."

More forthright than the writer of the above-mentioned column in *Blitz* (who does not express his own view, but only 'reports' what is happening in the ruling circles) is the editorial comment of the political and cultural weekly *Now*. The author of those comments writes as follows :

"The Colombo proposals are not Ten Commandments and none of the friendly nations who originally drafted them cared to say publicly that our interpretation of the implications of the proposals is the only correct one. If President Nasser now wants us to go beyond the Colombo proposals, that should not make us jittery."

Pointing out how the "three major population groups in Asia" (the Chinese, Pakistanis and the Indonesians) are "arraigned against us"; how it is unlikely that the Japanese "forsake the vast potential of China's market merely to placate India"; and how the other Asian nations have been "reluctant to take sides on the India-China quarrel", the Commentator adds :

"Despite American bombs, bazookas and money, South Vietnam is unlikely to be there for very long. We should perhaps by then still have some residual friends in south Korea, Formosa Malaysia. But is that the consummation we are devoutly looking forward to?"

These, however, are not stray voices. Long before *Blitz* and *Now* started writing such articles, others like Editor Nonporia of *The Times of India*, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Vinoba Bhave, R.K. Khadiolkar, MP, P.N. Saprú, MP and so on in their own different ways gave expression to views which are in content similar to the above. Everyone of them held and expressed the view that the continuing state of cold war between India and China does no good to either country.

### **Negotiations - Only Way**

Anybody who does his or her own thinking of the problem can see that the issue involved between India and China cannot be solved by military means; neither India nor China can take, by military means, what each of them claims to be its territory but is actually in the physical possession of the other; practical common sense therefore demands that the issue should be settled through political means - negotiations in which each side shows willingness to make adjustments with the other's claims, even though one's own national interests are defended to the utmost possible extent.

It is a matter of satisfaction that this approach is receiving greater and greater support, or, in the words of the author of the above-mentioned column in *Blitz*, "It is being increasingly realized that India cannot fight both China and Pakistan and also, at the same time, carry the burden of economic development."

But one cannot but recall that approximately 1,000 members of the Communist Party if India were arrested and detained all over India in 1962-63 for no other "crime" than that they gave expression to views which are now being increasingly accepted by non-party people.

Many of them were released in subsequent months, but their release was later followed by the re-arrest of several of them, while more were arrested for the first time.

Once again, therefore, nearly 1,000 Communists are today in detention for the "crime" of having advocated a line of action in relation to the India-China question which is now being increasingly advocated by several others.

### **Differences in National Council**

Much has been spoken and written about the "pro-China" section of the Indian Communists who, at the October-November meeting of the National Council of the (then united) Communist Party of India, opposed the stand taken by the "pro-



Russia" group. It has been repeated *ad nauseum* that this "pro-China" wing supported the Chinese aggression, that they welcomed the Chinese armies as liberators and so on.

Such canards were spread against us not only by the Government (as, for example, in Nanda's Broadcast and white paper), but also by the Right-wing Communists. But, in view of the 'rethinking' that has now started on the problem of the India-China relations, let us hope that there will be greater objectivity in the assessment of the role played by those who are popularly known as "Leftists" and "Centrists" in the (then united) Communist Party of India. Let us hope that facts will be seen as they are, not as they are being painted by our political opponents.

The stand taken by Dange and his friends on the one hand and that of those of us who opposed it did not consist in the question of whether or not to participate in the defence efforts organized by the Government. For, as Dange himself stated in his reply to the Chinese, everyone in the National Council was for defence. The real difference between these points of views was as follows :

### **Hatred towards China**

FIRSTLY, the Rightist resolution had a nakedly anti-Chinese tone - a tone whose practical implication was that the Communist Party should base all its political activity on hatred for the Chinese. We of the so-called "Left" and "Centre" thought that taking such an attitude would, apart from being contrary to the proletarian internationalism, be opposed to the national interests of India herself.

It is a matter of satisfaction to us that the senselessness and futility of the attitude of hatred for China are being increasingly realized. There is, for instance, a Commentator in the journal *Now* who deplores the situation (both in relation to India-China as well as to India-Pakistan question) :

"Only course the Government has left open for him (a publicist) in its handling of foreign affairs is to go on whipping

up a sterile hatred and, at the same time, reconcile it with complete inaction."

Referring particularly to the India-China question, he says :

"Since the Chinese announced a cease-fire, which our Government did not condescend to accept formally, nothing has happened on that front, not a cartridge has been fired. On the other hand, no attempt has been made to put an end to this futile hostility. Simultaneously, public opinion remains inflammable, dead against any settlement, scaring off the Government from all conciliatory moves."

It was this task of "inflaming public opinion", "scaring off the Government from all conciliatory moves", that the Rightist resolution laid on the shoulders of Party members. To this we were firmly opposed.

SECONDLY, the Rightist resolution in so many words asked the Government not to settle with China unless she accepts the precondition that the troops of both the countries take up the position occupied by them on September 8, 1962. We of the "Left" and the "Centre" opposed such a rigid stand and advocated the line that every efforts should be made to open talks with China with a view to arriving at an agreement which will be honourable to both sides.

Much has happened since then. Pandit Nehru himself subsequently modified the earlier Government stand with regard to the precondition for opening talks with China - restoration of the line as it stood on September 8, 1962. His successor, it appears, is prepared to relent even on the acceptance of the Colombo Proposals *in toto*.

### **Imperialist Military Aid**

The THIRD question on which we deffered from the Rightists was that of imperialist military "aid". The Rightist resolution welcomed the "aid", provided it was on "commercial terms". We opposed it, pointing out the acceptance of imperialist "aid" would be the beginning of the end of national sovereignty, as has happened in the case of other countries.

Here again, let us note, more and more people have begun to realize the danger which imperialist "aid" constitutes to our nation. The hope entertained in October-November, 1962, that the Chinese armies could be beaten back with arms secured from the United States and the United Kingdom has proved to be entirely baseless.

Refusal to supply us with the arms which our experts consider necessary for India's defence; pressure on us to settle with Pakistan on lines which would help imperialist intrigues both in Pakistan as well as in India, particularly in Kashmir; connivance at Pakistan's use of arms supplied by the United States against us - such have been the implication of imperialist "aid on commercial terms".

One may, at this stage, note that 'rethinking' on the India-China question has been the least on the part of the Right-wing Communists - barring, of course, such frankly chauvinistic elements as the Jan Sangh and other reactionary parties in the country.

It is significant it is not in *New Age*, the Rightist organ, but in such journals as *Blitz* and *Now* that voices have begun to be heard that "a resumption of fighting is ruled out, talks are obviously the only solution".

That section of the Indian Communists which was interested in denouncing us as "pro-China" and "anti-national" seem to be the only ones (barring, of course, the parties of Right reaction) who are interested in the continuance of cold war between India and China.

### **Why They Are Afraid**

This is understandable. For, the entire strategy on which the Right wing based itself when they decided to have their showdown with the militant rank and file, and that section of the leadership which gave expression to the sentiments of the rank and file, was to utilize the anti-China chauvinism of the masses which happened to be very strong in 1962 and continued even later.

To admit now that this chauvinism is against the interest of the nation, to start asking for a settlement with China, would mean the crumbling down of the whole edifice of Right-wing politics. Those rank and file members of the Party who are still with them will naturally ask the Rightist leaders : if it is now necessary to abandon the political line of anti-China hatred, was it not wrong on your part to have broken with the Leftists on the ground that they were not with you in your crusade against China?

One can sympathize with the Rightist leaders who will be unable to give a coherent answer to this question. But how long can they fail to react to actual developments which have shown the utter bankruptcy of the line of anti-China hatred which they have been persuing?

## Statewide Campaign in Andhra for Release of Communist Detenus

The Andhra Pradesh Committee of the Communist Party of India had called for the observance of a Food Week from September 6 to 12 to focus attention on the deteriorating food situation in the State and also to press the demand for the release of Communist detenus and in defence of civil liberties and democratic rights.

Meanwhile, 180 detenus in the Hyderabad, Secunderbad, Rajahmundry and Visakhapatnam jails had served notice on the Government that they would go on a three-day hunger-strike from September 6 if their demand for release or trial, better parole facilities, family allowance with a minimum of Rs. 100, better condition in jail, etc. were not conceded.

The detenus began their hunger-strike on September 6 and in support of their demands, in many towns and villages of Andhra, the families of detenus, members and supporters of the Communist Party and youth workers went on solidarity hunger-strikes.

At *Vijayawada*, on behalf of the Town Youth Committee, R.V.T.R. Sharma, T. Sriramulu, B. Devaraju, P. Surya Rao, B. Butchayya, V.P. Selvaraj, V. Sriramalu and Gurumuty went on a hunger-strike in front of the Taluk Office from September 6 to 8.

On September 8, these hunger-strikers were joined by 46 members of families of the detenus and many others on behalf of the Communist Party who marched to Taluk office from the

Communist Party office. A memorandum was submitted to the Deputy Tahsildar Moturu Udayam, wife of detenu M. Hanumantha Rao, member of the C.C. and Secretary of the Andhra Pradesh Committee of the Party, and Tammina Kanakamma and Gangaratnam.

Among those from detenus' families who were on hunger-strike were very old members of the families and also children above five years. An old man seeing them on hunger-strike remarked : this should melt even hearts of stone. But will it melt the hearts of the Congress rulers?

There were daily demonstrations in different wards of Vijayawada from September 6 to 12, with hundreds of people participating in them. They submitted memorandums to the Tahsildar demanding State trading in foodgrains, opening of fair-price shops, price control, etc., and release of Communist detenus.

In Guntur, twenty persons participated in the hunger-strike from September 6 to 9 in front of the District Collector's office in support of the detenus' demands.

Among the hunger-strikers were leaders of the Communist Party and of various organizations like the Youth League, Tobacco Workers' Union, Jute Mill Workers' Union, Hotel Workers' Union, Rickshaw Pullers' Union, ILTD Workers' Union, etc.

During the whole week the campaign for release and food was carried on through handbills, posters, signature collection on memorandums, demonstrations etc.

On September 8, there was a mass hunger-strike in front of the Collector's office followed by a public meeting.

In *Mangalagiri*, near Guntur Town, eight persons went on hunger-strike on September 7 in front of the Deputy Tahsildar's office and they were joined the next day by thirtyfour more among whom were members of the family of detenu S. Siva Reddy.

A memorandum submitted to the authorities on September 8 demanded the release of detenus.

At *Hyderabad*, 15 persons were on a three-day hunger-strike including V. Vimala Devi, wife of detenu V. Hanumantha Rao, and K. Sarada Devi, wife of detenu K. Krishnamurty.

At *Kavali* in Nellore district, forty persons including seven-year-old Sarat Babu were on hunger-strike on September 8, in front of the Taluk office. The hunger-strikers marched from Party office raising slogans demanding the release of detenus, better conditions in jails, adequate family allowances, etc.

At *Alur* in Kurnool district, seven persons participated hunger-strike and the public meeting held in the evening passed resolutions demanding release of the detenus, halt to price-rise, etc.

In *Gannavaram* in Krishna district, a 2,000-strong demonstration on September 8 demanded the release of detenus, opening of fair-price shops in every village, State trading in foodgrains, cancellation of the Additional Land Levy etc. A memorandum containing 50,000 signatures collected from different villages of the Taluk was submitted to the Tahsildar.

In *Nalgonda*, 150 cycle processionists went round the town and surrounding villages demanding the release of detenus. Later they submitted a memorandum to the authorities which described the food situation in the Taluk and demanded remedial measures immediately.

In *Karimnagar*, the Youth League held a meeting and adopted resolutions demanding detenus' release and on the food situation.

Demonstrations and meetings were held during the week in among other places, *Narsayapalem*, *Narsaraopet*, *Ammanabrolu*, and *Tallur* in Guntur district, *Bhimavaram* in West Godavary when a memorandum containing 5,000 signatures was submitted to the Tahsildar, *Amudalavalasa* and *Hiramandalam* in Srikakulam, *Vijayanagaram* in Vizag district, *Palem Palem* and *Viswanathapalli* in Krishna district and *Kovur* in Nellore district.

## Stop Playing Politics, Release Our Leaders!

*Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", September 12, 1965.\**

OUR country is admittedly going through a very critical situation. The Prime Minister in his broadcast to the nation on September 3 called it "this hour of serious crisis" when the people have to stand "united as one man", when "the nation must get into the mood which is necessary for undergoing sufferings and making sacrifices."

It is with the greatest regret that we have to say that this awareness of the "hour of serious crisis" which the Prime Minister expressed while facing the microphones in AIR studios does not seem to underlie his practice. We are referring to the meeting of the leaders of opposition parties which the Prime Minister convened on September 6. We are not concerning ourselves here with the discussions and decisions of that meeting. We are concerned here with the fact that the Prime Minister who called the people to stand "united as one man" did not consider it necessary to invite to the meeting the representatives of the Communist Party of India, the strongest Opposition Party in the country.

We repeat : the strongest opposition Party—a fact which both the Government and the people know, specially after the Kerala elections when it was proved that the strength of the Party in the Legislatures of various States and in Parliament, elections to all of which were held before the split in the Party, is no index of our real strength among the people.

Whether the Prime Minister invites us or not, whether his Government ignores us or not, we as the communist Party of India, know our responsibilities.

We are the communist Party and subscribe to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, we are a contingent of the International

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\* "People's Democracy is the Central Organ of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)



Communist Movement. We combine patriotism with proletarian internationalism and we are ultimately responsible to the people of India.

Never have we been the agents of any foreign Power, never in the future will we become agents of any foreign Power. Nor will we ever become the agents of the Indian vested interests under any pretext because we are a Party pledged to defend the interests of the toiling people and to work for the ultimate goal of ending exploitation of man by man in our country.

We have never believed that revolutions can be imported to any country from countries which have already had their victorious socialist revolutions. Nor have we believed that imperialist intervention can sustain counter-revolution for long in any country. We have always laid our faith in the people and held firm to the belief that the people, led by the Party of the working class, will create their own revolution and will defeat counter-revolution.

This is what Marxism-Leninism has taught us and because of that we have never had to look for help from any other country.

The leaders and cadres of our Party have been in the forefront of the freedom struggle. They fought, they suffered, they sacrificed and they saw their dearest comrades marching up the British gallows or dying in the battle—they faced all this without retreating one step, not to invite another foreign Power when Independence is won, but to make the people the arbiters of their own destiny.

Since Independence we have had to continue the struggle which we waged against the British imperialists against the new rulers who got into the saddle of power in New Delhi. And this struggle will continue as long as the handful of vested interests use the State machine they have won to appropriate for themselves the fruits of freedom. Nothing, neither the bullet nor the knout, neither DIR nor jails, can make us flinch from this struggle of the people.

We are an Opposition Party and we have always stated our differences with the Government's foreign policy, its handling of relations with our neighbours, and its handling of our defence. And we stick to these differences.

We have consistently stood for peaceful settlement of all our disputes with neighbouring countries. We have stood for this because we hold it is in the best interests of our people to have friendly relations with our neighbours, we have stood for this because it is in the best interests of developing our economy in conditions of peace, we have stood for this because we hold that any military conflicts with our neighbours will only gladden the hearts of the imperialist who are stalking the world on a mission of establishing neo-colonialist bases in countries which were once their colonies and even in countries which were free in the past. Nothing that has happened so far, neither the present relations we have with China nor the present conflict with Pakistan, has necessitated any change in our belief that ultimately our problems with our neighbours have no military solution, that they have to be solved peacefully through negotiations.

We have always stood for the defence of our sovereignty and territorial integrity against aggression from whichever source it comes. In November 1962, we had categorically declared that there was no question of our surrendering before any superior armed might. In any similar situation, our stand is the same.

We have stated all this here only to say that we have always stood by and will ever stand by the best interests of the broad masses of our people and we challenge anybody to show what is "anti-national" about it. We have stated all this once again because Nanda and his Home Ministry are working overtime to create the impression that we are the agents of China. We have stated all this to point out to the Prime Minister that his professions of national unity and simultaneous deliberate refusal to invite us to the meeting of Opposition party leaders do not go together.

How can the people be mobilized to stand "united as one man" when a thousand leaders and cadres of the strongest Opposition Party are detained in jail, when the Party's policy-making bodies are not allowed to meet and discuss and decide on how the Party can play its legitimate role in the present situation? How can the tens of thousands of Party members and hundreds of thousands of the Party's supporters be enthused and mobilized when they find that despite

all talk of national unity, the Government continues to keep their leaders in detention and treats them as untouchables?

Keep that aside for the moment. There is one member of our Party in Parliament, Dinen Bhattacharya, who spoke twice during the present session of Parliament. Why was an invitation not extended to him if the Prime Minister wanted to mobilize the support of all parties?

It is not as if only members of Parliament were being invited by the Prime Minister. Dange and Rajeswar Rao, both non-members of Parliament, had been invited to represent the Dangeites. Non-members of Parliament like Swatantra Chief Rajagopalachari and Sant Fateh Singh had been invited. Even that arch communalist RSS Chief Golwalkar had been invited to a conference which was expected to discuss the question of Communal harmony in the country.

That makes clear the Prime Minister's concept of national unity. Though he had invited the SSP, PSP and others like Individual Yagnik to his meeting, he seems to be most interested in winning the support of the reactionary forces in the country, the Swatantra, the Jana Sangh, the RSS, for his Government.

It seems that the Government is thus not prepared to face the situation by mobilizing all the democratic and patriotic forces and satisfying the elementary demands of the people. While in the recent past, people have been shot down for raising these demands, concession after concession has been given to the monopolists and the vested interests. This does not make for a satisfied people who alone, in the final analysis, can be the most powerful defenders of the country.

The last few weeks have seen huge movements of the people for food, against high prices and increasing taxes, for release of detenus and restoration of civil liberties. It is by meeting these elementary demands of theirs that the people can be mobilized to play their role.

We still hope that the Government itself will soon realize that this is not the way to meet the present situation. Our appeal to the

Government even at this late hour is : Release our leaders and comrades, so that our Party can play its legitimate role in the present context.

We have an urgent appeal to make to the people and that is for maintaining communal harmony in the country. The problems between India and Pakistan cannot be solved by the liquidation of minorities either in Pakistan or in India. Provocation is coming from all sides. We are confident that the members and supporters of our Party will display the utmost vigilance and be ready even to lay down their lives in defence of communal amity.

We are passing through dark and dismal days and in the coming days reaction will be more and more on the rampage. But if the Party stands firmly by the basic principles, if it stands firmly by the broad masses of our people, we will overcome all difficulties and march ahead a more mature, a more tempered Party.

## Detenus Begin Hunger-Strike In Kerala Jails\*

Fifty two of the 130 Communist detenus In Kerala—twelve others are now on parole—lodged in the three Central Jails of Trivandrum, Viyyur and Cannanore began their indefinite hunger-strike as announced from the morning of August 21 to press their demands. The other detenus are to join the hunger-strike in batches. Among those who are already on hunger-strike is A.K. Gopalan, M P, member of the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party.

The Government by refusing to concede the reasonable demands of the detenus have forced them into this life-and-death struggle.

BEFORE this issue of *People's Democracy* is in the hands of the readers, mass picketing in all the district and taluk centres of Kerala would have begun from August 25, as decided by the Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party of India, to support the demands of the detenus on hunger-strike, to press for a solution of Kerala's critical food problem and to protest against the discrimination against Kerala in the Fourth Five-Year Plan.

### **E. M. S. Writes To Other Parties**

E.M.S. Namboodiripad has written to leaders of the other left Parties in the state calling for united action on these issues. He has said in the letter that the Communist Party is calling for this united action not only on the question of detenus but on all the burning problem of the State. E.M.S. has suggested a joint meeting of all the parties between August 20 and 25 in Trivandrum.

He has also written to the all-India leaders of Left opposition parties for making preparations for such a united movements on a nationwide scale on the issues of food, civil liberties, etc. E.M.S. has said in his letter that despite all the differences which these parties have with each other on various questions, it should be possible to have joint action on issues like food.

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta August 29 1965

Though the General Elections are still a long way off, he has suggested that an opportunity should also be found to exchange ideas which would be of help in building up electoral unity of the Left opposition parties.

To consider all this, E.M.S. has proposed the convening of a meeting of leaders of Left opposition parties in Delhi after September 20. According to him, either the Rashtriya Sangram Samiti should bring into its fold the Left parties and conduct the united movement under the Samiti's auspices or the Left parties should come together to jointly work out the programme and constitute the leadership for such a struggle.

To a question whether such a movement would not affect national defence at a juncture like this, E.M.S. said it was for the Government to avoid such a development and if such a development took place the Government alone would be responsible for it.

### **Support From Other Parties**

C. Achutha Menon, leader of the Dangeite party in Kerala, at a Press Conference, said that his party had full sympathy with the hunger-striking detenus and that his party would participate in the movement to be lunched outside. He said that his party had not yet worked out the detailed programme of such a movement.

The Kerala State Committee of the SSP, meeting in Palghat on August 15 and 16, has decided to organize a united movement to press the demand for an increase in the rice ration quantum and for a just share for Kerala in the Fourth Plan. The Committee has authorized its Chairman to meet the leaders of other parties and explore the possibilities of united action.

At a protest demonstration and rally organized on August 15 in Trivandrum, leaders of the RSP called for united action of opposition parties and all sections of the people for finding solutions to Kerala's problems.

Brisk preparations are going on all over Kerala for the picketing which is to start on August 25 and the possibilities of united action by the Left parties have been widely welcomed and have added to the enthusiasm of the people.

### **Hunger-Strike In Maharashtra**

One hundred and thirty detenus kept in the various jails of Maharashtra went on a one-day hunger-strike on August 21 in support of their demand for adequate family allowances and better facilities in jails.

Simultaneously, a large number of people including the families of the detenus went on a day's hunger-strike sitting in a tent at the foot of the Martyrs' Memorial at Flora Fountain in Bombay.

## **Four Days Of Mass Action In Kerala In Support Of Hunger-Striking Detenus\***

Thousands of volunteers participated in picketing Government offices and tens of thousands of others participated in demonstrations and rallies all over Kerala during the four-day mass action which began on August 25 in support of the hunger-striking Communist detenus in the three Central Jails of the State.

The detenus in batches had begun their hunger-strike on August 21 to press their demands for release or trial and better facilities in regard to parole, medical attention, family allowance, etc.

On August 25, the first day of the mass action, 2000 volunteers participated in the picketing and work in most of the Government offices came to a temporary standstill and in places like Trichur where the volunteers made their entry into the offices, no work could be done for hours together.

In many places the police were manhandling the volunteers. In Kozhikode, for instance, the police after arresting 22 volunteers literally picked them up and threw them into the police vans. At least one of the volunteers was beaten while inside the van.

Nearly 900 of the first day's volunteers were later produced in courts and sentenced to imprisonment from five to twentyfive days.

On August 26, the picketing was more intense. In Kozhikode, though picketing was done at all the three gates of the Collectorate, the police did not arrest anyone sensing the mood of the thousands of people who had gathered there. The high point of the day's picketing was when women workers of the Commonwealth Weaving and other factories marched to the collectorate in a demonstration raising slogans in support of the detenus' demands.

The police on two occasions tried to push the volunteers away from the gates and on both the occasions the huge crowd roared its protest.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, September 5, 1965



By August 27, the third day, the picketing and people's response both reached new heights. Reports were already spreading about the serious condition of A.K. Gopalan and others. The people were very much agitated. And they were also getting ready for the mass picketing scheduled for the next day.

Though the report appeared in the morning of the 28th that the detenus were withdrawing the hunger-strike in response to the appeal of leaders of Left parties, the day's picketing was held according to programme with over four thousand volunteers participating.

The leaders of the Left parties had the Governor and also the detenus in all the three jails. The Governor, while rejecting the demand for release or trial, promised a liberal attitude to all the other demands.

· On the basis of this assurance and since the Left parties are finalizing the details of a programme for joint agitation for release of detenus and for a fair deal for Kerala in the matter of food, Fourth Plan etc., the leaders of the Left parties advised the detenus to give up their hunger-strike. The hunger-strike was broken in the evening of August 28.

## Andhra Detenus On Hunger-Strike\*

One hundred and eighty Communist detenus in the four jails of Andhra Pradesh—Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Rajahmundry and Vizag—are on a three-day hunger-strike from September 6.

Among their main demands is the one for family allowance. Only a few detenus are now being given family allowance and that, too, as charity. Parole is also not granted even in cases where the nearest relations are seriously ill and in certain cases parole orders have been received after the death of the family member.

Their letters both outgoing and incoming, are being held back by the jail authorities while interviews are being denied even to near relatives.

The detenus have also demands that they should be allowed to buy books and periodicals which are in legal circulation outside.

In the notice they served on the authorities intimating their intention to go on hunger-strike from September 6, they have said that even many of the facilities which were accorded to them in 1962-63 have been denied this time.

The Andhra Pradesh Committee of the Communist Party of India has Called for the observance of a Release Detenus Week from September 6 and called on all the democratic forces in the State to bring pressure on the Government to concede the demands of the detenus.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY". Calcutta, September 12, 1965

## Madras High Court Observations— Facilities For Detenus\*

The following is the order passed by Justice Srinivasan of the Madras High Court in the petition filed by P. Ramamurti, MP, M.R. Venkataraman, R. Umanath, MP and three other detenus regarding treatment of detenu in jails.

The petitioners in these cases are under detention under the provision of the defence of India Act. They move this Court for the issue of writs of mandamus to direct the appropriate authorities to relax the condition of restraint imposed upon them in certain matters, as such conditions are, according to them, not in consonance with the provision of the Defence of India act and the Rules.

After the petitions had been heard in par, the learned Public Prosecutor filed an affidavit proceeding from the Deputy Secretary to the Government, public Department. The Government have submitted that without prejudice to the general contention that the condition of restriction are not in excess of the Act and the Rules contemplate, they are prepared to relax these conditions with regard to certain matters.

I do not, therefore, propose to enter into the larger question of the legality of the restrictions imposed upon the detenus, and confine myself to the extend to which the restrictions are to be relaxed.

### Letters

The first prayer is that the petitioners have not been permitted to write or receive letters in excess of a specified number per week. Even these letters are restricted to those addressed to or received from close relations of the petitioners. The petitioners point out that it is necessary for them to correspond with their counsel in regard to matters which affect them....

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The Government state that the number of letters which they are permitted to write and receive is rested purely on convenience as these letters are subject to censorship, and it is not possible to overburden the authorities in charge of the censorship. Such censorship would necessarily involve delays in the delivery of the letters and it was with a view to avoiding this that the number of letters was so restricted.

Nevertheless, the Government state that they are willing to permit the petitioners to write and receive a larger number of letters than the number indicated in the Security Prisoners' Rules, subject to a maximum of ten letters a week.

While this relaxation is no doubt welcome, it still does not meet the demand. The petitioners are under detention only for the purpose of safeguarding the security of the State and to prevent them from doing things which might endanger such security. If their correspondence is subjected to strict censorship, as it undoubtedly is and must be, I am unable to see any justification for preventing them from corresponding with a wider circle than that of the immediate members of the family.

It may be particularly noticed that part of the complaint of the petitioners is that they are unable to correspond with their counsel. A person under detention may have several domestic matter which he cannot disregard solely for the reason that he is under detention. To take a simple example, Mr. Ramamurti, one of the petitioners, pointed out that the rule, as it stands, prevents him from even sending felicitations on the occasion of the marriage of a friend or a relation or the like.

This is certainly a wholly unnecessary restriction. While I accept the suggestion of the Government that the detenus may be permitted to write ten letters a week, this limit will exclude letter written to the counsel and letters addressed to the officers of Parliament. I should mention that in so far as the expenditure incurred is concerned, the Petitioners undertake to bear the charges over and above what under the rules Government would bear.

On one point the learned Public Prosecutor made a submission, that is with regard to the delays in the delivery of these letters.

Undeniably, the security procedure involves a certain amount of delay. It appears that all of these letters after passing through the Security Branch are sent to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, who looks to their onward transmission. With regard to the letters to Parliament, however, learned Public Prosecutor agreed that these letters, after undergoing scrutiny by the Security Department, will be transmitted direct so that no delay would be involved.

### **Interviews**

A plea was made on behalf of the petitioners that there is a heavy restriction upon interviews. It appears that under the rules formulated by the Madras Government, such interviews are permitted only once a fortnight and the interviews are limited to the members of the family of security prisoners.

The rules require the interviews to take place in the presence of an officer, who is vested with the authority to terminate the interview at any time, if, in his opinion, the conversation is detrimental to the public interest and safety. That requirement is not questioned by the petitioners. The complaint is only with regard to the restriction of the number of interviews and the scope of such interviews excluding persons other than the members of the family.

Here again, what I have said with regard to letters applies. In the affidavit, it is stated that the jail authorities are in practice more liberal and grant more interviews than are strictly allowable under the rules, and that subject to security screening there is no objection to an increase in the number of interviews. I would also add that this liberalization should extend to person who may not be counted as members of the family.

It appears that the jail authorities enforce the rule with regard to the possession of books by limiting the number of books which the detenus may keep with them at any time. I agree with the learned Public Prosecutor that it may be necessary to examine the books from the security point of view such as to see that no concealed message pass to and fro.

But it is really understandable why a limitation should be placed upon the number of books which the detenus may keep with them

for the purposes of study or the like. The Government in their counter-affidavit offer that subject to precensorship. They will have no objection to increasing the number of books and periodicals.

### **Night Lock- up**

One point upon which some emphasis was placed by the petitioners was that they are being locked up in their cells every night. It appears that in the Cuddalore Jail, there is an enclosure which is set apart for these detenus so that the practice of locking up the detenus individually at night is not necessary and is not being followed.

The learned Public Prosecutor points out that in other jails there is no similar provision and having regard to the number and nature of the detenus, individual lock-up is necessary in the interests of security. It is unfortunate, but it can not be avoided, and this is a difficulty which the detenus will have to put up with. The Government, however, offer to consider the matter and make suitable arrangements in other Jails.

I leave the matter there. The Government are also agreed to allow light inside the cells during night time.

### **Radio Sets**

Lastly, it is urged by the petitioners that they should be permitted to have their own radio sets. No serious objection is taken. The learned Public Prosecutor pointed out that there was one official radio provided. Having regard to the number of detenus, their differing tastes and the like, if there should be no objection to listening to any station on the radio, there should equally be no objection to permitting each detenu to have a radio of his own at his own expense.

The learned Public Prosecutor stated that would necessitate suitable power points being provided in the cells. At the present time that may not be necessary, for battery-operated sets are available, and if the permission is given, it is open to the detenus to make their own arrangements to secure such radio sets. There will be a direction that such permission should be granted.

I may say that the petitioners expressed themselves as generally satisfied with these arrangements. Though they would have liked to have a greater relaxation of the restrictions, they were not unreasonable in their demands and are willing to accommodate themselves.

In view of the statements made by the Government, it is unnecessary to issue any writ. These petitions are dismissed after recording the message of agreement expressed by the State.

## **Demonstration In Calcutta For Release Of Detenus\***

“Try them in open court, or release them”—this was the assertive demand that arose from a mammoth meeting at the Calcutta Maidan on August 30 1965 at the call of the State Committee of the Communist Party of India to express solidarity with the detenus who went on hunger-strike in Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal jails. Veteran kisan leader Shyamaprasanna Bhattacharya moved the main resolution which, while characterizing the attitude of the Government towards the detenus as “revengeful”, declared that a wider and powerful mass the Government to change their anti-democratic policies. He said that the movements for food and release of prisoners are but two facets of the same movement. Dr. Narayan Roy, MLA, who presided over the meeting, said that the Government is now shirking the responsibility for the treatment of seriously ailing detenus by releasing them when they need expert attention. Veteran leader of the Marxist Forward Bloc Amar Basu also addressed the meeting.

After the meeting a big procession paraded through the streets for about an hour, terminating at the Azad Hind Bag.

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## **Tripura Mass Rally Demands Release Of Detenus\***

A five-thousand-strong mass rally organized by the Progressive Front of Tripura in the Children's Park, Agartala, on November 17, called for the immediate release of all political detenus.

The Progressive Front was formed about four months ago with the Communist Party of India, the SSP, the Tribal Union, Dangeites and non-party individuals as its constituents.

A prominent non-party social worker of Tripura, Dwijen Dey, presided over the rally, which was addressed by Sudhanya Deb Varma on behalf of the CPI, Aghore Deb Varma on behalf of the Dangeites, Dwijendra Chandra Pal on behalf of the SSP and Sucha Kumar Chakma on behalf of trade unions.

The rally observed a minute's silence to pay homage to the soldiers who fell during the recent Indo-Pakistan conflict.

The issues stressed by the various speakers were the release of political detenus, the need for India quitting the Commonwealth, a proper food policy and nationalization of banks and foreign capital.

The speakers strongly criticized the Congress Government for not solving the country's serious food problem. They indicted the Anglo-American imperialists for creating and perpetuating the Kashmir problem and demanded immediate breaking away from the Commonwealth and rejection of all PL 480 food doles.

The Congress rulers came for the strongest attack for detaining without trial more than a thousand political leaders for such a long time.

The meeting demanded that all the detenus including Dasarath Deb Varma and Biren Dutt, only members of Parliament from Tripura, should either be immediately released or tried in a court of law.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY". Calcutta, December 12 1965

## **E.M.S. Namboodiripad Writes To G.L.Nanda, Union Home Minister For Release Of Detenus\***

The following letter, addressed to G.L. Nanda, Home Minister, Government of India, by E.M.S. Namboodiripad, was released to the Press in New Delhi on September 16, 1965.

My dear Nandaji,

During our talks yesterday, you asked me for some elucidation of the stand taken by my party in relation to the war and the Government's war effort. I am giving below the required elucidation.

(1) Let me, at the very outset, reiterate what we have repeatedly stated- that it is a baseless slander against our Party when your Government and our political opponents accuse us of being prepared to help the Chinese in their attack on India. We are at one with the rest of the people in their concern for the defence of the national territory.

(2) It is, of course, true that we have our differences with the Government on the way in which has handled the India-China dispute. This, however, does not mean that we are indifferent to the task of national defence when a foreign army crosses the established borders and penetrates into our territory (as the Chinese army was doing in October-November, 1962). Our attitude on this was made clear at the meeting of the National Council of the then united Communist Party held in October-November, 1962. It may, in this connection, be mentioned that such a confirmed political opponent of our Party as Mr. S.A. Dange pointed out in his reply to the Chinese Communist Party that the entire National Council was unanimous on the question of defending national territory against the advancing Chinese army.

(3) Having thus put the record straight with regard to our stand on national defence against the Chinese attack, I may point out that

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the situation at present is one of war with Pakistan, not with China. The question, therefore, should be raised of our attitude to Pakistan, not with China. To raise the question of China in this context amounts to the use of any stick to beat us.

(4) Our Party's attitude to the present war with Pakistan has been made amply clear through the statements which I have issued. (Copies of these have been sent to the Prime Minister). I also understand that Shri Gopalan (on his own behalf and on behalf of Shri Harkishen Singh Surjeet and several others) has written a letter to the Prime Minister endorsing the stand taken by me in the above-mentioned statements.

(5) These statements have made it clear that our Party is concerned with the war efforts of the Government and expressed our willingness to cooperate with the Government if only we are allowed to do so. We, however, have not received any favourable reply.

(6) The position, therefore, boils down to this: you require, according to cooperation of every political party and organization in the country in order to defeat the game of the Pakistani rulers; our party is prepared to give you its cooperation; but you refuse to create those very conditions which can enable us to give that cooperation. I do not know how to characterize this attitude being adopted by you.

(7) During our talks yesterday, you asked me whether we will continue to cooperate with the Government's war efforts even if the Chinese enter the war. I thought that the answer to this question would be clear from what I have already stated that we were in favour of supporting the Government's defence effort even in 1962 when the Chinese army was advancing into the Indian territory. But, since this question was again raised by you, I may once again repeat this: the Chinese entry (if it takes place) would not make the slightest difference to our general line of support to the Government's effort in this war.

(8) I would, however, be failing in my duty if I do not make it clear that cooperation with the Government in war effort does not mean endorsing all the policies being pursued by the Government.

Being a party of opposition, it will be our duty to criticize—sharply criticize—Government policies wherever we think they are wrong.

Being a party which is dedicated to the cause of the downtrodden masses, it will be our endeavour to champion the interests of the working people as against those of the landlords and capitalists.

Being a party which does not equate patriotism with blind hatred for the neighbouring countries, we would always be advocating the line of peaceful settlement of disputes with all neighbouring countries (including China and Pakistan) even while taking all the requisite measure for defending national territory against armed attacks.

(9) In every one of these respects, it has fallen to our lot to take position which are contrary to those taken by the ruling party. It is this that has brought on us the anger of the Government and opposition from some other political elements. Let me, however, make it plain that neither the anger of the Government nor opposition from some other political elements in the country would prevent us from championing the cause of the working people, or from advocating the line of peaceful settlement of disputes with the neighbouring countries.

(10) The question, therefore, is: does the Government think that the existence of such a party is a danger to the Government's war effort? Can you go on with the war effort only if you suppress a party which refuses to give up its opposition to the pro-landlord and pro-capitalist policies of the ruling party, a party which refuses to give up its conviction that peaceful settlement of disputes with neighbours is in the best interests of the nation?

If that is the attitude of the Government, of course you will have to keep my comrades and colleagues in jail. Otherwise—if you do not consider it a danger to the Government and to the nation to allow such a party to function along with other political parties, you will have to reconsider your whole policy.

Since the points raised by you and answered by me here are of general interest, I am releasing this note to the press.

Yours sincerely,

E.M.S. Namboodiripad

## **Punjabi Suba And Communist Party\***

*Resolution Taken By The Punjab State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)*

After India won independence, the Congress rulers not only refused to implement the promise of the freedom movement regarding the linguistic reorganization of States but made all efforts to suppress the democratic movement in support of this demand all over the country.

The people of Andhra, Maharashtra, Gujarat, etc. had to face the most severe repression of the Congress regime. It was only the united democratic movements of the people of these States, their most arduous struggles and innumerable sacrifices that forced the Congress Government to reorganize these States on linguistic basis.

India is a vast country inhabited by people speaking various languages. In such a country, for the cultural, political and economic development of the people of the various linguistic groups, it is necessary that the States are organized on the basis of democratic principles.

The aim of the foreign rulers was to enslave the people of India. Under foreign rule, the States were not organized on the basis of any democratic principle, resulting on the one hand in retarding the development of the various languages and cultures and on the other, in instigating communal and national conflicts among the people speaking various languages.

This old pattern of the States was not in the interests of the entire people of the country and its unity, but it only served the interests of the foreign exploiting rulers who wanted to keep the country undeveloped in every way.

The opposition on the part of Congress rulers to the reorganization of States on the basis of democratic principles was an expression of their anti-democratic policies aiming to concentrate and centralize

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political power in the hands of the vested interests. In pursuing this anti-democratic aim, the policy of the Congress rulers in relation to the Punjabi language and Punjabi-speaking State has been all the more dangerous and disruptive.

### **Hindu Communalism In Punjab**

In order to reject this democratic demand, the Congress rulers have encouraged communal divisions among the people and bargained and compromised at times with Hindu and Sikh communalists.

In Punjab the Jana Sangh and other communalists raise the bogey of "Sikh Raj". "Division of India" etc. over the issue of the Punjabi language and Punjabi-speaking State and thus mislead the Hindu masses. It is the misfortune of Punjab that the Hindu communalists in Punjab are misleading the Hindu masses regarding the same democratic principles for which the people of Andhra, Maharashtra and Gujarat fought irrespective of religion or community and set glorious examples of democratic unity. Instead of building the unity of Hindus, Sikhs, the entire people of the State, they sow the seeds of communal division.

### **Punjabi Suba And Master Tara Singh**

Under the leadership of Master Tara Singh, the Akali Dal has been utilizing the issue of the Punjabi language and Punjabi speaking State, putting forward this question not as a united democratic demand of the entire Punjabi people but as a question concerning only the religion of the Sikhs. They do not consider the Congress rulers' refusal to demarcate the State on a linguistic basis as an injustice to the entire people of Punjab and as an anti-democratic step, but only as discrimination against the Sikhs.

This communal policy of the Akali leaders has served neither the interests of the Punjabi language nor created conditions under which the Congress rulers can be forced to concede the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State. Because of this policy of Master Tara Singh and the Akali leaders, Hindu communalists have been even more successful in misleading the Hindu masses and the hands of the Congress rulers have been strengthened in turning down this demand.

The experience of the agitations and struggles of Master Tara Singh and his Akali Dal shows that the Akali leaders utilize the question of the Punjabi language and linguistic reorganization of the State for arriving at some compromise with the Congress rulers for a share in the State Government.

The Sachar Formula and the Regional Formula formed such bases for compromise between the Congress rulers and the Akali Party.

The Communist Party had made it very clear that the Sachar formula or the Regional formula could not become democratic solutions or meet the demand for the Punjabi language and the Punjabi-speaking State; on the contrary, these formulae were a compromise arrived at between the Congress rulers and the Akali leaders in order to deny this democratic demand.

The Party had also declared that these formulae instead of solving the problems of Punjab would further complicate matters. At the time of the general elections in 1957, the Akali leaders compromised with the Congress rulers on the basis of the Regional formula but this compromise could not last very long. Prior to the general elections in 1962, the Akali leaders once again launched a struggle for Punjabi Suba.

### **Communist Party And Reorganization Of States**

The Communist Party firmly stands by the demand for the linguistic demarcation of the States. During the struggles for the setting up of the linguistic States in Andhra, Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat, etc. the Party has played a leading role and that is why it has been the special target of the repression of the Government.

On the basis of the same principle, the Communist Party upholds the demand for the linguistic demarcation of the Punjab, for the development of Punjabi language and its use in all spheres of State administration. The Communist Party tirelessly works to build the broad democratic unity of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, the entire Punjabi people, to force the Congress rulers to concede this demand.

## **Punjabi Suba And Sant Fateh Singh**

During the morcha for Punjabi Suba in 1961 and after, the secular and democratic approach and agitation of the Communist Party created a strong impression among the Sikh masses against the communal and disruptive approach of Master Tara Singh regarding Punjabi Suba. Within the Akali party an appreciable opposition emerged under the leadership of Sant Fateh Singh against the leadership of Master Tara Singh.

In 1961, at the time of his interviews with Prime Minister Nehru, Sant Fateh Singh did not put forward the demand for Punjabi Suba as a demand of the Sikhs alone, but as a democratic demand of the entire Punjabi people. This demarcation of Sant Fateh Singh and his group from the communal approach of Master Tara Singh regarding the Punjabi Suba was welcomed by democratic people all over the country and created a favourable atmosphere for building the unity of the entire Punjabi people over the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State.

At the time of Sant Fateh Singh's interview with Prime Minister Shastri on August 7, 1965, the Congress rulers once again turned down the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State and Sant Fateh Singh has now declared his intention to go on fast unto death from September 10, 1965.

This attitude of the Congress rulers and the decision of the Sant to fast unto death will undoubtedly create a serious situation in the State. The main responsibility for creating such a situation lies on the shoulders of the Congress rulers.

The Communist Party condemns this anti-democratic attitude of the Government. At the same time, the Party also considers that the manner in which Sant Fateh Singh has raised the demand this time will not be helpful in building the secular unity to the Punjabi people, nor will it help in forcing the Government to change its attitude.

Sant Fateh Singh has put forward the demand for a Punjabi-speaking State linking it with the question of discrimination against the Sikhs and the incidents of sacrilege of holy Granth Sahib at Ludhiana, Doraha,



etc. For the realization of this demand he has appealed to the religious sentiments of the Sikhs and the religious institution, the Golden Temple, has been made the seat of this agitation.

The Communist Party wants to point out that the present stand of Sant Fateh Singh on the Punjabi-speaking State is on the same level as the same communal disruptive stand of Master Tara Singh, though in the past he had demarcated himself from the Master's stand.

The demand for a Punjabi-speaking State is in no way related to the complaints for discrimination against Sikhs, etc. The question of the Punjabi-speaking State is neither religious or communal nor solely a demand of the Sikhs. Whosoever puts it forward as a demand of the Sikhs alone or as a religious or communal demand will only strengthen the hands of the Congress rulers and enable them to disrupt the people and turn down the democratic demand.

### **Communist Party's Appeal**

The Communist Party, therefore appeals to Sant Fateh Singh to reconsider his present approach towards the punjabi-speaking State and the methods of agitation and struggle for its realization. He should put forward this demand not as a demand of the Sikhs alone, but of the entire Punjabi people. Instead of linking their demand with grievances of the Sikhs alone and launching struggles from religious institutions, he should launch the agitation and struggle in all villages and for building the unity of the entire Punjabi people.

The Communist Party demands that the Government should reorganize the State on the same principles on the basis of which the States of Andhra, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, etc. have been reorganized.

The continued refusal of the Government to concede this demand strengthens both the Hindu and Sikh communalists and disrupts the democratic struggles of the workers, peasants and other working people.

The Communist Party calls on its members and units to be aware of this anti-democratic and disruptive policy of the Congress Government, to build the democratic unity of the entire Punjabi

people and in order to force the Government to concede this demand build a broad democratic movement. While exposing the anti-democratic and disruptive policy of the Government, it is also necessary to fight against the communal policies of the Hindus as well as Sikh communalists regarding the Punjabi language and the Punjabi-speaking State.

The Communist Party appeals to the workers, peasants and working masses to understand the harm of communal propaganda and not permit any disruption of their united struggles.

## **Atrocious Jail Condition In Assam\***

### *Vindictive Treatment To Communist Detenus*

Jganeswar Das, member of the Assam State Committee of the Communist Party of India, has sent us the following letter about jail conditions in Assam.

Just a few days ago, I was released from jail. I am perhaps the only Communist detenué who has been fortunate to be released in Assam.

But my fortune was built at the cost of my health. While at Nowgong jail, I had a heart-attack. The attack proved severe and for a whole night I was gasping for breath at Nowgong jail hospital, and doctors were counting my last hours.

News of my severe illness spread. Telegrams, letters and resolutions demanding better treatment and release were sent by Left parties, leaders and public organizations all over Assam. There was widespread indignation in my home-town Karimganj and people of all political parties here including some leading Congressmen, sent telegrams to the Chief Minister of Assam.

As a result I was immediately transferred to the Medical College Hospital at Gauhati. Here I had to face another ordeal. The police officer who was on guard duty demanded that I should be handcuffed in my sickbed. Have you heard anything like that before? I told him that I would not allow him to do that as long as I was alive and he could handcuff my dead body. Still the police officer persisted. The report of this evoked protest from all quarters. And the police officer did not succeed in his design.

An all-party deputation met Chief Minister Chaliha demanding my release and protesting against the attempted police torture when I was on the sickbed. Two opposition MLAs also joined the protest.

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As a result of all this, I was released unconditionally. Thanks to the popular intervention, my life was saved.

I have left my comrades behind the prison bars—many of them are seriously ill. It is, of course, no wonder that they should be ill. Rather, it would be surprising if detenus in Assam jails are not ill.

Communist detenus are treated very badly in Assam jails. Perhaps nowhere in India are conditions so bad. Except one, all the detenus are treated like ordinary criminals and kept as Class II prisoners. They have been given the worst diet, they have to clean their dishes, glasses and clothes. Even a sick detenu is not given proper medical diet.

The Assam Government has made the strange rule that only those who pay income-tax are eligible for Class I. That the Government is applying this rule vindictively against the Communist detenus is proved by the fact that detenus of other political parties detained under the DIR have been treated as Class I prisoners though none of them pay incometax.

Among the Communist detenus are comrades like Achintya Bhattacharya, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, who was the Secretary of the Cachar Congress Committee from 1940 to 1945, whose contribution to the national movement is much more than many of the present leaders of the Congress in Assam.

There is Nandeswar Talukdar who is a recognized leader of the people of Assam.

There is seventy-year-old Ramanath Bhattacharya who has given fifty years of his life to the national movement. He is one of the pioneers who established the Vidyashram at Sylhet. He was in Pakistan jails for five years and on release migrated to India. Such old and respected veterans of the national movement are treated as ordinary criminals in the jails in Assam today.

As a result of all this, all of them are ill and many of them seriously suffering. Achintya Bhattacharya and Uma Sarma are suffering from

eye trouble and intestinal diseases. Bipin Daimani is bed-ridden with asthma, Abdul Bari is suffering from high blood-pressure. Naren Datta, Kalyan Bhattacharya and Ramapada Bhattacharya are all seriously ill.

The Assam Government has sanctioned Rs. fifty per family as allowance to the families of the victimized detenus. Only one or two have received more. Whereas in West Bengal, family allowance is sanctioned per head at Rs. thirty per family, whatever be its size. Many deputations have waited on the Chief Minister of Assam and detenus have made personal applications. Every time the Chief Minister has made sweet promises, but nothing has changed in regard to the treatment meted out to the detenus.

It is no wonder then that the detenus are ill and are becoming physical wrecks inside jails while the members of their families are passing their days in starvation and semistarvation.

## Statement On Indo-Pakistan War : 1965\*

[Issued By E.M.S. Namboodiripad On Behalf of The Central Committee of C.P.I. (M) On November 2, 1965]

The outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan war created a situation which was particularly difficult for our Party. We had to lay down our policy at a time when the overwhelming majority of the top and middle leadership of the Party was not available for that collected discussion which is necessary for arriving at correct decisions.

Those of us who remained free, had, therefore, to discharge our tasks under severe handicaps. I myself had, in my capacity as the General Secretary, to make pronouncements on the basis of decisions taken by the Party previously, but without any opportunity to consult my colleagues. The comrades who are running the central organ, *People's Democracy* and the various state organs of the Party have also been doing what they thought was necessary and correct to meet the developing situation.

It was natural, under these circumstances, that there were certain divergencies in approach and emphasis as between the pronouncements made by different individuals and organs of the Party. Conscious as we were of the need to overcome this difficulty as quickly as possible, we arranged for utmost possible exchange of views among the leading comrades of the Party; all methods available under the existing circumstances were utilized to consult the views of as many comrades as possible.

We have now been able to assimilate the various points of view exchanged and, on that basis, to arrive at conclusions which represent the viewpoint of the Party. I am, therefore, issuing this statement, on behalf of the Central Committee of our Party, setting out the conclusions so arrived at.

1. Our Party has repeatedly made it clear that it stands for the defence of national territory when it is under attack. This position

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was recently restated by Comrade P. Sundarayya in his reply to Central Home Minister Nanda. It is, therefore, obvious that when the Pakistani rulers decided to send infiltrators into Kashmir, our Party should have no hesitation to come out in support of government measures to throw out these infiltrators. This, however, can be successfully done only with the cooperation of the people of Kashmir. The Party would, therefore, warn the government that measures to throw out the infiltrators should not in any way lead to harassment of the state's people.

2. Our Party considers that defence of our territory against Pakistani attack should be combined with serious efforts to settle the Indo-Pakistan problems in general and the Kashmir problem in particular through peaceful means. Any attempt to use Pakistan's sending of infiltrators into Kashmir to extend the conflict, or to try to settle the problem through military means would be harmful to the interests of India as well as Pakistan.

Our Party would in this connection like to draw the attention of the people to the implications of preparing the country for a prolonged war with our neighbours, whether Pakistan or China. The financial burden imposed on the government by the state of cold war (which once broke out into a hot war) with China, even while strained relations were continuing with Pakistan, has been roughly estimated at Rs. 900 crores per year. This is about the same as the actual public sector outlay for the second five-year plan which, at the time of its formulation, was considered by some people as "over-ambitious". (The public sector outlay for the second five-year period was Rs. 4,800 crores; the actual outlay during this period, however, was only Rs. 4,500 crores, or Rs. 900 crores on an average for average for every year of the second five-year plan). It is obvious that this financial burden will grow enormously because of the war with Pakistan. According to one calculation made unofficially, Rs. 500 crores was the additional expenditure incurred during the August-September weeks of war with Pakistan. Even the present state of skirmishes within the framework of a formally-declared cease-fire would itself raise the Rs. 900-crores-per-year military budget several times.

4. The financial burden mentioned above is only part of the story. The economic consequences of the state of war are still more serious, still more lasting. For, not only has money to be raised for military expenditure, but the entire economy of the nation has to be geared to the needs of war. Production, transport and communications and all other spheres of economic activity have to be adjusted to the needs of the huge military machine required to face the well-trained and well-equipped armies of two neighbouring countries along the entire land frontier of India. Considering the fact that war with either China or Pakistan singly, not to speak of a simultaneous war with both, cannot be a "short and swift war", it is obvious that the perspective of planning for peaceful development will have to be replaced by the perspective of planning for war. Indications are available that this will take place. The Prime Minister and the Planning Commission have already been giving what is called a "defence orientation" to the fourth five-year plan. Although a clear picture has not yet emerged, it is obvious that such basic objectives of planning as industrial and agricultural development, improvement in the standards of living of the people, the attainment of a minimum level of income, reduction of social inequalities, etc., will have to give place to the needs of feeding the gigantic military machine which has to be built up.

5. The social consequences which follow from these economic transformations will radically alter the face of Indian society. Shortage of consumption goods, disruption of family life, inadequate facilities for the education and public health of citizens, etc., will raise innumerable problems and lead to acute social conflicts. The people of Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan are already suffering from the direct effects of the war—destruction of their homes, loss of crops and livestock, dislocation of economy, closure of factories, etc.

6. Out of all this would naturally arise that political instability which will put an end to what the leaders of our ruling party claim with pride for India—her parliamentary democracy. Already before the full onset of a militarized economy, we see how the institution of parliamentary democracy is getting emasculated. The notorious Defence of India Rules, whose indiscriminate and partisan use has



become the target of criticism by large numbers of democratic people in our country, is only the beginning. It is bound to develop further into more and more attacks on the institutions of parliamentary democracy if the war continues. The ruling party and the government which had no hesitation to launch an open attack on our Party in the name of the continuing cold war with China, will not hesitate to attack other parties if war with both China and Pakistan continues on a long-term basis. This would ultimately lead to an Indian version of that very anti-democratic rule which has been established in several other countries.

7. Such an extension of the conflict will give an opportunity to the imperialists to carry on their intrigues in India as well as in Pakistan. It is necessary in this connection to recall that it was the British imperialists who created the problem of Kashmir. It was they, together with the United States and other imperialists, that used the United Nations Security Council to keep India and Pakistan quarrelling over the future of Kashmir. The American imperialists carried this policy further by arming Pakistan and drawing her into the net of their SEATO and CENTO military blocs. Having thus armed the Pakistani army, they subsequently used the opportunity of the India-China conflict to dangle before the Indian ruling classes the prospect of military "aid" to India. When Pakistan sent the infiltrators into Kashmir, it was hoping on utilizing India's growing dependence on the imperialists to put pressure on India to get a solution of the Kashmir problem in its favour. Nothing would please the imperialists more than the continued tension and occasional military actions between the two neighbouring countries. On the other hand, nothing would conform more to the interests of the two neighbouring nations than to have the disputes between them peacefully settled.

8. Unfortunately, however, there are powerful groups in the country who, are from seeing and fighting the imperialist game, actually help it. They look upon the outbreak of war between India and Pakistan as a good opportunity, rather than a calamity, for the nation. They raise slogans of "inflicting a total defeat on Pakistan", "fight to the finish", "uncompromising struggle against theocratic state", and so on. These elements have succeeded in creating a war-hysteria among the people.

Leaders of the ruling party are also exploiting this situation in order to divert people's attention from the problems of their livelihood—problems which have been created by the bankrupt policies of the government and accentuated by the bankrupt policies of the government and accentuated by the outbreak of the war.

9. The untenability of the position taken by these elements can be clear from the fact that the government of India itself is committed, both before world public opinion and before the people of Kashmir, to deal with the state of Jammu and Kashmir in a way different from that of other states which acceded to the Indian Union. Although the validity of the accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union may stand the test of legality, a part of that state has in fact remained with Pakistan for eighteen years. The cease-fire line which divides this part of Kashmir from the rest of the state was laid down by the United Nations whose observers are looking after its proper observance. Furthermore, the government of India had committed itself to the United Nations to hold a plebiscite when certain preconditions have been fulfilled; it is only because the government of Pakistan did not fulfil those preconditions that the occasion for plebiscite did not arise. Internally, too, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was allowed to have its own Constituent Assembly; special provisions were written into the Indian Constitution safeguarding the rights of the Kashmir people.

10. It is, therefore, totally unrealistic to argue, as the spokesmen of the government of India are doing, that the state of Jammu and Kashmir is in no way different from any other state of India. These arguments run against the reality that, on a number of occasions, talks had been held between India and Pakistan on this problem and even as late as in 1964 the late Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, got the case against Sheikh Abdullah withdrawn even though the charge against him was that he conspired against India. Not only was Abdullah released from jail but was welcomed and treated as the Prime Minister's own guest in Delhi. This, too, after Abdullah had made several public pronouncements that he wanted to have negotiations with the leaders of India as well as of Pakistan in order to settle the future of Kashmir. Having been received in Delhi, he was allowed by Nehru to go to

Pakistan. It was thus clear that the government of India at that time had looked upon the future of Kashmir as a political problem to be settled through consultations among the leaders of India, Pakistan and Kashmir itself.

11. No useful purpose will, therefore, be served by repeating ad nauseam (as the leaders of the ruling party are doing) that there is no Kashmir problem. The fact is that the government of India itself took this problem to the United Nations in 1947. Even today, the Security Council resolution of September 20, 1965, which India has accepted envisages political negotiations after the cease-fire and withdrawals are effected. It is also obvious that the United States is tightening its screw on India by withholding food and economic "aid" precisely in order to force India to go to the negotiating table and "settle" the problem in such a way as to facilitate further imperialist intrigues in the sub-continent. This pressure of the United States is being increasingly felt on the government of India, as can be seen from the pronouncements made by S. K. Patil who was sent to the United States as the Prime Minister's special emissary. It is difficult to believe that the government of India will be able to resist this immense pressure from the United States so long as it continues to pursue policies of reliance on the United States for food as well as economic and military "aid".

12. Taking all these factors into consideration, any reasonable person would come to the conclusion that it will be better and more advantageous to India to come to terms with Pakistan and with the Kashmir people themselves, than to look for assistance from the United States in persuading the Pakistani rulers to accept India's terms. The eighteen year-long experience of the United States' handling of the Indo-Pak and Kashmir questions has proved the utter futility of relying on it either for settling with Pakistan or fighting her. The only result of such dependence on the United States will be the perpetuation of the present state of tension with Pakistan.

13. Our Party, therefore, calls on the people to demand of the government that it should not surrender to this pressure from the imperialists, but should take the path of direct negotiations with Pakistan. It should be remembered that India had concluded a

cease-fire agreement in 1948 under which a part of Kashmir has remained with Pakistan for eighteen years.

14. The Kashmir problem, however, has another aspect, the internal aspect. Even after Pakistan agrees not to interfere in the affairs of Kashmir, the question of relation between that state and the Indian Union will remain. This will have to be solved through consultations between the government of India on the one hand and the ruling and opposition parties within Kashmir on the other. Many of the attributes of the special status given to Kashmir at the time of framing the Indian constitution may have now become outmoded and may therefore require revision. These and other questions can and will have to be dealt with as part of the internal problem of relation between the centre and the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

15. While thus calling for a settlement of the Indo-Pak problem through the method of peaceful negotiations, our Party is aware that the Pakistani rulers are threatening the integrity of that part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir which has been in India's possession for the last eighteen years. This demands of our Party that it helps the government in the defence measures it is taking to resist any Pakistani attack. Our Party, however, cannot agree to any measure which will amount to an attack on territories which have been in Pakistani possession for the last eighteen years.

16. Our Party wants to make it clear also that the methods adopted by the government in mobilising the country for the war are anti-people. The further and still more indiscriminate use of the Defence of India Rules not only against our Party but also other Left parties; the large-scale arrests and detentions of muslims; the manner in which defence committees, homeguards and other organisations are filled with anti-democratic elements; the various forms of pressure put on the common people to make contributions towards the war fund even though the big profiteers and blackmarketeers are allowed to get away with nominal contributions; the efforts made to prevent the common people from raising their voice against increasing cost of living and other problems of their life—all these go to show that the government is defending itself against the people, defending the vested interests, rather than defending the nation. The continued

detention of the leadership of our Party and other forms of attacks on the Party underline this anti-democratic trend. It is obvious that our Party cannot agree to such methods of “organizing national defence”. It will have to fight for the reversal of these policies and for the adoption of democratic methods. We hope that other democratic parties and democratic elements will cooperate with us in fighting for it.

17. The Central Committee in the end appeals to the people to defend their democratic rights, to defeat imperialist machinations, refuse to be swayed by the war hysteria and to work for a peaceful solution of the disputes with not only Pakistan but also with China.

## Struggles In Kerala\*

Statutory rationing was enforced in Kerala from October 24. Reports are pouring in from all parts of the State of the distress caused because large numbers of people have been given no ration cards for various reasons.

Even those who do not own or cultivate any land have been denied ration cards. Many people who had recorded in the declaration form that they own a quarter or half acre of land have been told that they cannot draw any rations though it needs no saying that the crops on a quarter or half acre of land will not be adequate even to provide the seed and cover the expenses. In many places, people have shifted from rice cultivation on their small plots of lands and are growing coconut and palm trees, vegetables, etc. But in the Government records they still remain rice cultivators and so it has been ordained that they cannot get any rations.

During the period of informal rationing, there was an open market from which they could buy some rice. Now with statutory rationing and no open market, from where are these people to get any rice ?

In many cases, declaration forms were left in the houses with a very short time to fill them up and submit them. By the time illiterate householders mobilized help to fill up the forms and deliver them, it was too late and they are without cards.

Some enumerators have created even greater difficulties. They visited houses and only those who were present at that moment were recorded. They refused to take note of those who had gone to work in the factories and students who had gone to schools. These enumerators thought that all the people should absent themselves from work and studies and patiently wait at home till the enumerator found time to visit them and record their existence. In two wards in a small town, 102 units were thus cut down in twenty-six houses. From this one can imagine how many people such enumerators have written off as not existing in the State as a whole.

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In quite some places ration cards have not still been distributed and people are crowding the Supply Offices for their cards because without the cards they cannot buy any foodgrains. There were reports in the Press that in such cases rations would be given on the old cards, but people have found that this is not being done.

On top of all this comes the compulsory collection in the name of the Defence Fund. Many of these people have contributed to the Defence Fund in their own places of work and on other occasions and schools have collected from all the students. Yet, when they go to collect their ration cards, they are told that apart from the five paise which is the price of the card, they have to pay at least a rupee. There are reports that up to five rupees had been demanded and collected in this manner. And such collections are being made from people who even when they get their ration cards will not have enough cash to buy their full rations every week.

The situation is becoming extremely serious in various parts of the State and there is pressing demand from all quarters for urgent steps by the Government to right these wrongs done to the people.

### **Employers' Provocation**

In a number of factories and estates in Kerala, specially in the High Ranges, labour disputes have existed for long and workers are being forced into struggles.

● Over 3,000 workers in T. R. and T. Estate have been in the midst of a struggle for about ninety days. Not only no settlement has been possible, but the management is refusing to accept even a single proposal to restore normalcy. In fact, the management is further complicating the problem by resorting to repressive measures and provocative acts. Over a hundred workers have been arrested so far and charged in nine cases. A police camp has been opened in the estate and the workers are being beaten and terrorized. On October 8, Governor Jain visited the estate and the workers told him of their difficulties and sufferings and the entire background to the present situation. But so far no move has been made by the Governor or his administration to bring at least some relaxation to the tense situation prevailing in the estate.

● In the Manalaro estate in Nelliampati, 3,500 workers have been engaged in a grim struggle for a number of days. The workers began satyagraha before the manager's office from October 17.

● In Pambanar, workers belonging to the Ranikovil division of the S.I.T.E. Company have been offering mass satyagraha from October 11. To avoid a strike in the present situation and at the same time to draw attention to the demands of the workers, the Joint Secretary of the Peeramedu Plantation Workers's Union, P. I. Matthew, began a hunger-strike from October 22. From October 27, a police party led by a Sub-Inspector forcibly removed him from there and demolished the shed which has been erected for the hunger-strike. The next day, in protest, all the workers went on strike and staged a demonstration in Pambanar town. Matthew is continuing his hunger-strike in the Kottayam District Hospital, while a Vice-President of the Union, Balayya, has begun a hunger-strike in the estate.

● Leaders of the Kerala Plantation Labour Federation have been pointing out that plantation workers all over Kerala are being forced into an agitation for their legitimate demands.

Nor only in the plantations but in many factories also, long-drawn-out struggles have been going on.

● It is months since the workers of the Vanaja Textiles in Trichur began their struggle for annual bonus and the factory has been locked out since August 31 last.

● Over two months have passed since tile workers in a factory in Ottappalam began their struggle for bonus.

● In the Sabaragiri Project, 2,500 workers working on one of the dams have declared that they would be going on strike from the second week of November.

● Three thousand agricultural workers in the rice bowl of Kuttanad have struck work from October 28 for wages. The police are beating up the workers in an attempt to terrorize them.

● The agitation of the cigar and bidi workers of Cannanore district is continuing and the Joint Action Committee has declared that they will soon go on strike.



Not all the struggles that are going on in the State have been listed here, only a few to show how an explosive situation is developing in the State.

Many workers and leaders have expressed their feeling that they are not happy to go on strike or other forms of action in the present situation facing the country, but the managements, by their behaviour, are leaving no other way open to them. And the Government also, instead forcing the managements to behave, are helping them with the police to suppress the workers.

In the T. R. and T. Estate, for instance, the workers are fighting to re-establish, the rights which they had won in 1963. After a fortyfive-day strike then, an agreement had been reached, but the management has since then refused to honour it or implement it.

In Nelliampati, the workers are in struggle because they have till now not been paid the increased wages from 1963 recommended by the Wage Board. Also, a good section of the workers have been kept out of the purview of the Tea Wage Board's recommendation.

In Pambanar, the workers are fighting against dismissals, unilateral increasing of work-load by the management, refusal to pay wages, etc. The tripartite conferences called by the Deputy Labour Commissioner could not yield any result because of the recalcitrance of the management.

In the Sabaragiri project the same workers who are fighting today had been on a strike from April 29 to May 7 last. That strike had been called off after an agreement was reached. The contractors are now refusing to honour the agreement and are harassing the workers.

Thus, almost all the struggles which are being fought by the workers in Kerala today have been forced on them by the employers who have made it a practice to go back on agreements which they themselves have signed even before the ink on their signature is dry.

It is the Government and its anti-working class policies which encourage the employers to behave in this arrogant and irresponsible manner. The Government refuses to accept its responsibility of putting these employers in their place and forcing them to honour

agreements that have been reached—most of them in the presence of officials of the Labour Department. The Government can certainly force the employers to attend tripartite meetings which in many cases they are refusing to do now and even when they attend they make it a point to sabotage them by refusing to accept even the tiniest proposal. Instead, the Government is giving all help to the employers by keeping the police force at their beck and call.

The Government, if it is serious about production during the emergency, would not behave in this manner. But, as things are happening today, the Government's attitude is that only workers have responsibilities during the emergency and for uninterrupted production and the managements can with impunity carry on their activities of sabotage.

The Government cannot mislead either the workers or the people that all these struggle are being engineered by the Communists. Quite often the leadership is in the hands of the INTUC and in other places, as in Cannanore district, the INTUC is a part of the Joint Action Committee.

But the employers and Government are getting support from one quarter—the Dangeites in Kerala. They are campaigning that whatever be the crimes of the employers, it is anti-national for workers to go on strike now.

One of the important leaders of the Dangeites in Kerala, E. Gopalakrishna Menon, addressing a meeting in Kottapuram near Kodungalloor on October 26, appealed to the workers to go on increasing production irrespective of what the managements did. This is not an isolated example, it is a consistent line with the Dangeites at present.

When workers are wondering how defence can be strengthened without protecting the workers from such onslaughts of the employers, the Dangeites in the name of strengthening defence are allowing the employers to get away with their criminal sabotage activities. That is the depths to which they have sunk with their class-collaborationist policies.

### **A Significant Victory**

In a by-election to the Nanduvil Panchayat in Kottayam district, Communist candidate K. C. Antony won, defeating the Congress candidate.

This victory, though in a by-election to a Panchayat is significant not only because the defeated candidate was backed by the Congress and the powerful church.

The Communist candidate won with a majority of only three votes, but its significance can be seen if certain other facts are remembered. Even in the last general election in Kerala in the beginning of 1965, the Communist candidate had secured only 190 votes from this ward. This time, in the Panchayat by-election, the Communist candidate polled 416 votes.

The period from February last when the general elections took place to the date of this Panchayat by-elections was precisely the period when the Government, the Congress Party and all the other reactionaries had conducted a big campaign against the Communist Party saying it was “anti-national”, that it was an “agency of Peking and Pindi”, etc. In this Christian area, the Church also raised the cry of Communism against religion.

With all that, the Communist Party increased its vote by 215 in this ward during this period. Proof, if it were at all needed that the people do not believe the slanders against the Communist Party who has always stood with them, what they know are the misdeeds of the Congress rule against whom they have given their verdict.

## On To United Action

*Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", November 7, 1965, on the First Anniversary of the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)*

A year has passed since the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of India was held at Calcutta.

Hailed as the "Congress of Struggle against Revisionism," the Congress adopted a new Programme for the Party, a document which marked a complete departure from the class-collaborationist ideology and policies propagated by the Dange group of revisionists. The Programme restored the militant spirit of Marxism-Leninism and laid the basis for sustained ideological work in favour of the proletarian class outlook.

It was in this spirit of militant struggle for the purity of Marxism-Leninism that the Congress proceeded to examine the current economic and political developments in the country and outlined the tasks of the Party. In a comprehensive resolution outlining these tasks, the Party Congress brought out sharply the main features of the crisis of the capitalist path taken by the ruling classes, pointed out how this crisis cannot be averted within the framework of the landlord-bourgeois policies pursued by the ruling Congress Party.

Basing itself on such an analysis, the Congress called on the entire Party to build up a powerful mass movement—a mass movement of the workers, peasants and other toiling sections of the people—as the most effective lever to build the unity of all the democratic and patriotic sections of the people.

### **Vanguard of The Working Class**

Conscious as the Congress was that the class policies outlined in its Programme and resolutions can be carried out only through an

organization firmly based on the working people who work and struggle in factories and mines, plantations and other places of work, it made important changes in the Party Constitution. Utmost emphasis was laid on branches and groups formed on the basis of place of work and profession, wherever such branches and groups can be formed. It was also laid down that the primary units of the Party should be organs which function from day-to-day and intervene in the day-to-day life of the working people rather than a body which meets occasionally and disperses after taking some general decisions.

With this end in view, the Congress decided that the lowest units of the Party should be of such sizes that every member can be available not only for deliberation over the vital problems of the people, but also for the check-up of the work done by each member to help the people in solving their problems.

The fact that all these decisions were taken after thorough discussions from the primary Party Conferences upwards and that divergences in outlook and approach manifested themselves in the course of these discussions were broadcast by the enemies of the Party to show that the Party was on the brink of a split. These prophets of doom, however, were disappointed when they noted in the end that the Party emerged out of the Congress as the ideologically, politically and organizationally united vanguard of the working class.

The four months of preparation for the Congress and the week-long deliberations of the Congress itself were accompanied by huge demonstrations of the working people around the Party which was trying to purge itself of the hang-overs of revisionism. An intense struggle developed not only among the tens of thousands of Party members but millions of Party sympathizers as to who represents and should inherit the vast amount of political assets built up around India's Communist movement. Any impartial observer could see that the Calcutta Congress would culminate in putting the final seal of approval on the Communist Party and reject the claims of the revisionists.

## **Behind The Govt. Attack**

It is, therefore, not surprising that the ruling Congress Party decided to launch an immediate attack. They were prepared to tolerate the existence of a Communist Party provided ceased to be imbued with the militant spirit of class struggle.

They had hoped and expected Dange and Co. to take India's Communist movement along paths which were not dangerous to the ruling classes. They had hoped and expected that the Emergency and the repression which followed it would ensure that whatever resistance was put up to these class-collaborationist policies would be thoroughly ineffective.

In this, however, they were completely disappointed. The huge mass rallies in favour of those who fought these class-collaborationist policies and the final Calcutta rally showed that the working people of India unceremoniously rejected Dange and Co. The material which came out of the Party Congress showed that the Party would go into action in mobilizing all sections of the working people—action which would force the Government to reverse its policies. Such a development being dangerous to the regime the Congress Government decided to strike—strike hard and quick before it was too late.

## **Party Forges Ahead**

The arrest of prominent West Bengal leaders on the eve of the Party Congress followed by countrywide arrests of nearly a thousand leading Communists was undoubtedly a big blow to the Party. No other Party could have received such a blow and yet continued to function as our Party has been doing for more than ten months. Not only did the Party continue to function but mobilized the people on various burning problems like food, bonus, civil liberties, etc. It was also able to win impressive victories in the Kerala, Calcutta and Ahmedabad Corporation and other local elections.

On this anniversary of the Party Congress, therefore, we pay our respectful tribute to the leaders who helped the Party to evolve such policies as would stand the test of such as severe attack on the Party.

We pay our respectful tribute also to the tens of thousands of Party members and the hundreds of thousands of Party sympathizers who showed their grit and determination to face the situation and helped the Party to advance along the path laid down by the Seventh Party Congress.

On this anniversary of the Party Congress, we cannot but note that still more serious and difficult problems are present now than a year before. Not only have the problems of food, prices, taxes, etc. become much worse than ever before, but to these have been added the difficulties and complexities created by the outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan war. As has been clearly pointed out in the Statement issued by the General Secretary on behalf of the Central Committee (printed on page 3 of this issue), the nations's economy is being militarized with all the disastrous consequences which follow from such a course. The task of mass mobilization and action which the Party has to fulfil now are, therefore, still more difficult, still more complex.

It is, however, a matter of satisfaction that the ideological and political lead given by the Party Congress a year ago is adequate guarantee that these complexes and difficult problems will be solved by the collective will of the Party. The programme and Resolutions on tasks of the Party adopted by the Congress enabled the Party to evolve concrete policies which will identify it with all that is democratic and progressive in the national consciousness, even while keeping away from the bourgeois-nationalist and chauvinistic current.

### **Prophets of Doom Doomed Again**

The outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan war and the developments following it once again enabled the prophets of doom to sow confusion and demoralization among the mass of Party sympathizers. They began to forecast that the logic of the situation was inevitably leading to such divergences within the Party that it would be completely immobilized and disrupted.

The Statement issued on behalf of the Central Committee shows that these prophets of doom are meeting the same fate which they met a year ago. Once again the Party has used the well-tested proletarian method of arriving at correct conclusions—the method

of collective discussion which involves criticism, self-criticism and correction of mistakes. Despite the severe handicaps inherent in the situation, the Party organized as wide an exchange of views as possible and in the end came to animous conclusions. Every Party member and friend of the Party can now go ahead with confidence that the Party will pursue policies which will further strengthen its bonds with the people without in the the least being swayed by the bourgeois-nationalistic and chauvinistic wave.

On this anniversary of the Seventh Congress of the Party, therefore, let us pledge ourselves to carry out the tasks outlined in the Statement issued on behalf of the Central Committee which is the concrete application of the decisions of the Party Congress to the current situation. Let each Party member and Party-sympathizer work tirelessly to mobilize the people for solving the most burning problems, thrown up during the last few weeks of war as well as those which were left unresolved at the time of the outbreak of the war.



## **E.M.S. Namboodiripad Addresses**

### **One-Lakh Rally In Calcutta\* :**

#### **Demanding Release of Communist Detenus And Explaining Party Policy**

A mammoth rally of over a lakh of people on the Calcutta Maidan on November 15, 1965 raptly listened to the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India E.M.S. Namboodiripad explaining the policy of the Party.

Huge demonstrations colourfully decked with flags and banners, preceded the rally. These demonstrations marched to the Maidan from Howrah, Sealdah, North Calcutta, South Calcutta, Kidderpore, Sotheast Calcutta and other industrial areas. For hours together the people of Calcutta watched from the pavements these colourful and militant demonstrations as they wended their way through the main streets. One of the often-heard slogan of the demonstrators was demanding the immediate release of political prisoners.

These demonstrations and the mammoth rally and the rapt attention with which the people listened to E.M.S. Namboodiripad were an answer, as effective as any can be given by a Party which is facing ferocious repression at the hands of the Congress rulers—an answer both to the Government which tries to find self-satisfaction saying that the Communists are getting isolated and the slanderers who try to make out that there are such deep fissures in the Communist Party of India that it is cracking up.

Dr. Narayan Roy, MLA, presided over the meeting which adopted a resolution demanding the immediate release of Muzaffar Ahmad and other detained Communist leaders.

A letter from Mohit Moitra, MLC, who was released recently due to his serious illness, calling on the people to launch a mighty movement for the release of Communist detenus, was read out to the rally.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY" Calcutta November 21 1965

### **Mammoth One-Lakh Rally In Calcutta**

E. M. S. began his speech emphasizing the critical situation through which the country is passing at present and said he would like to explain what the Party thinks about the crisis and how it should be solved.

He referred to the slander campaign started against the Party, dubbing it as a party of traitors and said that this was nothing new. Once we were dubbed as agents of Russia. Now we are being slandered as agents of China, and for some people, we are also agents of Pakistan. Friends and followers of Dange not satisfied with all this, say we are agents of not only China and Pakistan, but also of British and US imperialism.

Despite this virulent slander campaign, E. M. S. continued, our Party has grown and is growing. The proof is there for everyone to see. In the elections held in Kerala, our Party came out as the first party in the State while the friends and followers of Dange were completely wiped out as a political force. Slander campaigns against the Communist Party have always been tried by the ruling classes and their agents but it has always been proved that such slander campaigns can never succeed against the Communist Party because we are with the people and the people know what we are doing and are mature enough to judge us by our actions and not by what the Congress rulers and their hangers-on say about us.

The people of our country, said E.M.S., are now faced with some very serious problems that vitally affect their daily life—scarcity of food, abnormal rise in prices of essential commodities, unemployment, ever-increasing burdens of taxation, etc. There is no question that the people will and have to fight against the Government policies which create these problems and accentuate them. And when the people fight thus, E.M.S. declared, none on earth can deter the Communist Party from giving its full support to all popular struggles just because there is a war with a neighbouring country.

Does this mean that we are sabotaging the defence efforts of the country as the ruling party and some of the opposition parties are

saying ? Answering the question, E.M.S. said that he wanted to make it clear that the Communist Party stands for the defence of the country against any attack on its sovereignty. There has been no ambiguity about his stand at any time.

But that does not mean and cannot mean that we support everything that the Government says and does in the name of defence. There can be no defence of the country without defence of the people and as the party of the working class and all working people, it will be the duty of the Communist Party and of every Communist to defend the people against every attack made on their life.

The ruling party and some opposition parties say that we are against collection of defence funds. This is a total lie, said E.M.S. We do not oppose any voluntary contributions to the National Defence Fund. But we do oppose and cannot but oppose forced collections when they are made. Heads of departments in Government offices, for instance, are given quotas and they have to fulfil these quotas by making collections from their subordinates. Peasants going to various Government offices are forced to contribute to the Fund. In Kerala even ration cards are given only if money is paid to the defence fund. It is to these coercive methods of collection that the Communist Party is opposed, not to the voluntary contributions that are being made to the Defence Fund.

The ruling party goes on making exhortations to the people to make sacrifices in the interests of the country. From the speeches and actions of the ruling party it would seem that the common people are the only ones who should make sacrifices. There are dishonest traders and industrialists who possess black money. Just this period of emergency itself has been utilized by these elements to fill their coffers with ill-gotten wealth. But why is the Government which calls on the common people to make all the sacrifices not taking any step against these elements ? Not only are they not touched, the Government is offering them all sorts of awards and rewards for their dishonesty like the Gold Bond Scheme, etc. And this while the Government itself admits—the real figure must be much higher—that there is tax evasion to the tune of about Rs. 200 crores every year.

The leader of the ruling party has given the slogan of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan." E. M. S. asked how the jawans can fight at the front with all their heart when their near and dear ones back home are starving, how can the kisan increase production when he is being evicted from the land and fleeced in other ways by the vested interests in the rural areas ?

Then there is the slogan of "Miss a Meal a Week". E. M. S. said that the rations given to the people of Kerala hardly cover six square meals in a week of seven days. The people of that State say, give us rations for twelve square meals a week and we are ready to let you take two square meals for the defence. When such slogans are given to people who are already missing not one meal a week but many meals, it does not show a serious approach to solving the problems facing us. No country, declared E. M. S., can defend itself by starving the people and depriving them of the barest necessities of life.

It is just this policy that the Government is pursuing, continued E.M.S. Taxes have been raised by twentyfive per cent in the villages of Madras and Uttar Pradesh and other State Government are also getting ready to do the same. In both the States where this increase in land revenue has already been introduced there was violent opposition from all the opposition parties and even from among Congressmen. But the Government just ignored this opposition. And yet, they go on asking for cooperation after showing such scant regard for viewpoints of the opposition parties.

It is against these policies of throwing more and more burdens on the people that the people are fighting and will fight in ever-increasing numbers in the coming days. No threats, no repression can make them desist from these struggles, because for them it is a question of existence.

Coming to the question of our conflicts with our neighbouring countries, E.M.S. said that there can be no military solution to the problems with China and Pakistan. Neither we nor the other countries are in a position to dictate terms to the others nor impose a solution of their choice by force on others. The only way these problems can be solved is through negotiations directly with the countries concerned and arriving at peaceful settlement.

Some elements out to slander us say when they hear this that we are asking the surrender of our country before others. There is no question of surrender in what we say. Direct negotiations and peaceful settlement of problems do not mean surrender, they are the path of sanity.

And it is not the Communist Party alone which advocates this path of sanity. President Radhakrishnan has often talked about the need for a peaceful settlement of our problems with our neighbours. He has said that the Rs. 900 crores we have to spend on defence because these problems continue constitutes as severe strain on our economy. Such well-known figures in our public life as Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Narain have expressed similar sentiments emphasizing the need for a peaceful settlement with our neighbours.

Even a person like R.K. Nehru, a former Civil Service official who has served the Government of India in various top assignments, has been advocating initiative to solve our problems with China peacefully and asking for the exchange of ambassadors with China as a first step to create the right atmosphere.

Obviously all these people are not advocating surrender, they are advocating a path which is in the larger and long-term interests of the nation. We Communists are not doing anything different, let the slanderers remember that.

Referring to the question of Kashmir, E. M. S. briefly dealt with the history of the problem and said, the Government is taking away the special status which had been accorded to the State in the Constitution. There is deep discontent among the Kashmiri people—this is an undeniable fact. It is our task in such a situation to win the goodwill and cooperation of the Kashmiri people. This cannot be done by taking away the special status of the State or by repeating ever so often that there is no such thing as a Kashmir problem.

We have been negotiating for full two years with the underground Naga leaders who have been leading an armed struggle for a long number of years. These negotiations are being conducted to find a peaceful settlement to the Naga problem. Why can not the same

thing be done in relation to Kashmir? Why cannot negotiations with the representatives of the Kashmiri people— leaders of both the ruling party and opposition parties—be started to settle the problem?

In conclusion, E.M.S, said that development and prolonged war or continued tension with neighbouring countries cannot go together. Despite all talk of defence and development going together, what we find is that development is being relegated to the background and in the name of strengthening defence, even accepted policies of development are being given up. This all the more emphasized the need for a peaceful settlement of our problems with our neighbours.

## **Another Round of Arrests In Andhra Pradesh & Kerala\***

### **Attack On Civil Liberties Continues**

The Congress Government of Andhra Pradesh is continuing its ferocious attack on the democratic rights and democratic movement of the people. In the night of November 11, another twentyone persons were arrested and detained under the Defence of India Rules bringing the total number of detenus in this State to 200.

Among the arrested are lawyers and doctors who are office-bearers of the State Civil Liberties Union and office-bearers of mass organizations like the Youth League and Agricultural Workers' Association.

After the general roundup of Communist leaders in December last, the Government had thought that it had paralyzed the activities of the Communist Party. But it soon learnt that far from being paralyzed, the Party continued to win the confidence and trust of more and more people. Not only that, the undemocratic detention without trial of the Communist leaders began evoking protests from wider and wider circles.

After the very successful State Civil Liberties Convention in Vijayawada, equally successful conventions to protest against the arrests and detentions and demanding the release of political prisoners were being held in district after district. Only a few days ago, the Nalgonda District Civil Liberties Convention was held—a thumping success with over 2,000 delegates participating. More such conventions are being planned in the remaining districts and panicky at the rapidly growing movement for release of detenus, the Government has this time struck against prominent leaders of the Civil Liberties movement.

The policies pursued by the Congress Government are creating more and more misery for the people. The food situation even in

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surplus Andhra Pradesh is becoming difficult. Skyrocketing prices have made life impossible for the majority of the people. And now in the name of emergency, the Government is planning to impose still heavier taxburdens on the people. The people are beginning to fight back and it is to behead their struggles of leadership and to suppress them with force that the Government has now detained more leaders of the mass organizations of the people.

Among those arrested and detained on November 11 are : K. V. Subba Rao, Advocate, Vice-President of the Andhra Pradesh Committee of the Civil Liberties Union; Dr. Y. Radhakrishna Murthy; B. Radhakrishna, Advocate (Khammam District) ; D. Gajapathy Raju, Advocate (West Godavary district), all members of the Working Committee of the State Civil Liberties Union; Ravuf, Advocate of Kadiri town in Anantapur district; A. Ramachandra Reddy and M. Ramasubba Reddy, Leaders of the Ryotu Sangham (Kisan Sabha) in Kurnool district; M. Venkataratnam, Vice-President of the Avanigadda Panchayat Samiti and General Secretary of the Krishna District Ryotu Sangham; M. Hanumantha Rao, K. Ram Mohan and Dama Chanchayya, leaders of the Youth League in Krishna, Khammam and Nellore districts; A. Krishna Murthy, General Secretary of the Vizag Shipyard Employees' Union; I. Ramana Reddy, Secretary of the Nellore District Agricultural Labour Union; A. Pentiah and A. Kattamallu from Warangal District.

### **Arrests, Internment In Kerala**

C. K. Chakrapani and K. P. Kunhiraman, members of the Secretariat of the Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party of India, have been arrested and detained under the Defence of India Rules, while the other two members of the four-man Secretariat have been interned in their own areas—Sivanandan in Trivandrum and Neyyattinkara taluk and K. S. Nair in Trichur taluk and Valapad police station area.

Secretary of the Quilon District Committee of the Party, Ramakrishnan has been interned in Quilon and Karungapally taluk.



## **Entire Opposition In West Bengal Assembly Walk Out Demanding Release of Political Prisoners\***

The entire opposition in the West Bengal Assembly walked out on November 15, 1965 demanding the release of political prisoners detained under the Defence of India Rules or their trials in courts of law.

Twelve opposition members including leaders of all the Opposition groups had made an attempt to table a joint adjournment motion on this question, but the Speaker did not give leave to it. After question hour, the Speaker allowed the signatories to the adjournment motion to speak.

They urged the Speaker to consider his decision as he was supposed to be the custodian of democracy and can allow the Opposition to voice its grievances.

They charged the Government with making a mockery of democracy by detaining political prisoner without trial. While Communist Party's Dr. Narayan Roy said that at a time when the country was facing a crisis the people must have their leaders in their midst. Forward Bloc's Hemanta Kumar Basu said the Government should change the particular section of the DIR so that those detained could be tried by courts of law.

Dangeite Somnath Lahiri said the whole Opposition was united on the issue. He said that in reply to a letter from him the Governor had written that the detentions had been made on valid reasons. Lahiri asked what these reasons were. Nani Bhattacharya of the RSP demanded that specific charges should be framed against the detenus and they should be brought before courts of law. Many of the detenus

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were members of the legislature, he said, who should be allowed to perform their duties under the Constitution.

Where is Jyoti Basu, asked Sailen Adhikari of the SSP. Even though he was the leader of the opposition he was not allowed to attend the Assembly session. Adhikari said that Jyoti Basu had been arrested during the agitation against the rise in tramfares. That movement had been withdrawn but Jyoti Basu was still under detention. Another SSP member, Kashi Kanta Moitra, charged that the DIR was being used by the Congress Government for its own purposes to bolster its rule.

RSP's Nikhil Das told the Government that if it did not reply to the charges the entire opposition would walk out. The Government kept silent and all the members walked out of the House. They returned after some time to participate in the rest of the day's business.

## The Home Ministry's Threat

Editorial Of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", December 5, 1965.

Whom is the Central Home Ministry trying to fool by the repeated assertion that the speeches and writings of E.M.S. Namboodiripad are being closely watched and that action will be taken "at the appropriate time"?

Those who have been studying E.M.S.'s pronouncements know that there is nothing in them which will enable Gulzarilal Nanda or his subordinates to launch proceedings against him, unless of course, the "action" contemplated is detention without trial.

E.M.S. himself has repeatedly stated that he would welcome an opportunity to prove how baseless is the charge of his being "anti-national". He has further asked the authorities to take courage in their hands and to prove their charge before a court of law, rather than persist in the cowardly practice of making wild allegations supplemented with such "action" as cannot be legally challenged.

It is all the more surprising that Central Home Minister Nanda should have made reference to a particular speech delivered by E.M.S. at Bombay on November 9. The charge is that he expressed opposition to the Government's defence activities if the objective of those activities is the recapture of the Azad Kashmir area from Pakistan, or Aksaichin from China, or to take the war into the Tibetan territory of China.

Is it seriously suggested that one would be liable to punishment if one were to draw the people's attention to the futility of preparing the country for an offensive war against Pakistan or China, a war to recapture, through military means, areas which, whatever the *de jure* position, has not been *de Facto* with India for some time?

Let it not be forgotten that, as far as the Azad Kashmir area is concerned, the Government of India itself had, at one time, negotiated with the Government of Pakistan for a *de jure* recognition of the *de facto* position. Can the Home Minister or his colleagues deny that

this was the very proposal made by the Indian team in the 1962 negotiation and that the proposal fell through only because it was not acceptable to Pakistan at that time? Is it not, therefore, reasonable to expect that proposal is likely to come up again when the India's Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistani President Marshal Ayub Khan meet at Tashkent in the next few days?

With regard to Aksaichin, too, it is well known that serious proposal were made that the *de facto* position should be recognized. Chinese Prime Minister Chou En- lai's visit to India in 1960 was the occasion when this proposal was seriously mooted within the Indian Cabinet. The then Prime Minister, the late Jawaharlal Nehru, is known to have been personally in favour of it and to have had the support of the then Defence Minister, V.K. Krishna Menon. The veteran diplomat, K. P. S. Menon, recalls a talk which he had with Nehru in the course of which Nehru agreed with the correctness of the proposal on merits but pleaded helplessness "since it might not be acceptable to Parliament."

The fact, in any case, remains that no realistic student of India-China relations considers it practicable to recover that territory from China through a war. This is corroborated by the former American Ambassador to India, J. K. Galbraith, who states as follows :-

"It fell to me two years ago to be our executive when the dispute between China and India broke into open war. The policies which we concerted with the Indians and the British and which combined support to the Indians with a clear indication of our disinterest in promoting a war in those distant mountains passed through my hands. I had some part in forming them. They worked; at the point of their main attack in the Northeast Frontier Agency, the Chinese returned to their previous lines". (*American Review*, October, 1965).

If the above statement of Ambassador Galbraith is true, it means that "the Indians and the British" were parties to the American policy of "disinterest in promoting a war in those distant mountains". It is, in any case, indisputable that the United States Administration does not consider the war to recapture Aksaichin a practicable proposition.

It is thus clear that the passion roused around the Azad Kashmir and Aksaichin areas do not conform to the political, diplomatic or military realities of the situation. The hysteria worked up around these regions will not help the nation to find reasonable solutions to the problems of relations between India and her two neighbours.

The Communist Party and its spokesman, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, therefore, were only doing what any patriotic citizen should do when they raised their voice against the hysteria being worked up on the Indo-Pakistan and India-China issues. They were pointing out that it is in the interest of our own people that they take account of realities, rather than be guided by unreasonable impulses. The leaders of the Government who are now trying to settle India's dispute atleast with one of her neighbours—Pakistan—should have appreciated the stand taken by the Party. But, moved as they are by their hatred of the Communist Party and determined to use any stick to beat the Party with, they threaten E.M.S. and the Party with "action".

It is heartening to note that saner elements even within the ruling party are publicly expressing themselves in favour of the stand taken by the Party. Congress member of the Rajya Sabha, P.N. Saprú showed courage in telling his colleagues that E.M.S. was "talking good sense". We are sure that this trend will grow and force the Home Ministry to reappraise its entire policy.

## **Protest Against Curb on Demonstration in West Bengal\***

**Resolution dated November 29, 1965 of the West Bengal State Committee of the C.P.I. (M)**

The West Bengal Government is making yet another attack on the already curtailed civil liberties and democratic rights of the people. The "Processions and Assemblies Bill" which has already been introduced in the State Legislature seeks to impose so many new restrictions that it will well-nigh become impossible for the people to register their protests against Government policies and campaign for their demands through demonstrations and rallies.

In the name of the Emergency and misusing the defence of India Rules, the Congress Government has already made a mockery of civil liberties and the Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Over a thousand leaders of the people's movement have been detained without trial and the DIR continues to be liberally used against striking workers, starving people asking for food, in fact, against every section of the people fighting for their demands. Eminent jurists like M.C. Setalvad, a former Attorney-General of India, have again and again warned about the dictatorship that is being set up by the Congress Party under cover of the Emergency.

Not satisfied with all this, the Union Government is now coming forward with a bill to empower itself to ban parties and associations, while the West Bengal Government seeks to impose new restrictions on processions and meetings.

As the anti-people policies of the Congress Government create more and more discontent among the people, the Government is taking to the bankrupt path of suppression and terror. The Congress leaders loudly proclaim, for consumption outside, that India is the largest democracy in the world. But the reality is that vicious attacks are being made on the democratic rights of the people and the "largest democracy" is fast becoming a vast prison-house.

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, December 5, 1965

We would like to remind the Congress rulers of what the President of the Republic said at Varanasi on November 21 when his attention was drawn to the demonstration by university students. The demonstration was on a patently wrong cause, yet Dr. Radhakrishnan is reported to have said, "In a democracy what is the harm in staging a demonstration if it is peaceful. Everybody has the right to express his views and agitate for the fulfilment of his demands."

Yet, it is precisely this right to express one's views and agitate for one's demands that is being taken away by the Congress rulers; this is precisely the aim of the West Bengal Government's new Bill. In India today to exercise this right is to invite detention without trial under the Defence Of India Rules.

This is not an issue which affects a few individuals or one particular party alone, it is a question which affects the entire future of our democracy. Despite all its limitations, a parliamentary democratic system is preferable to a dictatorial or autocratic regime and the Communist Party stands for the defence of the parliamentary democratic system in India against onslaughts by the ruling classes to undermine it when they find their position shaky among the people.

The West Bengal State Committee of the Communist Party of India calls on all democratic-minded people to voice their protest against this new attack on democratic rights. Only a powerful people's movement can stay the hands of the Congress rulers, prevent them from taking away the civil liberties and democratic rights of the people and force them to lift the Emergency, withdraw the DIR and give up their designs to push through such Black Bills as the Processions and Assemblies Bill and the Undesirable Associations Bill.

The West Bengal Committee calls upon workers, peasants and all democratic-minded people to move into the field of action immediately.

## **A. K. Gopalan's Petition Before Supreme Court Demand For Human Rights For Detenus\***

The petition of A. K. Gopalan, MP, member of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India, now in detention, came up on December 6, 1965, before the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court composed of Chief Justice Gajendragadkar. Justices Wanchoo, Hidayatullah, Ramaswamy and Raju. Gopalan's Counsel was Danial Latifi, Barrister-at-Law, assisted by M.I. Khowaja, Barrister-at-Law, and Janardhan Sharma, Advocate. The Union of India, Respondent, was represented by C. K. Daphtary, Attorney-General, assisted by N.S. Bindra, Senior Advocate and R. H. Dhebar.

Opening the case Barrister Latifi said that in the present petition Gopalan challenged the lawfulness of the conditions imposed on him in prison. In a previous petition, the Court had upheld the legality of the detention order. Now he challenged Rule 30 (4) of the defence of India Rules and the legality and vires of the Travancore-Cochin Security Prisoners' Order, 1950, applied to him.

Gopalan had spent sixteen years of his life behind prison-bars as price paid for upholding his political views and six of these had been spent in prisons of the Republic after independence. His successive appearances before the Supreme Court had, for good or ill, marked the development of our constitutional jurisprudence. The present petition raised questions regarding conditions of detention affecting many hundreds of political prisoners throughout India.

Sixteen years ago, in the first constitutional case tried by the Supreme Court, a habeas corpus petition filed by Gopalan, Justice Mahajan had deplored Preventive Detention laws, which he considered repugnant to democratic institutions, taking root in India.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, December 19 1965.



Now, Latifi said, we may add a melancholy footnote to the remarks of that learned Judge, that, in the twilight between peace and war, a State of Emergency has settled on our country seemingly as a permanent dispensation and the Defence of India Act has joined the laws referred to by Justice Mahajan as quasi-permanent denizens of our Statute Book. It is with this background of the permanency of the Emergency laws that the Court should approach Gopalan's petition.

### **Usurpation Of Power**

Rule 30 (4) of Defence of India Rules purports to provide that a detenu shall be detained in such place and under such conditions as to maintenance, discipline, punishment, etc., as the detaining Government may from time to time determine. Latifi said that making this Rule was usurpation, by the Central Government, of legislative power vested exclusively in Parliament by the Constitution, under the second part of Entry 9 of the Union List and concurrently for certain purposes, in Parliament and the State Legislature under the second part of Entry 3 of the Concurrent List.

The Defence of India Act contained no provision whatsoever regarding PERSONS SUBJECTED TO DETENTION. The virgin power to legislate on this topic thus remained with the parent legislature and could not be snatched away by the inferior Rule Making Authority (the Central Government) without due delegation.

In the alternative, Latifi submitted, if there had been somewhere in the Act an implied entrustment of legislative power to the Central Government under this sub-entry, Parliament had laid down no policy to guide the inferior Rule Making Authority and such delegation was thus incompetent.

Citing the remarks of Justice Subba Rao when delivering the judgment of the Supreme Court in Probhakar Sanzgiri's case, Latifi submitted that the conditions regulating the restrictions on the personal liberty of a detenu are not privileges conferred on him but are conditions subject to which his liberty can be restricted or taken away.

Latifi read section 44 of the Defence of India Act providing that ordinary avocations of life and enjoyment of property shall be interfered

with as little as may be consonant with the purpose of ensuring the public safety and interest and defence of India and civil defence, and said that this was the fundamental stipulation in favour of the citizens made by Parliament when entrusting wide powers to the Executive.

Citing Smith's *Synonyms Discriminated*, Mr. Latifi said that "avocations" is a wider term than "vocations" and includes the minor as well as the major affairs of life, and employments of every degree of urgency and responsibility. Thus the section continues to protect a detenu even when his liberty of locomotion has been taken away. The detenu may continue such of his avocations as do not directly imperil the public safety and interest and defence of India such as study, reading, writing and radio listening.

### **Worse Than Alien Internees**

Latifi drew attention to the Geneva Conventions Act 1960 which contains most elaborate provisions regarding treatment of enemy alien internees and prisoners of war. He said this may be taken as a minimum yardstick of standards of detention conditions consistent with public safety interest and defence. By that Act the family life of internees had to be preserved, their dependents adequately supported, hygienic living quarters and adequate maintenance had to be given and unnecessary harassing restrictions were prohibited. They could not be made to work without their consent.

The Chief Justice, interrupting, interjected : "You cannot expect us to apply standards suitable for enemy aliens to citizens of India". Latifi replied, "My lord, I am only asking for these as minimum conditions. Even these we do not get."

Latifi then referred to the Travancore-Cochin Security Prisoners' Rules, under Rule 5 of which the detenus were locked up at night in cells even in hot summer months. This was unnecessary for security and contrary to humanity and health.

Addressing the Attorney-General, Justice Hidayatullah asked, "Why can't you make the Rule provide for detenus to sleep outside with a reserve power in the jailor, for reasons to be recorded in

writing, enabling him to order that a particular detenu should be confined to his cell ?”

### **Censorship Harassment**

Latifi exhibited to the Court the copy of a daily newspaper as it had been received in jail by Gopalan. Most of the front page was blacked out. “How can one justify this type of censorship as being the minimum restriction necessary to ensure the defence of India ?” It is sheer harassment, he said.

Latifi then asked the Court to permit Gopalan himself to address it on the subject of jail conditions. The Chief Justice agreed to this.

Gopalan, supplementing Latifi’s arguments, pointed out how anomalous it was that different conditions prevailed in different States where there were detenus detained under the same so-called common policy said to have evolved from joint deliberations of the Centre and State Governments.

**Gopalan read out Rule 25 (b) of the Madras Security Prisoners’ Rules 1963, which provides that on application, Security Prisoners shall be paid a uniform monthly family allowance. In Kerala, he said, a large proportion of detenus were getting nothing at all, while others are getting varying amounts fixed at the whims of the authorities. In the Punjab no detenus is getting any family allowance. Justice Hidayatullah was heard to observe that since detenus were being imprisoned without trial, some recognition by the State of an obligation to maintain their families seemed to be dictated by considerations of humanity.**

When the Court resumed after lunch, Gopalan pointed out a number of other anomalies in the Rules governing detention conditions.

### **Uniform, Humane Policy**

The Chief Justice, then, addressing the Attorney-General, asked whether a uniform and humane policy on the treatment of detenus could not be evolved by the Union Government, taking into consideration the fundamental fact that detenus were not to be punished, and that they were detained without trial on suspicion

only as a preventive measure. The Chief Justice also referred to the necessity for providing for maintenance of families of detenus on a uniform scale as seemed to have been done by the Madras Government. He said that perhaps the Attorney-General might like to take time to consider the matter and advise the Government to see if some action could not be taken by the Government which might be more satisfactory than seeking a Court decision, which would have a purely legal basis.

The Attorney-General said that he was agreeable to the suggestion from the Court but wanted sufficient time to enable the Union Government to consult the State Governments. He was also prepared to talk it over with the lawyers of the Petitioner to see if any common ground could be found.

Accordingly, the hearing of A.K. Gopalan's petition, along with that filed by Harikishan Singh Surjit, another member of the Polit Bureau of the Party, which raised similar points, was adjourned to the reopening of the Court in January after the Christmas vacations.

## A Year After The Arrests We Demand Again Release Our Comrades\*

Gulzarilal Nanda—Sadachari par excellence, the man who two years ago set out to fight corruption but has become so corrupted by power that he refuses to quit even after his ignominious failure is clear to everyone including himself, the “disillusioned socialist” whose socialism never went beyond what, in the beginning, was laid down by the Ahmedabad millowners and later by the Indian big bourgeoisie— this man who, if he had any sense of shame, should have retired from public life long ago, seems to think in the style of the absolute monarchs of the dark and middle ages that the liberties of the citizens are to be determined by his caprices.

It is just a year since the Sadachari faced the microphones in AIR's New Delhi studios to broadcast a string of lies and slanders against the Communist Party of India after arresting in a midnight all-India swoop on December 29-30 nearly a thousand leaders and activists of the Party.

One does not know whether a tape of his broadcast speech was played back to him later, but one certain fact is that he knew he had convinced none. And so he promised a White Paper which ultimately shrunk to the stature, if not the size, of a Statement.

### **Goebbelsian Black Sheet**

So dubious were its sources, so full of illogical incoherence was it that no one claiming to be sane would have accepted that Statement's parentage, none who are sane ever believed it. It was rightly called the Black Sheet, in line with the propaganda technique associated with the name of Hitler's deputy, Goebbels. Only difference perhaps is adept that Goebbels was more at the game than Nanda and his department.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta December 26 1965

For instance, Nanda started out with making the charge against us that we wanted a Chinese attack on India so that we could exploit the situation to create civil strife and guerilla warfare. But before he finished the statement, he made the charge that we wanted a peaceful settlement with China. That shows the type of logic the Statement contained, the character of the charges made against us. Yet that Statement was offered as the explanation for depriving a thousand citizens of the Republic of their civil liberties and normal ways of life.

In the last one year, on more than one occasion, we have replied to these charges and exposed the Goebbelsian nature of the Statement though it came out of the mouth of an Indian Sadachari.

*This was not the first attack on our Party after the Emergency had been proclaimed in October 1962. Nearly a thousand of leaders had been arrested in November 1962 and remember, all of them except in Maharashtra were arrested after China had declared its unilateral cease-fire. A Home Minister who allowed all these comrades to be free during the entire period of the armed clashes on the border in October-November 1962 and arrested them after the cease-fire had been declared, was obviously not thinking of defence of the country.*

Except for twelve of the leaders in Maharashtra, all the others were released beginning with Kerala after six months and ending with West Bengal after just over a year.

All that had happened between the releases then and the arrests in December 1964 was that we had fought a determined battle against revisionism in the Communist Party of India, reorganized the Party, held its successful Seventh Congress and thus prepared the Party to lead the struggles of all sections of the people whom the Congress Government's policies were grinding down. When has an Opposition party strengthening itself and defending the interests of the people become a crime in a system which calls itself parliamentary democracy, in a country which the leaders of the ruling party parade as the most populous democracy in the world?

## **Real Reasons For Attack**

There was not the least justification for the attack on our Party in 1964—beginning with the arrests of our West Bengal leaders in October on the eve of the Party Congress and later the general round-up in the end of December. Guns had stopped booming on the India-China border for over two years and the ruling classes had not even imagined there would be a conflict with Pakistan within a year. Obviously our comrades were arrested not because they were a threat to the defence of the country and the maintenance of public order.

If the Sadachari had been in the least honest, he could have given the real reasons. But even if he did not, they are obvious to everyone. The attack on our Party was made in a desperate bid to pave the way for a Congress victory in the Kerala elections and to behead of their leadership the growing people's struggle—mass actions for food, workers' strikes for wages, dearness allowance and bonus, peasant struggles against heavier and heavier tax burdens.

The Congress rulers failed in both their objectives. The Kerala electorate not only rejected the Congress but also gave a slap in its face when they rejected all the slanders against the Communist Party as so much of nonsense and returned it as the first party in the State. The Congress version of parliamentary democracy does not allow any opposition party to come to office even if the people elect it, so the Kerala Assembly was dissolved without being allowed to meet even once and indirect Congress rule was imposed on the State in the form of Governor's regime with a top Congress leader as Governor.

The arrests and detention of our leaders have not brought down the intensity and sweep of people's struggles—they are, on the contrary, growing fast. After keeping a thousand Communists in jail, today Nanda talks of taking action against all workers going on strikes or token strikes—give them “a short shrift” he told Congress workers in Bombay. Perhaps Nanda does not know that history is replete with examples of how it is people talking like this who get the “short shrift” in the long run.

*Armed with the Emergency and DIR, Nanda attacked our Party first, then all the democratic opposition parties in Bihar at the time of the food struggle in September last and now he is threatening*

*all workers who go on strike. The attack on our Party was not an isolated event, it was the beginning of the attack on the entire democratic movement.*

Seeing the growing opposition of the people, the Congress rulers talk the language of the knout and the gallows and set about turning this country into a vast a prison-house and liquidating parliamentary democracy.

### **Cowardly Use Of DIR**

Cowards as they are, they dare not face us in a court of law. They say that such trials are not in the interests of the State. Their charge against us is that we are agents of China and a trial of our comrades can only affect relations between India and China and they cannot be made any worse. Apart from that, if there had been even a shred of evidence that we were agents of China or any of the umpteen charges the Home Minister had hurled at us, they would have tried us long ago, got convictions and tom-tomed to the whole world how they had scotched a Peking plot in India. If they had not done it, it is because they have no evidence, and if they have no evidence it is because what they are charging us with is not part of our Programme or policy. And, so, they resort to the cowardly use of the DIR, of taking away people's liberty without trial.

It is this attempt to set at nought the rule of law and establish a dictatorship that has been the target of attack of eminent jurists who have warned that the prolonged Emergency will be the beginning of the end of democracy.

Why only eminent jurists. The Supreme Court itself was recently constrained to remark, in the case of Orissa Communist leader Jagannath Misra that the proceedings should show that the authority had acted with such care and caution and with the necessary sense of responsibility when a citizen is deprived of his liberty without trial.

The Congress government is on this issue totally isolated from democratic opinion in the country only recently, nine democratic opposition parties meeting in Delhi demanded the withdrawal of the Emergency, the scrapping of the DIR and release of deténus. Even the INTUC has been complaining about the misuse of the DIR.



What is astounding is that after all this, instead of changing its policies the Congress Government shows scant regard even for judicial verdicts—as when they re-arrested detenus released in U. P., Punjab, etc. by the High Courts, and in Andhra, intellectuals who have nothing to do with the Communist Party were arrested for the only crime of taking a leading part in the movement to defend civil liberties.

There is nothing against which our Party has to defend itself. In fact, we can proudly assert that we are the Party which consistently stood for the best interests of the nation and the people and what we had said and demanded in the past is being recognized as right not only by larger sections of the people, but also eminent leaders including many Congressmen and even the President of the Republic and on occasions, the prime Minister also. Nanda takes solace saying people are demonstrating against E. M. S. He is perhaps referring to the Congress-backed Jan Sangh demonstrations in Aligarh and Bangalore. But let him remember that as against the couple of hundreds of his proteges who demonstrated against E. M. S., millions have patiently listened to him in mammoth rallies in Kerala and Tamilnad, Andhra and Karnatak, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.

If our comrades are being detained without trial, it is not because we are against defence or because we are agents of China, it is because the attack on us is the first step to suppress the democratic movement and resistance to the anti-people policies of the Government.

### **Demand Release**

Twelve hundred of our comrades and leaders have been jailed for a year—some of them as in Maharashtra for over three years.

Among them are eight of the nine members of the Polit Bureau, twentyseven of the thirtyone elected members of the Central Committee and most of the members of the Provincial Committees and Secretariats of District Committees. Among them are most of the members of our group in Parliament and the State Assemblies.

In the name of democracy, we demand their immediate release. If the Congress rulers are allowed to get away with detaining our Party leaders and members without trial for such a long time, the future of democracy in India is bleak. The hands of the hangmen of democracy have to be stayed now. To this noble task we call all democratic compatriots of ours : **DEMAND THE RELEASE OF DETENUS WITHDRAWAL OF EMERGENCY AND SCRAPPING OF DIR.**

## Forward To Mass Struggles\*

*Win Food For The People, Land For The Peasants, Peace With Neighbours*

*Statement of the Central Committee of the C.P.I.(M) issued on February 7, 1966:*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement on February 7, 1966 on the current situation.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) greets the people of Kerala who are in the midst of a mighty action against the food policies of the Congress Government. The Government, unable to fulfil the elementary responsibility of feeding the people, has resorted to violence to drown the people's protest in blood. The General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, Comrade E. M. S. Namboodiripad, has been arrested and detained along with a number of other leaders and naked police raj has been established in Kerala, Undaunted, the people fight on demanding food, demanding the release of the arrested, demanding an end to repression and open enquiry into the police atrocities.

The struggle that is being fought in Kerala is part of the unprecedented wave of mass unrest which the country is witnessing—a wave of mass protest against the pro-vested interests policies of the Congress Government which have made living unbearable for the mass of the people. The Central Committee greets the people of West Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra and other States who are already in the arena of battle against starvation, retrenchment, unemployment and wage-cuts.

The new Government which has been formed under the leadership of Smt. Indira Gandhi, despite all the illusions that are sought to be created about it, has followed the beaten path of denying people's

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demand and suppressing their struggles with police violence. State budgets which have already been presented show increasing tax burdens for the people while making fantastic concessions for the richer sections, and official spokesmen have already indicated more taxes on the people in the next Union budget.

### **Deepening Economic Crisis**

India's economic crisis has now reached a point dangerous to the integrity and freedom of the country, thanks to the policies pursued by the Congress Government. The path of "independent" capitalist development, the path of collaboration with foreign monopolists and compromise with Indian landlords, has come home to roost.

The foreign exchange crisis, the heavy foreign debt burden, sky-rocketing inflationary rise in prices accelerated by a monstrous rise in defence expenditures, crushing tax burdens on the people coupled with freedom to foreign looters to reap high profits and freedom to Big Business to amass and dispose off huge wealth, industry working below capacity with thousands of workers already thrown on the streets—these are the features of the very serious economic situation. Standing above all of them is the widespread shortage of food—a deficit of ten to fifteen million tons—which has led to famine conditions and starvation for millions of people and which may claim a heavy toll of life in the coming months.

Reckless borrowing from imperialist countries has reached to such an extent that it is calculated that twenty per cent of our exports last year would have been needed to service the debts and we are now in the stage of borrowing to pay off past loans. The foreign exchange crisis has been further aggravated by the free hand given to foreign monopolists to loot our country through more and more collaboration agreements in a number of which the foreign monopolies have been allowed to own a majority of the shares and huge amounts in the name of know-how and services. Under Congress dispensation, India guarantees the highest profits to U.S. and other capital. Indian industry has been built in such a wrong way that instead of lessening our dependence on supplies from abroad, this dependence increased as is seen in the huge demand for maintenance

imports. In the absence of these imports the closure of many industrial units is in the offing—it is estimated that about forty per cent of our industry might close down or be out of use.

After very nearly ruining the country with this dependence on foreign capital and “aid”, the Congress Government has added to the people’s misery by throwing on their shoulders the monstrous burden of Rs. 900 crores per year in the name of defence in addition to the Rs. 500 crores which is estimated to have been spent during the recent conflict with Pakistan. Apart from claiming a large part of the foreign exchange resources available, thus further accentuating the foreign exchange crisis, this defence expansion has accelerated the inflationary tendencies which were already there in the economy and has contributed in good measure to the steep rise in prices which again fleeces the common man. The hoax of combining defence and development now stands thoroughly exposed—defence expenditure is accompanied by a slowing down of the rate of industrial development.

The crisis has further been deepened by the fiasco of planning—the failure to reach the Third Plan targets which has revealed in all its nakedness the limitations of capitalist planning. Notwithstanding all the concessions the Government has made to the private sector to attract more capital for investment, it has not succeeded in reaching anywhere near the declared targets. Even with the utmost State aid, the progress of capitalist development is at a pace totally incommensurate with the needs of the people and at a cost unbearable for the people.

With the deepening of the economic crisis, the urban unemployed who could already be counted in lakhs has increased still further. Not only are new avenues very, very few and new entrants into the labour market find it extremely difficult to get a job, working factories are closing down throwing large numbers on the streets. Nearly twenty thousand textile workers of Maharashtra have been thrown out of their jobs, hundreds are being retrenched from Government offices. Rationalization and automation menace the future of the working people.

Completely overshadowing all this is the food crisis—the worst since independence, and it is the result of the policy of compromise

with landlordism. This, coupled with the policy of promoting the development of capitalist relations in agriculture, has created a first-rate agrarian crisis. The drought this year has only served to lift the veil over the continuing crisis which was developing its own momentum. The food situation is serious beyond imagination and it is the Government's own policies which have brought about this situation. Despite the bumper crop in 1964, the policy that was followed was one of no monopoly procurement, no levy, no effective action against wholesalers and hoarders. Pledged as it is to defend the interests of the landlords and rich peasants, the Congress Government does not allow any scheme which takes away the surpluses of these sections to succeed. Rather than put an end to their hoarding and profiteering, the Government would import foodgrains and jeopardize the independence of the nation. The crisis in food production and distribution arises directly out of the class outlook and policies of the Government and it is the same class policy that has brought ruin to the countryside and led to the creation of large mass of agricultural workers and poor peasants and the eviction of tens of thousands from the land they cultivate.

Government's economic policies have thus meant, on the one hand, mounting miseries for the mass of the people and, on the other, created a paradise for the landlords and rich peasants, the hoarders and wholesalers who have minted money out of the privations of the people, and for Big Business which, apart from its profiteering practices, has been given concessions in the form of decontrol of the cement industry, writing off of huge amounts of interest on Government loans to the Tatas and IISCO, amendment of Bonus Commissions recommendations in favour of the employers, reward for dishonesty in the form of tempting offers to black money holders and tax-evaders, etc. The Monopoly Commission Report has itself had to admit facts and figures which prove the inordinate concentration of capital and control in a few hands giving them the control over people's livelihood. All these developments have proved the correctness of what the Programme adopted at the Seventh Congress of our Party stated, "the conflicts and contradictions between the people on the one hand and the bourgeois landlord Government led by the big bourgeoisie on the other are steadily getting intensified."

## **Imperialist Pressure**

The Government itself created the crisis with its policy of dependence on the foreign imperialists and it is now seeking a way out of the deepening crisis still becoming still more dependent on the imperialist. The imperialist especially the U.S. imperialists, are exploiting the situation to exert more and more pressure to exact more and more concessions from the Indian ruling classes.

The consequences of the stoppage of all U.S. economic “aid” during Indo-Pakistani conflict, and following it of all Western “aid”, have served to emphasize the extreme dependence of our “independent” economy on the sweet will of U.S. imperialism. The Congress Government suddenly discovered the political strings attached to U.S. “aid” and began talking about a self-reliant economy and self-sufficiency in food. But this propaganda bubble burst the moment the USA virtually refused help to relieve the food situation. Since then a different tune is being sung with Minister after Minister praising U.S. generosity. The anti-U.S. pose has disappeared. The USA has now promised fifteen million tons of wheat. What bargain has been struck, what price has been paid is yet to be known but can well be imagined.

The USA has already laid down harsher terms for PL 480 shipments, and the rate at which Indian currency from the sale proceeds of U.S. wheat is accumulating in U.S. hands, it may be that soon the U.S. imperialists will own one-third of Indian currency and be in a far stronger position to exercise pressure than before.

Imperialist intervention in regard to the Fourth Plan began long ago and India was clearly told that the huge foreign exchange requirements needed would not be forthcoming if the Plan was not adjusted to the needs of the imperialists. The mock fight between those who wanted a big plan and the rest was followed by talk of consolidating achievements, Plan holiday, etc., and, finally, the Government has come out with the hoax of a Plan of priority for agriculture—the so-called package plan, turning to agriculture rather than to industry as demanded by the U.S. imperialists.

The U.S. imperialists have been satisfied since under this plan, India has to buy several million dollars worth of fertilizers from the USA and the Government has agreed to promote fertilizer factories with the help of foreign collaborators and also in the private sector with the help of foreign capital. Under U.S. pressure Government has thus opened the fertilizer industry to the private sector on terms dictated by the foreign monopolists. The social consequences of this fertilizer development of agriculture will be to accelerate the development of capitalist farming, to the rise of big landholders capable of making the necessary inputs and thus lead to further expropriation of the common peasant. The lease of land to the Birlas in Punjab is an indication of the shape of things to come.

Not only fertilizer but other basic industries like oil, defence, etc. have also been thrown open to the private sector—industries which had earlier been exclusively reserved for the public sector. Government is entering into partnerships with foreign monopolist concerns on profitable terms to the monopolists and, more often, it is compelled and agrees to admit foreign capital into the private sector in collaboration with Indian capital. No longer does the Government stick to the condition of Indian control in joint enterprises, it is making new concessions to private concerns including foreign ones.

The crisis is so deep that the imperialists may be able to put any pressure on the Government and a cornered Government is likely to strike a deal at the expense of the nation's future.

The Soviet Union has agreed to give crucial aid for our economy and defence. The Government of India while accepting this aid uses it mainly for bargaining with the imperialists. The reliance is still on the Western imperialists and only when they are recalcitrant, the Government approaches the Soviet Union as was seen in the case of the Bokaro Steel Plant, supersonic fighter planes, submarines for the navy, etc. The assistance from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries is not utilized for planning for self-reliance and self-sufficiency, but to lessen the pressure exerted by the imperialists and to bargain for more "aid" from them.



The U.S. imperialists are pressing for concessions not only in the economic sphere but are demanding that India pursue a foreign policy to suit the global strategy of U. S. imperialism. This most powerful of the imperialist countries is striving to establish its domination over all the continents through economic and political pressure wherever it is possible, through naked aggression wherever it becomes necessary.

### **Non-Alignment Is Being Given Up**

The Government of India's foreign policy of non-alignment had been acclaimed not only by the Indian people but by Afro-Asian states and the socialist countries for its anti-imperialist content. But today, in the effort to woo U. S. imperialism for more and more "aid", the anti-imperialist content of the policy of non-alignment is steadily being given up. India's border dispute with China is being exploited by the Indian ruling classes to justify to the people this shift in foreign policy. The Indian ruling classes are trying to make out that China is India's main enemy and the main task is to face the "Chinese menace". The change in the attitude to the Tibet question in the United Nations was one index. What is worse is the attitude to the liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people. In the present-day world, the criterion of anti-imperialism of a people or a govt. is the attitude to the U.S. aggression in Vietnam. The Government of India has got so deeply involved in the meshes of U. S. "aid" that it dares not any longer take a forthright anti-imperialist, pro-freedom stand on this question. Instead of condemning U.S. aggression and crimes against the people of Vietnam, the Government of India holds that it is China that stands in the way of peace in Vietnam. It welcomed U.S. President Johnson's peace offer hoax, and when the USA has now resumed the bombing of North Vietnam, it only expresses "concern". As on Vietnam, on every issue when the people confront the U.S., the Government of India keeps silent on the predatory activities of the U.S. imperialists and takes a lukewarm attitude to the struggles against colonialism and neo-colonialism in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

It is this that has led the people and many governments on these three continents looking at India with suspicion. To the extent the

Indian ruling classes are giving up the anti-imperialist content of India's foreign policy, to that extent India is getting isolated from Afro-Asian and Latin American nations fighting against imperialism.

The Indian ruling classes ignoring the lesson of history that dependence on U.S. imperialist "aid" inevitably leads to the mortgaging not only of our economy to the U.S. monopolists, but also our independence are surrendering more and more to imperialist pressure. The danger to India's independence comes not from Pakistans or China but from U.S. imperialism.

### **Indo-Pak And India-China Relations**

The only relieving feature of this otherwise gloomy picture has been the Tashkent Declaration.

India-Pakistan relations which had been bedevilled by imperialist intervention for the last eighteen years since Independence broke out into an open war in September last.

The Indian ruling classes used the opportunity to whip up war-hysteria and jingoism to divert the attention of the people from the immediate issues facing them and to put a brake on the rising mass movement. Other parties vied with each other in playing the same game. The Communist Party of India alone in those days warned against this rousing of war-hysteria and national chauvinism, the Party alone conducted a ceaseless campaign for a ceasefire, negotiations and peaceful settlement of the dispute. For this, our Party was then dubbed as "traitors", "anti-national", etc.

Today, the Tashkent Declaration has vindicated the position we took that the dispute between India and Pakistan cannot be settled in the battlefield, it can be settled only around the negotiating table. Our Party welcomed the Tashkent Declaration as the first step towards normalizing relations between the two countries. Events have already shown that there are powerful elements in both the countries who would like to wreck the agreement. It is only the peace-loving people of both the countries who can guarantee not only the proper implementation of the Tashkent Declaration but also further steps to establish friendly, good-neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan. Difficult problems undoubtedly face the two countries,

but given the spirit of Tashkent Summit, the spirit of give and take which made the Tashkent Declaration possible, the problems are not insurmountable.

The Tashkent Summit has shown the even while mutual accusations of aggression are being made, even while troops of the two countries were occupying each other's territory, it is possible to sit across the negotiating table, discuss disputes which have led to armed conflicts and find solutions to the disputes, if there is genuine desire for peacefully settling such disputes.

If the Tashkent Declaration has shown the possibility of a peaceful, negotiated settlement of disputes, the deep crisis of our economy underlines the crying need for such a settlement also with China. Not only can such an India-China settlement become the cornerstone of Afro-Asian solidarity against imperialism, it will provide the opportunity to India to direct the struggle against poverty and misery, illiteracy and backwardness, it will give tremendous relief to the people on whose shoulders unbearable burdens have been thrown in the name of defence.

But the Government shows no inclination to start talks with China on the same basis as the Tashkent talks were held. Instead of offering to talk with China without any preconditions, the Government still talks about the Colombo proposals—when even the originators of these proposals no longer stand by them but are urging direct negotiations between India and China.

This refusal to start talks with China to settle India-China disputes has a deliberate purpose. By keeping up the anti-China posture, the Indian ruling classes hope to appease the U.S. imperialists and get more aid from them.

### **Emergency-DIR Misrule**

The dispute with China is also being exploited by the Government to continue the Emergency and the Defence of India Rules. Experience of more than three years has proved that the Emergency and DIR, far from having anything to do with the defence of the country, are misused to suppress the people who are rising in action against the pro-vested interests policies of the Government. Our Party

is pledged to the defence of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, yet over a thousand of our leaders and activists have been detained without trial for over a year—about a dozen of our leaders in Maharashtra for over three years. They were detained on the eve of the Kerala elections in an attempt to retrieve the fortunes of the Congress party in that State and to smash the growing resistance of the people to Congress policies. This has now become crystal clear when after the arrests of the Communists in December 1964, the Government arrested the leaders of other opposition parties in Bihar and Maharashtra at the time of the food struggles in these States, and used the Emergency and the DIR to suppress the struggles of the working people and muzzle press criticism of the Government. The ridiculous extent to which the DIR was misused was seen when in West Bengal the State Government used it to ban production of sweets from milk products—as if it was something that concerns the defence of the country. The Emergency and the DIR thus affect not only the Communist Party, but the entire democratic movement. Leading jurists have already warned that if the Congress Government is allowed to continue the Emergency for its partisan ends, the country is on the way to an authoritarian regime.

The deepening economic crisis as a result of reliance on imperialists, further dependence on the imperialists in an attempt to seek a way out of the crisis and for this the continuation of an anti-China policy, the Emergency, the DIR and suppression of democratic rights, civil liberties and struggles of the people—all this constitutes today the class policies of the Congress Government.

Incapable of finding a solution to the pressing problems of the people, Congress leaders are concentrating their attention on fighting each other for power and pelf. The factional fights in the ruling party in U.P. and Punjab, Mysore and Kerala, West Bengal and Gujarat, have nothing to do with policies, they are all about as to who should occupy the seats of office and be in a position to distribute privileges. This faction fight which has so far been confined to the States has now spread to the Centre also as was seen in the fight for the leadership of the Congress Parliamentary Party. There is an attempt to create the illusion that since Indira Gandhi became Prime

Minister after defeating Morarji Desai, her Government would pursue progressive policies. But the reality is that whichever Congress leader becomes Prime Minister the basic policy that will be pursued is the class policy of the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes—the policy of building capitalism in collaboration with foreign imperialism and compromise with Indian landlords. Within this framework individuals may make variations but the basic policy will be pursued to the detriment of the nation and the people.

### **People In Struggle**

People's resistance to these policies is growing on an unprecedented scale. The present food struggle in Kerala was preceded by Statewide food struggles in Bihar and Maharashtra. The people of Calcutta and the rest of West Bengal fought a heroic action against the tramfare-increase imposed by the British company abetted by the Congress rulers. The mammoth mass rally in Calcutta on January 30 served notice on the Congress Government that the people are ready to defy all repression in the battle to defend their rights. The glorious textile workers' general strike in Maharashtra was a declaration of the determination of the working class to launch united mass actions against closure and retrenchment. The plantation strike in Kerala was to announce that the workers were tired of the delaying tactics of the Government and employers to deny what is legitimately due to them. Non-gazetted officers and other middle class employees have gone into action in many places against rising prices. All over the country, workers have fought long drawn-out battles for adequate bonus. In West Bengal, innumerable clashes have taken place against harassment of poor and middle peasants in the name of procurement. When these struggles were taking a united form and reaching its high watermark in September last, the Government whipped up war-hysteria and national chauvinism to disrupt the rising mass movement and put a brake on it. The ruling classes succeeded to some extent, but the working people are again on the march for their demands for food, against rising prices, for adequate dearness allowance and bonus, for trade union and democratic rights. These struggles will assume still wider proportions as the economic crisis deepens and the Government, instead of reversing its policies, adopts more and

more repressive measures against the people as in Kerala, in Tarapore and other places.

As yet, many of these struggles are of a spontaneous nature. It will be the task of the Communist Party to give an organized character to these struggles and in unity with other Left parties and mass organizations to lead these struggles of the people and raise it to a mighty all-India action against the anti-people policies of the Congress Government.

It will be the task of the Communist Party to tell the people that the struggle against the economic policies of the Government is at the same time a struggle against imperialist intervention in our country, against the Indian ruling class policy of surrender to imperialist pressure. The struggle for food is at the same time a struggle for proper agrarian reforms and for a national food policy, against the Congress rulers' reliance on PL-480. The struggle for adequate wages, dearness allowance and bonus is at the same time a struggle against the Congress Government's policies which create an inordinate concentration of wealth and strengthening of monopolistic tendencies in the country. The struggle against the Emergency and for civil liberties is at the same time a struggle to carry forward the Tashkent Declaration and for peaceful settlement of disputes with China. The struggle to defend the policy of non-alignment is a struggle against U. S. led imperialist pressure, for quitting the British Commonwealth, and for solidarity with the freedom-fighters of Vietnam.

It is to this all-embracing struggle that the Communist Party calls the people today. And when it enters this struggle, the Party re-states what it has said in its Programme, "Even the basic democratic tasks of uprooting imperialist monopoly capital and the smashing up of the feudal and semi-feudal fetters on our agriculture cannot be completed without dislodging this bourgeois-landlord Government headed by the big bourgeoisie from power."

#### **Fourth General Elections**

It is against the back-ground of this intensifying crisis and growing people's discontent and struggles that the Congress rulers have

announced their decision to conduct the Fourth General Elections as scheduled. The Communist Party demands that before preparations for the elections are made, our Party be guaranteed the same rights and liberties which the ruling party enjoys. It is to make a mockery of parliamentary democracy to hold elections after keeping the leaders and activists of one of the strongest opposition parties in prison and denying them the opposition parties in prison and denying them the opportunities to campaign among the people.

Despite this policy of the Congress Government, the Communist Party will participate in the elections with the basic aim of defeating the Congress in as many constituencies as possible. For the Party, the elections will be a big political action to get the verdict of the people against Congress policies. The Party will strive for a united front with other democratic parties wherever possible. If such fronts are not possible, the Party believes that the aim of defeating the Congress in as many constituencies as possible can be achieved by adjustment of seats in the elections with whoever is prepared to making such adjustments. The Communist Party will offer its support to any democratic opposition party which is in a position to form a non-Congress Government in any State and the Party expects the support of other democratic opposition parties to form the Government in any State where it is capable of doing so.

### **Struggle Against Bourgeois Ideology**

The Communist Party and other left opposition parties have big tasks to shoulder before the elections approach. The working people are already in the field of struggle and it becomes the urgent task of the Left opposition parties to forge that unity in action which alone is capable of carrying forward the mass movement. United struggles in industries, united Statewide struggle, all leading to united all-India actions—this is the perspective that is unfolding. An essential condition to advance the mass movement in these very favourable conditions is the conscious activity of the Party to do all it can to give organized form to the growing mass discontent. We cannot say that we have been able to do this in the past and hence, the Central Committee calls on the Party to bend all its efforts to successfully fulfil this task in the coming months. Essential also for the advance of the mass movement is the unity of the working

class and kisan movements which are rent with divisions today. While the Party has to do all it can to maintain the unity of existing organizations and to forge unity with other organizations, it should be kept in mind that unity of the mass movements is not possible today without unity in action of the Left parties in regard to mass issues and struggle. We welcome the steps already taken by the Left parties and the Rashtriya Samgram Samiti to give a united lead to the growing mass movement. The complete success of the Maharashtra textile general strike would have been impossible without such a united lead. So also the food struggle in Kerala and Bihar and the anti-tramfare-increase struggle in West Bengal. Our Party will strive to maintain and strengthen this unity in action.

An equally essential pre-condition for the success of the mass movement is a consistent fight against the disruptive and diversionary slogans of the ruling classes-their attempts to whip up war-hysteria and national chauvinism and their efforts to demoralize the people by creating the impression that all that is happening is inevitable. The Party, on the basis of its Programme, has to educate the people that far from being inevitable, the crisis is the outcome of bourgeois-landlord policies and the salvation of the country and the people lies in the replacement of this bourgeois-landlord regime.

Our Party looks upon the Indian revisionists as part of social-democracy. Though they claim to be Marxist-Leninists, they are no better than other Left opposition parties. While the Party will have united action with them as with other Left parties on mass issues and will do its all to maintain the unity of the mass organizations in which they also work, the Party will be in irreconcilable opposition to the Dangeites as betrayers of Marxism-Leninism and as bourgeois-nationalists. The Party will have to be eternally vigilant to concretely expose all their activities to disrupt the mass movement-their embellishment of Congress rule even while talking about struggle against it, their campaign against China even while talking of a settlement with it, etc. By this they disrupt the mass movement against Congress misrule, prevent a powerful campaign for settlement with China; rouse chauvinism and disarm the people.



## **On To Mass Actions**

The crisis created by the ruling classes is deeper than ever before, the conditions to take the mass movement forward more favourable than at any time in the past.

The Communist Party calls on the Indian people to go boldly forward into united mass actions in defence of their rights and demands, against the anti-national policies of Congress rulers. United actions locally, united Statewide actions—all developing into powerful united all-India actions—this is the way forward for the democratic movement.

**On to this glorious task, forward to mighty mass actions !**

## Scrap The Emergency—Here And Now

The total isolation of Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda and his Government on the question of the continuance of the Emergency is today all too evident. Inside Parliament and outside, the last few days have seen the demand for the lifting of the Emergency assuming powerful proportions. All political barriers have been broken, the demand has truly become a national demand.

Along with members of the Opposition, members of the Congress Party in Parliament were bitterly critical of the Home Minister on this question.

Congress Member of Lok Sabha H. C. Mathur perhaps expressed the strongest feelings when he said, "If the Home Minister feels he cannot do without DIR, it is time he steps down." He said there was "no justification whatsoever for continuing the Emergency and the Defence of India Rules."

A. K. Sen, Law Minister in the Union Cabinet till a few days ago, in a strong plea for lifting the Emergency, said the Defence of India Rules gave good deal of powers to interfere with life and property of the citizens and these powers could be utilized only when there was external danger. He thought the time had come "when one likes to feel that he is free again, that he can breathe freely and feel that the Executive works only according to rules and laws."

SPOKESMEN of all the Opposition parties and Independents like Acharya Kripalani in the Lok Sabha gave support to the demand while in the Rajya Sabha DMK leader C. N. Annadurai, demanding the immediate repeal of the Emergency, charged the Government; with "defying determined judgement of jurists, disregarding political advice given by eminent constitutional lawyers and arrogating to themselves the sum total of political wisdom." In the Rajya Sabha, too, Congress members like M. Govinda Reddy and spokesmen of Opposition parties lent powerful support to the demand.

Thirtynine Opposition members of Parliament belonging both to the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha in a joint appeal to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi urged, "the time has come when Government should declare here and now that Emergency is revoked and DIR repealed."

Among the signatories to this appeal were Bhupesh Gupta, Dayabhai Patel, A. B. Vajpayee, M. S. Aney, N. C. Chatterjee, Hiren Mukherjee, S. N. Dwivedy, U. M. Trivedi, Hem Barua, P. K. Deo, Madhu Limaye, Mohammed Ismail, Maniram Bagri and S. M. Banerjee.

Outside Parliament, the demand is being even more strongly voiced. Thirtyfour eminent personalities in the country, among them three former Chief Justices of India, a number of Vice-Chancellors and several newspaper editors, in a joint appeal submitted to the President and the Prime Minister said, "The time has now arrived when the Executive should reconsider its attitude and take the bold step of revoking the proclamation of grave emergency made in October 1962."

"What moves us to this action," they said, "is a solicitude for the fundamental rights of the citizens many of which have stood suspended during the emergency, and for the fair name of our democracy which stands tarnished in the eyes of the world by the adoption of methods characteristic of a police state.

"Leaving aside the short period following the Chinese aggression and the period of the recent conflict with Pakistan, could it be seriously suggested that the country was in a state of such grave emergency as was contemplated by the Constitutional provision ?

"A grave emergency lasting over three years and resulting in the exercise of powers by the Executive over such a long period has not been known in any democratic country," they said.

Among the signatories are former Chief Justices Meher Chand Mahajan, S. R. Das and B. P. Sinha and Vice-Chancellors C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, C. D. Deshmukh, A. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar and R. K. Nehru.

Releasing the appeal to the Press, M. C. Setalvad, former Attorney-General of India and President of the Bar Association of

India said that the existence of continuance of the Emergency would affect elections next year. "Certain members of a political party are in detention. I think that will affect the freedom of elections."

Asked whether the political detenus, "particularly the Left Communists", could be dealt with under the normal law of the land, Setalvad replied, yes. He said that the Preventive Detention Act could take care of such matters. The only difference was that while the P. D. Act provided for review by an advisory body, the Defence of India Rules did not. There had been "abuse" of the powers under the Emergency and many cases had come up before courts.

Setalvad said the deprivation of the fundamental rights to the people even for a day could not be justified without a valid reason. He also felt that the States had "abused" the powers more than the Centre.

Jayaprakash Narain who has been repeatedly making the demand for the lifting of the Emergency said again in New Delhi on February 28, while delivering the Lajpat Rai Memorial Lecture, that the Defence of India Rules should go as early as possible.

Without any exception, the entire national Press has editorially demanded the lifting of Emergency.

And on February 25, observing Detenus' Demands Day, rallies and demonstrations all over the country demanded the scrapping of the Emergency and release of political prisoners, while Communist detenus inside all jails went on a one-day hunger-strike, in many places supported by mass hunger-strikes outside jails, in front of Government offices, etc.

Under the impact of this growing all-sided demand, the Prime Minister assured the Rajya Sabha that the Government would "very, very soon" review the entire question of revoking the Emergency proclamation and repealing the Defence of India Act and Rules.

But what Home Minister Nanda has announced so far are just a few procedural changes which have not satisfied anybody.

According to M. C. Setalvad, the Home Minister's assurance does not deal with the 'fundamentals' of the situation. The Press has been similarly critical of the Home Minister.

Hiren Mukherjee in the Lok Sabha described as “poodly little things” the decisions not to launch prosecutions under the DIR against newspapermen, anti-social elements and economic offenders. The real issue, he said, was the release of those arrested “for political reasons” and kept under detention without trial.

Nanda tried to justify the continued detention saying, “we are not dealing with political opponents but with enemies of the nation.”

By “enemies of the nation” he had members of the Communist Party of India in mind became evident when he told Bhupesh Gupta that “he and his kind are safe.” Bhupesh Gupta and his party can be expected to reject the security clearance given by the Home Minister, but what is of concern is the supreme arrogance of the Home Minister who thinks that it is his unchallengeable right to determine who the enemies of the nation are.

*Communists became “enemies of the nation” on the eve of the Kerala elections. Obviously, Nanda’s “enemies of the nation” are those who are in a position to successfully challenge the Congress monopoly of power. Nanda equates the nation with the Congress and abuses the Emergency powers in the hands of the Executive to protect the interests of his party against whose bankrupt policies people are rising all over the country.*

All this becomes even more obvious from the report that it is the Congress Chief Ministers of the States who are most anxious along with the Union Home Minister to continue the Emergency. The State Chief Ministers are not over-worried about the defence of the nation from external danger, all they are interested in is that Emergency and Defence of India Rules are useful weapons to suppress the political opposition.

It is this misuse of the Emergency in the nearly three-and-half years it has existed and the stifling of the fundamental rights of the people that have brought the demand for the scrapping of the Emergency to the lips of the entire nation, There is no justification for continuing the Emergency. It must go—here and now !

## United Left Front's Call Observe General Strike And Hartal On March 10, 1966 In West Bengal\*

### P.C. SEN'S ARROGANCE MUST BE ANSWERED

#### APPEAL OF UNITED LEFT FRONT

The United Left Front calls upon the entire people of West Bengal to give a fitting reply to the arrogant challenge thrown by the Chief Minister of West Bengal by observing complete General Strike and Hartal throughout West Bengal on March 10, 1966. We are confident that inspite of all the provocative measures of the police and the entire State machinery the people will give expression with firm determination and unity to their resentment against the Government's anti-people food policy and brutal lathi-charge, firing and killing heaped upon them by the Government.

The General strike and Hartal will continue from 6 a.m. of the 10th to 6 a.m. of the 11th. The essential services are, however, exempted from the General Strike and Hartal.

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\* Published as an announcement news in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", March 13, 1966. The General Strike and Hartal was successfully observed all over West Bengal on March 10, 1966, vide Item No 46B of this Volume. The General Strike and Hartal continued on 11th March, 1966 in protest against police repression on 10th March's General Strike thus it became a continuous General Strike and Hartal for 48 hours and demonstrated the wrath, anger and unity of the people of West Bengal against Congress rule

## The Glorious Bengal Bandh\*

Life in the whole of West Bengal came to a complete standstill of March 10 when the people observed Bengal Bandh to protest against the callous food policy of the Congress Government and police atrocities on innocent people demanding food. The Government had turned the entire State into an armed camp by calling thousands of armed police from adjoining States and troops of the Eastern Command to "Assist" West Bengal police which, however, failed to deter the people from their fight.

THE Chief Minister of West Bengal conceded that the General Strike and Hartal was observed more or less in all districts of the State. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* reported on the spectacular success of the strike and hartal in Calcutta : "With markets, shops, offices, and banks hidden under tightly drawn shutters, the city appeared virtually dead. Tramcars were immobile in depots... The swish of rushing police vehicles was the only sound to break the silence on roads.

"Factory chimneys did not belch smoke. And most of the office and industrial workers had an unscheduled holiday. Writers Building, the seat of administration, recorded a meagre two per cent attendance."

Angered by this magnificent show of unity the Sen Government resorted to brutal repressive measures on the people resulting in killing 16 people and injuring hundreds of others. Most of the killed persons were below 20 years of age. Throughout the day and night the police was busy resorting to lathi-charges and teargassing in this or the other part of the city.

Despite curfew and Section 144 demonstrations were organized in hundreds all over the city to protest against the police vandalism. The attempts of the authorities to run railway trains provoked the people who squatted on the tracks in thousands to stop the trains

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY". Calcutta March 20, 1966

from running. The police and the army attacked the demonstrators ferociously which ended in clashes in several places. Ultimately all the trains had to be stopped in view of the determination of the people.

Most of the plane services of the Indian Airlines operating to or through the Dum Dum airport were cancelled because of Bengal Bandh.

In Asansol, though a complete and peaceful general Strike and Hartal was organized, police resorted to unprovoked firing in which two persons were killed and 36 injured. Thousands of people marched along with the dead body of a martyr to the Sub-Divisional Officer. They demonstrated for four hours and dispersed only when the S.D.O. and A.S.P. gave a written assurance that there would be no more firing in the town.

Police, however, continued to be brutal against the demonstrators and the situation deteriorated in Asansol. The Army was called in the evening and curfew was clamped on the town.

Local Congress leaders deliberately tried to provoke the demonstrators and resorted to goonda methods when the people were demonstrating in front of the INTUC office, Khadi Bhandar and residences for some Congress leaders.

Near Hind Motors, Hoogly, the trigger-happy police resorted to reckless firing. People demonstrating on the railway track became the special targets of police fire. The people had to arrange on their own the medical treatment of a large number of wounded persons. *The Statesman* correspondent gave his eyewitness account:

“The police fired 52 rounds before the crowd retreated slowly into the locality on the other side of the track embankment. When I entered the locality, faces were tense and heads peered from each door to take a look at the car which had ‘Press’ stickers on the windscreens. I saw three men carrying stethoscopes running towards the ambulance. I stopped my car to inquire if I could be of help. They viewed me with suspicion, refused my offer. My feeling was that they were arranging for transportation for those seriously injured in the police firing.”



In Dum Dum, after a total strike the workers staged a huge demonstration which was attacked by the police. The workers, however, refused to disperse. The police then started entering the workers' colonies and beating their inmates indiscriminately.

The reports received from centres like Nadia, Bongaon, Canning, Majdia, Basirhat, Krishnagar, Suri show that the strike in these centres were more or less peaceful because the police did not provoke the people. However, in places like Chandannagar where police resorted to a lathi-charge, teargas and firing the peace in the town was disturbed. Ferocious attacks on the people in some places by police force turned the areas virtually into a battle-field. The local Press was full of reports of "pitched battles" between the police and the people.

*The working class of Bengal played an important role in making Bengal Bandh a grand success. The students did their part in Hartals in the towns. Picketing was organized on a mass scale everywhere despite Section 144. All sections of the people joined in this gigantic mass action which "rocked Bengal" according to one Calcutta daily. Even distant areas in the North like Jalpaiguri and siliguri observed total Hartal and General Strike. The heroism displayed by the people in braving police repression has no parallel in the recent history of Bengal.*

People in Agartala in Tripura expressed their solidarity with fighting Bengal by observing Agartala Bandh on March 10. A huge demonstration was organized in support of the demands raised by the United Left Front.

The West Bengal Chief Minister held the Communist Party responsible for the Bengal Bandh. He tried to disrupt the United Front by stating that except the Communist Party all the Opposition parties in West Bengal were prepared to abjure violence. His machinations, however, failed to achieve anything due to the united determination of the people.

The people all over Bengal observed three days' Hartal to protest against police atrocities and violence. All the efforts to disrupt the

Hartal were foiled by the vigilance of the people. The isolation of the Government reached to such an extent that even Congressmen were openly asking for resignation of the most hated Chief Minister P.C. Sen.

The West Bengal Committee of the Communist Party congratulated the people of Bengal for their determined struggle against Congress food policies and wanton police repression. It called upon the people to continue the struggle with more vigour till all their demands are met in full.

The United Left Front issued a similar statement.

The West Bengal Government will have to face a more powerful Bengal Bandh if the just demands of the people are not accepted in full in time.

## **West Bengal Must Not Relent Till**

### **Minimum Demands Are Met \***

*Statement of the Central Committee of the C.P.I.(M)*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India has issued the following statement to the Press on March 16, 1966:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India extends its warmest greetings to the heroic people of West Bengal who have been fighting a valiant battle for food and against Police Raj.

More than fifty brave sons of West Bengal—young schoolboys and middleaged workers and employees—have been brutally shot down by the Congress Government for the only crime of demanding food. The Central Committee pays its homage to the martyrs and pledges to them that the supreme sacrifice they have made will not go in vain. The Central Committee sends its heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs—all West Bengal stands with bowed head mourning their loss.

The nearly month-long battle for food in West Bengal has been one of the mightiest movements of post-Independence India, one of the most significant for the mass participation in it, the grim determination of the people to fight as long as necessary, the contempt which they flung at the entire armed might of the Congress Raj.

The Congress rulers instead of conceding the elementary and just demands of the people thought they could suppress the struggle with bayonets and bullets. The entire police force of the state was mobilized, armed police contingents from other States were brought and finally the army was called in. The occasions on which firings were resorted to were numberless. Blood flowed in the streets of Calcutta and district towns and villages. Over eight thousand persons were arrested—many of them were mercilessly assaulted in

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY". Calcutta March 20, 1966

lock-ups. Police parties entered houses, beat up people indiscriminately and wrecked the inside of these homes.

Facing all this, undaunted by this repression for which there has been no parallel in recent years, the people fought on, the tempo of the struggle was rising with every passing day. West Bengal was paralyzed and the fighting people served notice on the Congress Government: Either meet our demands or West Bengal remains paralyzed.

Before the mighty determined people, the Congress Government had to retreat. The Union Home and Food Ministers had to rush to Calcutta. The Congress Government had to give up its earlier high-and-mighty attitude and attempts to dismiss the popular movement as the work of hooligans and anti-social elements.

Some of the leaders in detention including the leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Jyoti Basu, have been released, though many still continue in prisons. A Committee of Enquiry, which is nothing but a farce, has been promised to go into all aspects of the movement including police firings. Curfew and bans imposed under section 144 have been lifted or relaxed in many areas, though harassment of the people continues. The popular movement has won a partial victory but the Government still refuses to concede the minimum demands of the people:

- \* For full rationing in the entire State of West Bengal;
- \* For proper arrangement to make kerosene available to the people;
- \* For a judicial enquiry into the wanton police firings;
- \* For compensation to the families of those killed in police firings;
- \* For withdrawal of all prosecutions in connection with the food struggle;
- \* For release of all political prisoners;
- \* For withdrawal of Emergency, curfew, section 144, armed police and military from all areas;
- \* For reopening all educational institutions and to facilitate this, conceding the demands of all categories of teachers.

The struggle has to go on till the Congress Government concedes these demands. The Central Committee calls on the people of West Bengal not to relax their efforts but to intensify their movement in the coming days under the leadership of the United Front of Left Parties and the Rashtriya Sangram Samity.

The People of West Bengal are fighting not for their own food alone. The food movement of West Bengal comes in the wake of the food struggles of Bihar, Maharashtra and Kerala. And West Bengal is bound to be followed by other States as the food situation everywhere gets worse.

The Congress Government should see the writing on the wall. Unless it reverses its present prohoarder, pro-black-marketeer food policy and evolves a national policy to give food to the people, withdraw the Emergency and restore the rule of law, it will be faced with powerful movements in all States. The Central Committee of the Communist Party appeals to all democratic parties and mass organizations to come together to urgently initiate this movement and lead the people in their struggle for food, civil liberties and democratic rights.

## Release Immediately All Detenus :

### E.M.S. Namboodiripad Writes To Prime Minister Indira Gandhi\*

E. M. S. Namboodiripad, in a letter to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the beginning of March, is reported to have demanded the release of all Communist detenus even if there is any delay in taking a decision on the lifting of Emergency.

On March 5, 1966 E.M.S. had sent a telegram to the Prime Minister saying : Your Government has claimed that the Defence of India Rules will be used only for essential purposes. Kosala Ramadas and myself arrested in connection with the food struggle have still not been released. Not one detenu has been released in Kerala which is directly administered by the Centre. If there is any delay in taking a decision about the lifting of the Emergency, I request that all detenus be released immediately.

Some time has passed since this telegram, said E. M. S. in his letter, and there is no change in the situation. But if one reads the contradictory statements which you, your Home Minister Nanda and Hathi have been making, one begins to wonder whether you yourself know what your Government is saying.

Home Minister Nanda had made a pious declaration that the emergency powers would be used only for safeguarding national security. He specifically stated that the DIR would not be used against food and other economic struggle.

If this statement had been made with any sincerity, immediate instructions should have been given to the Governor who is the Centre's representative here to release Kosala Ramadas and me who were arrested in connection with the food struggle.

E. M. S. wrote that he would like to draw the attention of the Prime Minister to a reply which Hathi had given in Parliament. To a question whether a number of people had not been detained in Kerala

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\* Published in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, April 24, 1966

in connection with the food struggle, Hathi had answered, three were arrested, one has been released.

Who were these three ? Kosala Ramadas, myself and Nilakantan. Nilakantan is the Trivandrum District Secretary of the SSP. He was arrested on the same day as Kosala Ramadas was arrested and the orders for the arrests of both were issued by the Kerala Home Department.

When the food struggle was withdrawn, Nilakantan was released. The two of us are still kept in jail.

Hathi had repudiated the suggestion that detention orders are issued on the basis of the politics of the arrested persons. If the difference between Nilakantan who has been released and the two of us who are still being detained is not that we are Communists and he was not, you have to explain to the people what else it is.

What happened in West Bengal a few months ago was the same. At the time of the struggle in July-August last against the increase in tram-fare, a number of Opposition party leaders were arrested. Among them were Jyoti Basu, Abdul Halim and others of our Party.

After a few days, except for Jyoti Basu, Halim and others of our Party and some belonging to another party, all the others were released.

How can your declaration that arrests have nothing to do with the political opinions of the arrested persons be reconciled with such actions ?

When after your declaration in Parliament that there would be a new approach, some of the State Governments have begun to adopt this new approach, your Central Government and the Kerala Government directly in your charge are not prepared to go even that far. This is evident from the following facts.

(a) When all those detained in connection with the West Bengal food struggle have been released, in Kerala, two of the three persons detained in connection with the food struggle are still kept in jail.

(b) While all the detenus in Gujarat, almost half the detenus in Madras, and a few dozens in Andhra have been released, no detenu

detained under the orders of the Central Government has been released.

When the Central Government and Kerala administration directly in its charge take such an attitude to the question of release of detenus, it is not surprising that most of the State Governments have not even given any thought to the question of releasing detenus.

Can you blame us, then, if we come to the conclusion that your declaration about reviewing the whole question of Emergency was in effect only a cover behind which to keep us in jail for as long as possible ?

I would like to repeat what I said in my telegram of March 5 that if you require more time to take a decision about the lifting of the Emergency, all the detenus should be released forthwith.

Above all, in this year when the General Elections are to be held, our Party has as much right as yours to prepare for the elections, to conduct discussions with other parties for necessary adjustments, etc. Our Central Committee and Polit Bureau must have the same opportunities for all this as your AICC and Working Committee. If you deny us this opportunity, you are yourself destroying the dignity of being in the leadership of a democratic nation.

E. M. S. concluded his letter referring to two statements the Prime Minister had made about the mass struggles breaking out in various parts of the country.

He wrote : You are reported to have said before the Bengal Bandh that such agitation would come in the way of the early lifting of the Emergency. How can this statement be reconciled with what Nanda had said that emergency powers would not be used to face economic problems ?

Your Home Department has on the one hand given clear and specific directives to the State Governments not to use the DIR against blackmarketees, etc., and on the other, with your open support, P. C. Sen has been allowed to liberally use the DIR against the West Bengal food struggle. The "Socialism" of your Government is really wonderful !



The question, then, is simple and straight. Is it your intention to use the DIR against mass agitations like food struggles, working class struggles, peasant struggles, etc.?

If it is that you cannot face such agitations without the emergency powers which have been condemned by eminent jurists and the entire people of this country and also by many in foreign countries, then the people will be ready to come to their own conclusions regarding the democratic character of your Government.

The other statement of yours to which I would refer is the one about opposition parties inciting trouble in the pre-election year. Is it your belief that the opposition parties are so powerful that they are able to rouse people in one State after another? Did not your own KPCC participate in the food struggle in Kerala at one stage? Is it enough to be satisfied with making such a statement about opposition parties?

The sensible course for you would be to realize even now that these problems—whether of food in Kerala and West Bengal, or of language and linguistic States as in Punjab, or of the tribal people as in Assam and Madhya Pradesh—have all been created because of the mistakes in the Government's own policies and that they cannot be faced with emergency powers.

Though your appeal for cooperation from all may create a ray of expectation, that hope is extinguished when it is remembered that you are making this appeal after keeping in jail the entire leadership of a party which at least in Kerala and West Bengal has become the strongest opposition party. As long as we are kept in jail, your appeals for cooperation sound hollow and insincere.

## **Maha Gujarat Samgram Samiti Demands Release Of Detenus, Ending Of Emergency And Restoration Of Civil Liberties\***

THE Maha Gujarat Samgram Samiti organised a huge procession on Republic Day, culminating in a mammoth rally, to focus attention on working class demands for bonus, dearness allowance, etc., and the demand for restoration of civil liberties, ending of Emergency and release of detenus. Indulal Yagnik, MP, presided over the meeting.

The meeting saw the rising temper of the working people and democratic sections of the people. It set the mass movement on the road of new struggles in the coming days.

Among the speakers were Naliniben Mehta and Nathusingh of the Communist Party of India and representatives of the Dangeites and the independent Janata Parisad.

Naliniben Mehta emphasized the need for restoration of civil liberties and immediate release of the detenus, some of whom have been under detention for over 18 months and the rest for over a year.

She also pointed out that the Tashkent Declaration had to be taken forward by establishing friendly relations with all neighbouring states.

She called upon the workers to get ready for militant mass actions leading up to a general strike in order to achieve the demands of the working class.

Nathusingh explained the demands of the working class for bonus, dearness allowance, etc.

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\* Published in "PEOPLES DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, February 13, 1966

## **All Out Strike Again In West Bengal General Strike On April 6, 1966 Will Continue On 7th If Government Provokes\***

### *United Left Front Issue Statement*

The United Left Front has issued the following statement:

The United Left Front has considered the Chief Minister's reply to its letter of the 18th March. This reply is completely unsatisfactory. It is the considered view of the ULF that the Chief Minister has no mind to concede to the people's demands. The mighty popular upsurge all over West Bengal during the last one month compelled the Chief Minister to change his previous obstinate and arrogant tone, but he is now seeking to wriggle out of any concrete measure or any definite commitment for the relief of the people.

The ULF has always been reasonable. Even inspite of very powerful feelings of the people against any discussion with the Chief Minister, we entered into discussions with him in order to see if there were any possibility of securing some relief. We went very far in our efforts to reach a temporary settlement and placed minimum conditions.

But the Chief Minister has not responded to our efforts.

1. He had announced earlier that rations would be extended to cover the 'B' category from the 15th March; he has not yet honoured this announcement, and is merely making some vague declarations. So far as the other categories are concerned there is no indication that they will ever be brought under rationing.

2. He had assured on the floor of the Assembly that the quantum of rations under M.R. would be increased and brought to level under S.R. He has now avoided the question altogether.

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, March 27, 1966. The General Strike and Bundh' was successfully observed on 6th April, 1966 all over West Bengal. Vide Editorial of the "People's Democracy" of April 17, 1966 bearing title "BENGAL: STRUGGLE WILL CONTINUE", covered under Item No. 50 of this volume.

3. The Cabinet's expression of satisfaction with the Central Government's assurance of wheat supplies upto 1.20 lakh tonnes only every month,—which can maintain supply of rations at the existing rate only—shows that the Government has no intention of increasing the quantum of rations even as a measure of immediate relief. It is also significant that the Central Food Minister stated yesterday that the West Bengal Government has not yet informed the Centre about the exact requirements of the West Bengal.

4. Though the Government has not been able to justify the high price of rice under rationing, yet the Government has refused to reduced the price.

5. Regarding kerosene the Government has not made its position clear about the quantity and the number of people to be supplied, nor about the supply to a large rural population who have no ration cards.

6. We had offered our co-operation in the procuring the surplus stock of the big producers and hoarders, and in distribution of ration cards and rations to the people through people's Food Committees. The Government has completely ignored this offer.

7. The Government has refused to issue a mandatory directive in respect of the levy order to exempt producers holding upto 5 acres of irrigated and 7 acres of non-irrigated land.

8. The Government has not yet clearly stated that it will institute a judicial inquiry into the police firings and excesses.

9. The Government has not accepted our suggestions of a general release. Besides the many still being detained without trial since 1964, according to the Government itself, so-called 'cases' are pending against 3622 persons out of a total of 5495 arrested in connection with the present movement. 1316 of these persons, including a considerable number of school children, are still in prison as "under-trials". Harassment, persecution and victimization of people are still continuing.

10. The Government has not taken any definite step to give compensation for those killed or disabled by police firing. In short, the Government has turned down all our basic demands. The Chief Minister seems to be determined to inflict another series of severe trials on the people.

We are confident that the people, undaunted by the most brutal police violence and united in their determination to see some improvement of their conditions, will give the only fitting reply to the Chief Minister through renewed struggles for the realization of the demands put forward by the ULF. Hardships and sufferings of the struggle will be cheerfully borne by the people, who will ever remember that more than fifty have already lost their lives in their present movement.

The ULF had already decided to call for a General Strike and Hartal if the Government did not concede to the minimum demands of the people. Accordingly, the ULF had already decided to call upon the people to build up and consolidate their organised strength in all parts of West Bengal and prepare for a peaceful General Strike and Hartal all over the West Bengal on the 6th April.

The peaceful GENERAL STRIKE and HARTAL will commence from 5 a.m. of the 6th April and will continue for 24 hours. We hope that some wisdom will prevail upon the Government and it will not again employ provocative repression and violence against the people. If, however, the Government does resort to repression again, the GENERAL STRIKE and HARTAL will continue for another 24 hours on the 7th April.

In the meanwhile, as a part of the preparations for the GENERAL STRIKE and HARTAL, the ULF calls upon the people to observe 29th March as an ALL-BENGAL DAY OF PROTESTS & DEMONSTRATIONS against the policies of the Government. A central rally and demonstration will be held on that day at 5 p.m. at the Calcutta Maidan.

The Unity of the people under the leadership of the ULF is the main strength of the movement. We have full confidence that this unity will be maintained and further developed, and that the people will completely ignore all attempts at disruption of the movement by slander or spreading of confusion among the people.

The people's movement for food and against repression has now entered a new phase, unprecedented in the recent history. The people will win the struggle, for justice and right are on their side.

The West Bengal Rashtriya Samgram Samiti has fully endorsed the above decisions of the ULF and has called upon the working class to make these programmes successful.

## **These Are People's Minimum Demands Let P.C. Sen's Government Concede them, Or Be Still More Condemned**

### **1**

**RAISE** immediately the quantum of foodgrains per head per day both under statutory as well as modified rationing. Give extra 200 grams to heavy manual workers, both urban and rural.

### **2**

**SET** up people's Food Committees without delay at all levels, with adequate powers and authority to supervise, in association with official agencies, procurement and distribution including distribution of ration cards.

### **3**

**REDUCE** the unreasonably exorbitant prices of rationed foodgrains.

### **4**

**APPOINT** immediately a Judicial Commission to enquire into police and military firings and atrocities. The composition of the Commission should be such as would inspire public confidence, and the Commission must finalize its report within two months.

### **5**

**RELEASE** forthwith all political prisoners detained or put under arrest under various sections of the DIR, Security Act and similar other measures. Normalcy can begin only by a general release of the political prisoners.

## Rally As One Man

*Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", March 27, 1966 On The Call of General Strike in West Bengal on April 6, 1966. \**

THE PEOPLE OF W. BENGAL have displayed marvels of heroism, great determination and massive unity in the recent struggles against the bankrupt policies of the Congress Government. They are learning through bitter experience how this Government serves the interests of reactionary and vested sections of the society.

The Government let loose unprecedented repression and violence instead of satisfying the minimum and urgent needs of the people. But in face of the mounting anger of the people it had to retreat and open discussions with the Left parties.

The United Left Front, in its desire to give some relief to the people and to bring about a settlement, did all that was possible to prevail upon the Government to see reason. But the Chief Minister of West Bengal has spurned all their efforts and the reasonableness of the Opposition has been met with dishonest manoeuverings and rebuff.

Thus there has been no other alternative but for the Left parties, Rashtriya Samgram Samiti and the people to prepare for further struggles. We know that the people will have to bear further suffering and repression, but we are confident that they can never be cowed into submission.

We must pledge in the name of our martyrs and our suffering people not to rest until the Government is compelled to discard its anti-people policies.

The United Left Front together with the Rashtriya Samgram Samiti have decided upon a peaceful General Strike and Hartal on April 6 in support of their demands which remain to be fulfilled.

The Government stands condemned and isolated from the people as never before.

We are confident that once again all sections of the people of West Bengal will rally as one man to the struggle which has been imposed on them by the Government.

## Bengal : Struggle Will Continue

*Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", April 17, 1966 On Successful Observance of General Strike in West Bengal On April 6, 1966.\**

WITH a total peaceful Hartal all over the state on April 6, the people of West Bengal have again served notice on the Government: the food struggle will continue till the Government concedes their demands.

The glorious action on April 6 was completely peaceful giving the lie to Congress propaganda that opposition parties were inciting people to violence and confirming what we have always said that it is the Government which unleashes violence with its efforts to run the transport services against the wishes of the people and its provocative display and use of armed police might . The people of West Bengal had taught such a lesson to the Congress Government that it dared not try to run the transport services or parade its police forces on April 6. And the action remained peaceful.

The Congress Chief Minister has been declaring his love for the people and claiming that it is this love which has made him increase the wheat ration quantum, arrange distribution of kerosene on ration cards, etc. But it require a mighty mass movement lasting nearly two months and the shedding of much innocent blood to rouse this love in the Chief Minister's heart. If the dogged food struggle of the people of West Bengal has proved anything, it is that only when the people begin to fight do the Congress leaders take any notice of their demands.

The main demands of the food movement are yet to be won. The increase in the rice ration still remains a vague promise. While kerosene has been guaranteed to ration card holders in the statutory rationing areas, there is no such guarantee in the vast areas where no rationing or only modified rationing exists. The opposition parties



were not consulted while deciding on the personnel of the Enquiry Commission, and on the question of its terms of reference, the Chief Minister has gone back on his promised word.

But that the Chief Minister had to make a show of concessions is due to the fighting unity of the people, the indomitable strength of their struggle. And that also is the guarantee that if the people persist in the struggle and intensify it, the Government can be forced to implement the promises it has made and concede the rest of their demands.

As we go to press, the United Left Front of opposition parties which has been leading the movement for food, democratic rights and release of detenus and other prisoners etc. is giving shape to the programme for the next stage of the struggle.

While we salute the people of West Bengal for the heroism and determination they had already displayed, we pledge then all support in the coming days of more intensified struggles.

## Silence Of Wrath\*

**Mourning procession in Calcutta on March 13, 1966 to pay homage to those killed during the food struggle and to protest against police repression.**

Silence, utter silence, an all-pervading silence... tens of thousands marching but the thud-thud of their feet melting into this silence...millions on the sidelines also enveloped in the silence—not the silence of the mute or the vanquished, but the silence of holy wrath and unbearable anguish... the silence of the unvanquished... the silence of the confident who had passed death sentence on an anti-people regime... the silence of a whole people that would have gladdened the hearts of the martyrs if only they could see it—this was Calcutta in the afternoon of Sunday, March 13, when in homage to those killed during the food struggle, a mammoth silent procession trekked the streets of the North of the city from Subodh Mallik Square to Deshbandhu Park.

Newspapermen have described this demonstration as the biggest in the city since Independence, some have said it was two-mile long, some it was four-mile long, some have written it took more than an hour to pass a particular point—all impressed by the solemnity of the occasion, but for one who witnessed it what remains in the mind is not the number of the marching people nor the time they took—time and place came to a standstill, and as face after face came into view and passed, the mind was on the glorious battle that had been fought, the unparalleled heroism of the people against the ferocious repression of the Congress rulers, the more than fifty boys and men in the prime of their life who bared their chests for Congress bullets in an indictment so severe that no regime can outlive it.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY". Calcutta, March 20, 1966 *The Congress Government in West Bengal resorted to severe police repression to break the General Strike and Hartal in West Bengal on March 10, 1966 which continued on March 11, 1966 in protest against police repression. The SILENT PROCESSION was organised in Calcutta on March 13, 1966 to pay homage to those who were killed in police firing on March 10 and 11, 1966 and earlier and to record people's protest against police repression. More than 50,000 people took part in the SILENT PROCESSION on March 13, 1966 in Calcutta. This reportage is connected with Item Nos 49, 49A and 50 of this Volume.*

Heading the memorable demonstration was a hastily-erected martyrs' memorial carried by pall-bearers cordoned off by volunteers and as it approached and passed, men and women stood with heads bowed in homage, many weeping unashamedly, their grief as great as if their own kith and kin had been lost.

Then followed men, women and children in silent condemnation of a regime which found it cheaper to spray bullets on the people than give them food.

Here are the tiny tots trotting along to keep the pace, holding on to the hands of their parents—the parents would not leave them behind : let the Congress rulers see whom they are starving, let the Congress rulers see our children, their growth stunted by starvation and malnutrition.

Here is a lame man limping along, the strain all-too-evident on his face, but he would not give up his position in the serried ranks : how can I ? This is the least I can offer to those who gave their all for us.

Here is the old mother, clad in immaculate white with a black flag in her hand. The pace is too fast for her. But she marches on, tears trickling down her face when she talked :

Look at the boys who have been killed. Their fathers and mothers had pinched and saved, gone without small comforts they would have liked, to send their son to college. He was bright, he had done well in school. He would do well in college also, he would get a job and then he would look after his father and mother and give them the small comforts which they denied themselves. And today ? All their dreams are shattered, their hopes have been burnt to ashes.

The men who have been killed. They have wives and children. They laboured hard. But everyday they found they had less to feed their children with. And then they found there was no rice for love or money. When they came home every evening they saw their children expectantly looking to see whether they had brought any rice. The children had been to school during the day. But in the evening they could not do their lessons and homework—the house was in darkness, there was no kerosene. All that the fathers wanted

was rice so that their children need not starve, kerosene so that their children can study and grow up into useful citizens. And for that, they were shot and killed.

I am a mother. I have my own children. But I would have been proud to have given birth to these boys who died so that the people can live. How can I ever fulfil my debt to them ? Walking in the sun ? What is it compared to their sacrifice ? This is the least we can do today. I cannot rest.

The withered, lined face, the white-clad figure with the black flag held high over the head, passed on, others took her place and moved forward.

It seemed ages had passed, but they were still coming, men, women and children, young and old. The millions on the sidelines stood with bowed heads and bowed them even lower when huge posters came along with the photographs of the dead. Clenched fists pledged to the martyrs : they would be avenged.

On and on, determined face after determined face, steady feet after steady feet, they marched and the silence itself proclaimed the doom of the Congress raj.

The last of the serried ranks had passed. But for long one did not realize it —sunk in the memories of the last few days.

These are the same streets down which the blood of the martyrs had flowed—the martyrs to whom we were paying homage. Only a few hours ago they were here demanding food, only a few hours ago trigger-happy policemen were spraying bullets on them. And now, the people have taken over the streets, there is not a single policeman in uniform to be found, not a single black maria accompanies the procession. The arrogant Congress rulers have realized that they have reached the danger-mark, that they can interfere with this demonstration only at their own peril.

There in the far distance, the last black flag has turned the corner and disappeared from view. But people are reluctant to move away. And when they move, they cluster in groups around the hundreds of martyrs' columns erected all over the city. They are people's monuments—half-a-dozen bricks put together, smothered with

garlands and flowers, incense burning at the altar. Lakhs of rupees have not been spent on them but what are lakhs of rupees compared to the love and tributes that are being showered on them ?

One again bowed one's head at the hallowed spots and said to the dead : Comrades, you have written a glorious chapter in the history of people's struggles. Your sacrifice will not go in vain.

## West Bengal Rebuffs Home Minister

### Nanda\*

The flying visit of Union Home Minister Nanda and food minister Subramaniam to Calcutta on March 12 and 13 failed to solve the problems raised by the mighty people's movement all over the State. The proposals put forward by them only showed to the people of West Bengal that both the State and the Union Governments were not serious in meeting any of the people's demands.

When both the Union Ministers were driving from the airport to Calcutta they found, according to their own admission, grimfaced crowds. People showed back flags in some places and slogan-shouting against the Government's food policy was heard by them throughout the route. Nevertheless, Nanda found "ample indications that the people welcomed the Central Minister Visit". The Home Minister was not prepared to see the unprecedented hatred of the people which was clearly reflected in the unique Hartal and General Strike.

The four opposition MPs who meet the Home Minister told Nanda frankly that they would not discuss anything in the presence of the hated Chief Minister P.C. Sen. However Nanda's Sadachar could not prevent him from telling a lie to the press that "Mr. Sen's absence from the meeting with the opposition MPs was inevitable because of his engagement elsewhere".

As reported in the Press, Nanda took copious notes of his discussions with opposition MPs and Government official which in a day alone filled more than 50 pages. Despite this dramatic show of study of the situation, the solution suggested by him fell far short of the need of the situation.

The Nanda Proposals which formed the basis of Chief Minister Sen's press Conference consisted of the following measures.

\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, March 20, 1966.

1. Appointment of a commission to go into the causes of “disturbances and allied matters.”

2. Release of some legislators and political leaders arrested during the struggle.

3. Withdrawal of the suspension order on 16 MLAs.

4. Partial relaxation in repressive measures like curfew, Section 144 and withdrawal of the military.

These steps, however, failed to satisfy the people and all the Opposition parties correctly rejected them.

When Nanda was talking to the Opposition MPs and giving advice to everybody, the West Bengal police was busy in rounding up thousands of activists Calcutta and its suburbs. The total number of arrested people had crossed the 7,000 marks. Under these circumstances release of some leaders alone cannot go in any way to meet the demands of the people.

The order of release of detenus held under the DIR was an open admission by the Government that the law was used only to suppress the opposition. Nanda, a few days ago, stated in Parliament that only “enemies of the nation” would be arrested under the DIR. Now due to the pressure of the people the Government was compelled to release them.

Jyoti Basu, who was arrested during the tram-fare agitation in August last year, was released by the Government only when the entire Opposition demanded his release. One Opposition leader aptly remarked after his release : “You entered jail in the wake of tramfare movement and it took another movement to bring you out.”

The United Left front put forward the following demands to the Government the acceptance of which alone could have resulted in solving the problem.

1. Extension of full rationing throughout the State, no cut in the ration quota in the plantation areas, restoration of cut in the ration made earlier.

2. Supply of adequate Kerosene to all the people.

3. Withdrawal of all prosecutions in connection with the movement, immediate release of detenus and of all person connected with the movement , cancellation of all warrants of arrest and detention.

4. Payment of compensation to the relatives of the victims of the police action and judicial enquiry into police firings.

5. Withdrawal of Emergency, section 144, the curfew and the armed police and military from all areas.

6. Immediate reopening of all educational institutions and acceptance of demands of all teachers in State.

The United Left Front in its meeting on March 14 decided that if these demands were not conceded before March 18 a bigger movement would be launched all over the State including another general strike. "Till our demands are not fulfilled we will not relent", said Jyoti Basu to the press correspondents after the meeting.

Thus the outward concern shown by Nanda proved to be sheer hoax. Before leaving for Calcutta he hold Pressmen in Delhi: "I am going to Calcutta with a determined mind to bring about a settlement and restore normalcy". He also claimed that he was going on his "peace mission" with "an open mind." Later developments have only shown that he came with ready-made solutions discussed in the union Cabinet meeting and wanted to impose them on the people of Bengal.

Nanda also wanted to create an impression that the Union Government was extremely concerned about situation in West Bengal. His game, however, was misfired.

When Nanda was in Calcutta, section 144 was imposed all over the city. But in reality people ignored it. He had to see a mighty demonstration on the Martyrs' Day despite Section 144. If he had been honest he would have admitted the total isolation of his Party and the Government from the people.

What is more, Nanda was compelled to meet a section of his partymen who openly advocated the demands put forward by the opposition parties.



Throughout his stay in Calcutta Nanda did not use to pet words like “goondas”, “hooligans” “anti-social elements”, “anti-national elements” while referring to the food agitation. He had to use the word “upheaval” instead.

The people of Bengal have shown that they can not be cowed down by threats and repressive measures. The historic unity achieved during the struggle has only increased the confidence of the people that unless they rout the black-rupt policies of the Congress Government their conditions will not improve.

## **Cine Workers' Open Letter To Union Home Minister, G. L. Nanda\***

Dear Nandaji,

What happened these last few days in Calcutta and the whole of West Bengal will amaze and pain everybody. After a number of incidents had happened and some lives lost, you have come to Calcutta to restore peace. Once before you had come down to Calcutta. Black blood of fratricidal strife was then flowing in Calcutta. You had shown the courage and honesty that was required to wipe away the black spots of Calcutta with a strong hand that the Calcutta police lacked. An anti-riot procession was taken out from the Monument at the instance of your state Government. Many of those who were at the head of that procession are today detained under your DIR. You have come again today, when blood is again flowing in Calcutta and the whole of West Bengal. And at the root of this monstrosity is your State Government, your Chief minister, your police.

Nandaji we do not understand politics. But we are nearer to the heart of the people. That is why we feel that the whole of Bengal is pointing its accusing finger at your State Government, the Chief Minister of your State Government and the police of the Chief Minister.

We are, therefore, not prepared to listen to any apologia of the State Government from you. Now say unhesitatingly that:

- (1) You will immediately start judicial enquiry into police zoolum.
- (2) You will release all the detenus detained under the DIR.
- (3) You will meet the cry for food and kerosene.
- (4) You will honour the storm of protest that is reging all over the country against the Emergency.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, March 20, 1966

Lastly, we would only hope from you that you will create such conditions that we will not have to witness the obstinate arrogance of the Government, the perverted psychosis of the Ministers and the brutal jingoism of the police any more.

Yours,

On behalf of the Cine  
Technicians' and Workers' Union

Satyajit Ray  
Mrinal Sen  
Soumitra Chatterji

## **Resolution On Food Taken By The Polit Bureau Of The Communist Party Of India (Marxist)\***

### **Congress-Made Famine**

The polit bureau of the Communist Party expresses its sympathy with and concern for the people who are undergoing intense sufferings due to the famine and scarcity conditions created by the Congress rulers.

For the last few months serious scarcity and famine conditions have been prevailing over most parts of the country. In the worst affected areas like Orissa, a number of starvation deaths have taken place, children are being sold or abandoned, there have been distress sales of land and cattle and large-scale migration of the rural poor to the urban areas. The situation is not much better in many of the other States.

This situation will become even more critical in the coming months which are the traditional lean period even in normal times.

The Congress Government continues to be callously complacent to the sufferings of the people. Controversies about food zones and denials of starvation deaths do not solve the problem and the Government refuses to take even a single effective step to seriously tackle the food situation.

### **Drought Is Not The Cause**

The class policies pursued by the Congress rulers in the nearly two decades since independence have led to a situation where the country does not produce adequate food to feed the people. The drought this year and the lack of rainfall have intensified the problem. But the crisis has not been created by the drought and rainfall. They have only brought to the surface the permanent crisis of Indian agriculture which is a creation of the Congress Government's pro-vested-interests policies.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, May 22, 1966

But the Congress Government, pursuing policies biased in favour of the big landlords and rich peasants, refuses to procure the stocks with these sections and allows speculation and blackmarketing in foodgrains to flourish. Apart from the big traders and the millers, these big landowners have themselves turned into hoarders and blackmarketeers and the Congress rulers dare not touch their interests because the general elections are approaching and they are the financiers and vote-getters of the Congress Party in the rural areas. It has been the experience that while people were starving because they could not get any rice, any quantity of rice was available—but at a price. The Congress Government is as guilty as these hoarders who have been selling their surplus stocks to the starving people at profiteering prices.

### **Procurement Programmes A Flop**

Because of the refusal of the Congress Government to touch these interests, procurement programmes have collapsed in all the States. In West Bengal, for instance, the target was first fixed at 15 lakh tons, it was then reduced to 11 lakh tons, while actual procurement has been only 5½ lakh tons.

The Government has introduced statutory rationing in the whole of Kerala State and some of the major cities. The quantum of ration in these areas is inadequate and prices of the rationed foodgrains have increased in places. Modified rationing has been a hoax and with the total failure of the procurement programme, will become an even bigger hoax. What is even more grim is that there are no provisions made for the millions of our rural poor and they have been left to starve and die.

### **Bartering Away Of Freedom**

Instead of procuring the stocks that are available and arranging for their equitable distribution, the Government seeks to solve the problem with PL-480 imports from the United States. As for increasing food production, instead of giving land to the tiller and giving him credit to improve farming, the Government relies on private U. S. capital to set up fertilizer plants and the upper sections of the landowners who alone, in the present conditions, can make the necessary inputs and set up big capitalist farms. Thus, in the

name of getting foodgrains to meet the scarcity and producing fertilizers to increase food production, the country's freedom is being bartered away.

### **All-Out Support To Food Struggles**

Big struggles have already taken place in Bihar, in Maharashtra, in Kerala and in west Bengal against the famine created by the Congress Government. If the Government persists in its present policies, even bigger struggle are in the offing with the situation getting explosive in the coming months. The P. B. of the CPI pays its homage to the martyrs of these food struggle, greets the people who braved the worst repression to fight for food and assures that the Party will stand steadfastly with them in the grim days ahead.

The P.B. condemns the ferocious repression with which the Government seeks to suppress people's struggles and calls on the people to maintain the popular unity that has already been built and to strengthen it still further in preparation for the coming struggles.

The P.B. urges the Government even now to take the following immediate steps to solve the food problem faced by the nation :

- \* Introduce radical agrarian reforms and give credit and other facilities to the cultivating peasants and a remunerative price to the producer;
- \* State trading in foodgrains;
- \* Procure all the available stocks, exempting the lower strata of the peasantry and ensuring that the middle strata is not harassed;
- \* Arrange for the equitable distribution of procured stocks and reduce the price of rationed foodgrains where they have been increased as in West Bengal and Kerala;
- \* Stop all revenue collections in scarcity-affected areas, start test relief works to alleviate the sufferings of people and free distribution of food to those who cannot work.

# Resolutions Adopted By The Central Committee Of The Communist Party Of India (Marxist) At Tenali, June 12-19, 1966

**Note :** *The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) held its meeting in Tenali from June 12 to 19, 1966. This was the first meeting of the Central Committee which was elected by the Seventh Congress of CPI(M) held in Calcutta, October-November 1964.*

*Even when it was elected, four of its members—Muzaffar Ahmad, B. T. Ranadive, Promode Das Gupta and Hare Krishna Konar—were already in detention under the draconian Defence of India rules. The first meeting of the C. C. had been called in Trichur at the end of December 1964. Just when the Polit Bureau of the C. C. met in Trichur to fix the agenda for the meeting of the C. C., the Government made its attack on the Party and arrested and detained over a thousand of the Party's leaders and activists, including most of the members of the C. C. in an all-India swoop in the night of December 29-30, 1964.*

*They were kept in detention for over sixteen months and only under pressure of a powerful movement for civil liberties and the West Bengal struggle of February-March 1966, was the Government forced to release the Communist detenus beginning with April 1966.*

*Immediately after the release, the PB met in Calcutta on May 9, 1966 and convened the meeting of the C. C. in Tenali. The C. C. after reviewing the political developments and the work of the Party during this period adopted a number of resolutions which are printed in this pamphlet. \**

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*This prefatory Note was given at the outset of the pamphlet which contained these resolutions*

*(a) Homage to Martyrs, (b) Condolence Resolutions Comrade S V Parulekar, Comrade Abdul Halim, Comrade B. D. Parab, Comrade D V. Subba Rao and Baba Sher Singh., (c) On the political report, (d) On devaluation of the rupee, (e) On food, (f) On general election, (g) On ideological discussion, (h) On emergency and defence of India rules, (i) On Vietnam, (j) On Government employees, (k) On Automation, (l) On the Naga and Mizo problem (m) Reorganisation of Punjab on linguistic basis and the demarcation of its boundaries, (n) On Mysore and Maharashtra border problem, (o) On ghastly railway accident at Matunga (Bombay) (p) On famine conditions in Orissa, (q) Repression in Warangal district (Andhra Pradesh), (r) Police firing on workers at Rayagada, (s) On east pakistani repression, (t) On the kisan sabha, (u) On the new ordinance*

### **(a)Homage To Martyrs**

The Congress Government resorted to brutal firings on unarmed people and let loose a reign of terror in order to suppress popular struggles against its anti-people, anti-democratic policies.

In the states of Madras and Andhra, firing was resorted to in a number of towns and cities during the agitation against the attempt to impose Hindi as the official language in January-February 1965.

In Bihar and Maharashtra, the police resorted to firings during the widespread food struggles against the policy of starvation pursued by the government.

In Kerala in January-February 1966, during the magnificent struggle against the cut in the already meagre ration, the government resorted to firing.

In West Bengal, during the statewide struggle for food and against repression, for release or DIR detenus, the police and military resorted to firing for days together in Calcutta and many other towns.

Firing was resorted to in many industrial centres during strikes of workers. In Tarapore, when the construction workers of the Atomic Power Station went on strike, American officers of the Bechtel Corporation took the law into their own hands and shot down and killed nine workers.

In Bastar, the police staged a second Jalianwala Bagh when it huddled hundreds of adivasis within the palace of the Maharaja, made escape impossible, rained shots on the adivasis enclosed in the palace and killed many of them including their leader Pravin Chandra Bhanj Deo.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India is happy to note that this brutal repression did not cow down the people. It warmly congratulates the people who, undaunted by these brutal firings and reign of terror, fought for popular demands and often compelled, by their courage and determination, the government to retreat.

The Central Committee pays its homage to the hundreds of martyrs who had fallen victims to the police bullets in these firings



and pledges that it will carry on the struggle for the cause in which they had laid down their lives.

### **(b) Condolence Resolutions**

#### **Comrade S. V. Parulekar**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India pays its homage to the memory of Comrade S. V. Parulekar, member of our Central Committee and valiant fighter in the cause of communism in India. Comrade Parulekar died in jail, a victim of the callous policy of the Congress Government which kept him in detention since 1962 and would not release him even though he was suffering from serious ill-health. A popular leader of the masses, a successful parliamentarian, Comrade Parulekar was, above all, a devoted Marxist-Leninist, and fought courageously inside the Party against the anti-working class policies of the revisionist clique. Long years of incarceration and suffering had undermined his health, yet he continued to serve the Worli adivasi peasants of Maharashtra whom he had organized into a powerful force. As one of the founders of the All-India Kisan Sabha and as one of its secretaries for many years, he had greatly contributed to the development of the kisan movement throughout the country. He also continued to fight for the working class and was directly guiding a number of powerful trade unions.

Leader of the Party in Maharashtra, he continued to serve it till his last day guiding and inspiring his co-detenus. The Central Committee once more pays its homage to this intrepid champion of our people, the devoted Marxist-Leninist who is no more with us.

#### **Comrade Abdul Halim**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India pays its homage to the memory of Comrade Abdul Halim, one of the founder-members of our Party, a member of the Central Control Commission and the West Bengal State Committee. For more than four decades Comrade Halim in the most trying period of our Party worked steadfastly and devotedly under the banner of our Party and displayed exemplary courage and capacity for self-sacrifice. The British

Government and its successor, the Congress government, repeatedly jailed him and he had to spend a large part of his life in jail. Undaunted by this, Comrade Halim devoted his entire energy to the cause of the working class, to the cause of the Party. Starting as a trade union leader in his early youth, Halim developed into a Marxist-Leninist, a leader of the West Bengal Party, inspiring others by his quiet steadfastness and revolutionary sense of dedication. The government refused to release him until his condition became precarious. His death after his recent release was hastened by the strain and stress of the unjust incarceration and the Congress Government must be held directly responsible for it.

The Central Committee sends its condolences to the members of his family and assures them that our entire Party shares their grief and sorrow.

The Central Committee once more pays its homage to this valiant champion of communism, our valued colleague who is no more with us.

### **Comrade B. D. Parab**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India pays its homage to the memory of Comrade B. D. Parab who died in detention in Bombay in May, 1965. His death was caused by the cruel and inhuman attitude of the Maharashtra Government which, inspite of the precarious condition of his health, refused to release him or transfer him to a climate where his disease could have been brought under control. Comrade Parab has joined the immortal ranks of the innumerable martyrs who have laid down their lives so that the common people may triumph.

### **Comrade D. V. Subba Rao**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India pays its homage to the memory of Comrade D. V. Subba Rao, a member of the Andhra State Committee of the Party. Comrade Subba Rao, was a militant organizer of the Party who greatly helped in building the Party organ in Andhra. In 1948-51, he faced indescribably cruel police torture, and yet kept the banner of the Party unsullied. He

was a valiant fighter inside the Party against revisionism and his contribution in founding, organizing and building Janasakti, the organ of the Andhra Committee of the Party, is inestimable. The torture he had suffered at the hands of the police had greatly undermined his health. His shining example will ever inspire Party members in their struggles.

### **Baba Sher Singh**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India pays its homage to the memory of Baba Sher Singh, a great revolutionary fighter for India's freedom. Baba Sher Singh joined the Ghadr Party in 1914 and had suffered long years of incarceration in the Andamans and in the jails of India during the British regime. Till his last days he was with the masses and was devoted to their cause.

### **(c) On The Political Report**

Having considered the political-organizational report for the period beginning with December 30, 1964, the Central Committee expresses its satisfaction at the progress made in the Party's activities.

The countrywide arrests which took place in the night of December 29-30, 1964, and subsequently, created an extremely difficult situation for the comrades who had to shoulder the responsibilities which devolved on them. They had to regroup and reorganize the Party in order to meet the new situation in which the bulk of the party leadership was behind the bars. They had to face the terrific propaganda offensive launched by the government and the ruling party—propaganda which was calculated to isolate the Party from the democratic sections of the people who were becoming growingly critical of the Congress regime. They had to deal with several complicated problems which arose in the wake of the Indo-Pak conflict, first in the Rann of Kutch and then in Kashmir. Above all, they had to discharge all these responsibilities in the face of the vicious attacks carried on by the revisionists against the Party.

It is to the credit of the entire Party that all these difficulties were bravely faced and the responsibilities discharged with credit. It has once again been thus proved that the ruling classes will never succeed in their efforts to beat the Party into submission, that on the

other hand, the mass of the working people and the militant cadres of the Party will beat back all the attacks launched on the Party by the ruling classes and their agents.

The leaders of the ruling Congress party had nourished the illusion that the communist movement in the country had become weakened and disrupted by the class collaborationist policies and practices of the revisionists and that, therefore, the militant Communists who fought and broke with revisionism could be easily isolated and suppressed. They were, however, awakened to reality when they saw the huge mobilization of the people around those who broke with revisionism—mobilization which culminated in the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party held at Calcutta.

The unity on the basis of the Programme and the Resolutions of the Calcutta Congress was clear proof that the overwhelming majority of the great Communist Party of India would take to the path of firm opposition to, and determined struggle against, the bourgeois-landlord government, led by the big bourgeoisie, and its anti-people policies. That was why the Congress government decided to strike before the newly-elected Central Committee of our Party started elaborating and implementing the broad policies worked out at the Party Congress. The government hoped that the arrests would so demobilize, disorganize and disrupt the Party's work that it would be easy to push its anti-people policies without effective protest from the people.

The Central Committee is happy to note that these hopes of the ruling Congress party and the government were shattered by the tested cadres of the Party who discharged their responsibilities with credit; by the large mass of sympathizers and friends of the Party whose loyalty and devotion stood the Party in good stead, and by the still larger mass of non-communist democrats who saw through the game of the Congress Government, refused to be swept away by the anti-communist barrage and raised their voice of protest immediately after the government attack on the Party.

The Committee expresses its appreciation and conveys its gratitude to all those who made it possible to wage united struggles for civil

liberties, for release of detenus, against the Emergency and DIR, for the economic demands of the people, for a correct democratic policy on the language issue and so on.

The Committee is proud to record that, while the members and sympathizers of the Party played a creditable role in all these struggles, members of other parties and non-party democrats cooperated with our comrades in making these struggles a success.

Within a month of the countrywide arrests of our leaders, the people of Tamilnad rose against the undemocratic language policy of the Congress Government. The Committee is proud to note that, despite the dislocation caused to the Party organization by the mass arrests, Party members and sympathizers threw themselves heart and soul into the defence of the people when the government launched its brutal attack on them for responding to the call of the DMK to protest against the undemocratic language policy. This was in marked contrast to the attitude of the revisionists who joined the Congress to slander the agitation as one engineered by reactionaries.

A rebuff in a much sharper form was given to the Congress Government in Kerala where our Party was, at the time of the countrywide arrests, engaged in forging a united front to inflict a crushing defeat on the Congress at the mid-term election. The ruling Congress party had hoped that its attack on us would so frighten the other opposition parties that they would refuse to have anything to do with us.

These hopes, however, were shattered when a good section of the opposition refused to be cowed down. The Central Committee appreciates the attitude of those opposition parties and independents who joined our Party in fighting and defeating the Congress. It commends the Party committees all over the country who sent funds to Kerala to fight the elections, specially the Tamilnad and Karnataka committees who sent cadres and vehicles and took charge of work in some of the constituencies.

It was all the more shameful under these circumstances that the revisionists played the game of the ruling party by breaking the united

front and making a determined attack on our Party the centre of their election campaign. The people of Kerala, however, could see through their game. They suffered the worst disaster in their life while our Party came out as the biggest party in the legislature—a party which would have headed a non-Congress government had it not been for the earlier disruption caused by the revisionists.

In the Ahmedabad and Calcutta corporation elections as in the panchayat elections in Tamilnad, too, the people showed that they rejected the slanderous accusations made against our Party by the Congress rulers. The common features of these elections were that our Party put up as its candidates several comrades who were detained by the government; that most of the democratic opposition parties supported their candidature; and that the bulk of those detenu candidates were elected by the people. It was thus indisputably proved that the people treated with contempt all the denunciations of our Party made by the Congress Government. The Congress Government which hoped to isolate us from the people was thus getting growingly isolated from the people.

The developments in Kerala had lasting effects on the politics of the country. The conscientious democrats even within the Congress began to see that the Congress cannot rule the way sought to be done by its leaders. They, too, began to join the opposition parties in demanding a change of policy. Protests against the arrests and detentions, support for the slogan of “release or trial”, demand for the convening of the new Kerala legislature with the participation of elected detenus—these were voiced by all opposition parties as well as sections of Congressmen. The patently undemocratic stand of the Central Government that the non-Congress parties would not be given the opportunity to form a government and the subsequent dissolution of the Kerala legislature shocked all those who have even a modicum of democratic sense.

It was this that led to the countrywide movement for civil liberties—a movement headed by eminent jurists, journalists, parliamentarians, educationists and so on. The Central Committee appreciates the vigorous campaign carried on by all these friends of democracy who forced the unwilling Congress Government, after

more than a year of persistent struggle, to release almost all the detenus.

The Committee appreciates also the intense work carried on by the members and friends of the Party in linking up the activities of these intellectuals with the campaign and agitation for civil liberties among the mass of the working people. The civil liberties movement was thus turned into a mass political upsurge showing the immense possibilities for the further development of the democratic and socialist movements in the country. It is necessary to remember this since the fight for civil liberties is not over but has to be carried on with even more vigour. Though forced to bow down before the growing volume of public opinion, the Congress Government is manoeuvring to continue the emergency and DIR, so that they can again use them against our Party, the democratic movement and people's struggles at the time and place they choose.

Party committees at all levels, despite the many difficulties, showed great initiative in mobilizing the people under the Party's own banner. At the same time, they forget relations of fraternal cooperation with other parties, organizations and individuals to develop united struggles. Such initiative in mobilising the Party's own independent strength and forging united fronts with other parties helped in unleashing and developing mass struggles and defeating the government's attempt to isolate the Party. This unity in and for action has been built fighting and defeating the tactics of the revisionists who have all along tried to disrupt the unity of mass organizations and even to bring down the tempo of, and sabotage, mass struggles after joining them because of the mass mood.

The Central Committee notes that our Party as well as other Left opposition parties and mass organizations were active in this period in offering determined resistance to the landlord-capitalist attacks on the living standards of the working people. Ideological and policy differences among the various opposition parties and organizational differences among the mass organizations did not prevent them from coming together and fighting for the legitimate demands of the workers, peasants and other sections of the working people. The Committee greets all those who unitedly organized strike-struggles,

food agitations, the anti-tramfare-increase struggle in Calcutta, the agitations and movements of government employees and so on.

The biggest and most historic of these mass struggles in this period are the Kerala Bandh of January 28, 1966, and the two Bengal Bandhs of March and April. In Kerala, every section of the people was so resentful of the callous attitude of the Central Government in regard to food supply that even the provincial unit of the ruling Congress party had to join the complete general strike and hartal of January 28, 1966, though it later withdrew from the struggle.

In West Bengal, the struggle was not only quantitatively bigger and more widespread, it was qualitatively higher than ever before in post-independence India; the people showed greater determination in facing the repressive measures of the police and the army, fought a political battle against the Congress Government and forced it to retreat: not only was the government forced to make some concessions regarding the economic demands of the people of West Bengal; politically, too, the demand for release of detenus had to be conceded. The all-India campaign for releases, for withdrawal of Emergency, etc., received a big impetus from the releases which were forced on the Government of West Bengal.

It is remarkable that struggles of such magnitude and such broad unity of all sections of the people were being fought only a few months after the Indo-Pak war and the wave of chauvinism that swept the country during the days of the war. The war had actually disrupted the growing unity for mass struggles symbolized in the Rashtriya Sangram Samiti and the united front of left parties which had already called for a National Action Day—a call that was withdrawn when the war broke out. The ruling classes hoped to take advantage of the confusion following the outbreak of the war to accentuate the difficulties among the parties and organizations leading mass struggles and to isolate our Party from the rest of the mass movement.

Once again, to the utter shame of the revisionists, they joined the chorus of denunciation of our Party, they spoke in the same language



as the most rabid chauvinists like the Jana Sangha. Once again they repeated their 1962 tactics of abandoning mass struggles in the name of national defence.

This situation was, of course, short-lived. The cease-fire and the developments following it rapidly overcame the difficulties caused during the period of active hostilities on the Indo-Pak border. That was why, in a few weeks after the cease-fire, united struggles began to develop. But the short period of confusion did temporarily halt the advance of the mass movement.

The Party had to face an extremely difficult situation. It was virtually alone among the democratic opposition parties in taking a stand that went against the current of national chauvinism. This naturally made its campaign among the people more difficult than ever before.

Added to this was the fact that the Party itself was not free from confusion. Once again the enemies of the Party started hoping that the Party would be riven with differences and get isolated from the mainstream of public opinion and would become ineffective in leading the mass movement.

Once again, however, these hopes were shattered. Basing themselves on the Programme and Resolutions adopted by the Party at the Seventh Congress and making a sober objective analysis of the new situation, the members of the Central Committee, in consultation with as many committees and individual comrades as could be consulted, worked out the line of the Party for the new situation.

The Central Committee Statement adopted in October 1965 represented the collective will of, and united stand, of the entire Party behind it. The mass political campaign run on the basis of that Statement carried conviction to a large number of people who in the beginning were hostile to the stand taken by the Party. As a matter of fact, the tables were turned on the detractors of the Party since the Tashkent Agreement and subsequent development fully confirmed the correctness of the Party's stand.

It is to the credit of the Party that it did in this period boldly campaign for a peaceful solution of the disputes not only with Pakistan but with China as well. Although the Party had since 1962 stood for a political settlement of the border dispute with China, it could not for a long time carry conviction to the large mass of non-party democrats. Here, however, was a new opportunity for telling the people that India's disputes with Pakistan as well as with China have got to be settled through political rather than military means.

Nearly three years of the experience of military preparations against China and Pakistan had made the people realize the seriousness of the situation—a realization to which expression was given by no less a person than the President of the Indian Union. But no political party was prepared to run a mass campaign for it; most of them actually found fault with, and attacked, our Party for having done so. Our Party, however, refused to bow down before these attacks and bravely faced the unpopularity for having undertaken this campaign. The result was that in a few weeks' time, larger and larger sections of the people began to see the wisdom and correctness of the course suggested by us.

This was the biggest political defeat suffered by the ruling Congress party. Its hopes of "exposing" our Party as "traitors" and as Chinese agents were completely shattered. The slogan of a negotiated settlement with China came to be accepted by all responsible men. So was the futility of the boastful claim of forcibly retaking Aksai Chin and other areas under the actual possession of China.

All this had its impact on the revisionists also. The revisionists, though still trying to spread the ideology of the ruling classes in the working class movement, have been forced to speak in a different language though not changing the basic understanding contained in their programme. Instead of concentrating the whole fire on China as the main enemy of the nation, they have to talk about U. S. imperialism as the main threat to the nation. Instead of welcoming even imperialist military "aid" as they did in November 1962, they have to join the patriotic movement to denounce even imperialist economic "aid" and food under PL 480. Instead of insisting on

China's "acceptance of Colombo proposals in toto" as the only basis for opening talks with China, today they have to talk about finding a new basis acceptable to both India and China. When Smt. Indira Gandhi formed the new government, the revisionists acclaimed her as capable of implementing what is "progressive" in Congress policies. Today they have to demand the resignation of her government for betraying the nation. A year-and-a-half ago, they disrupted the united election front in Kerala saying that they would not tolerate even adjustments with the Muslim League with regard to a few seats to be contested by independents. Today they have to publicly express willingness to join the Muslim League in a united front to fight the Congress. No political party had, in such a short period, to make such a *volte face* in regard to all its earlier pronouncements.

This fiasco suffered by the revisionists has been caused by the all-round crisis created by the policies pursued by the ruling classes. Their path of building capitalism in collaboration with foreign monopolists and compromising with landlords—a path eulogized by the revisionists as one of "building an independent economy" since the ruling classes take some help from the socialist countries—has proved its bankruptcy. This path has meant not only starvation, shortages and increased burdens on the people in the form of taxes and price-rises, but also evergrowing dependence on imperialist countries, specially the USA. This process of growing dependence on imperialism has now culminated in the devaluation of the rupee which will accelerate the process and make India a victim of still more vicious attacks. Only a few collaborators—with the foreign monopolists benefit by this policy pursued by the ruling classes, while still larger sections of the ruling classes themselves and the entire mass of the working people have to bear the burden and suffer the indignities of imperialist dictation.

The Central Committee is confident that the classes, parties, organizations, groups and individuals who have been resisting these policies will strengthen their unity, draw in still wider sections and more determinedly resist the new onslaughts. The Committee assures

them that the whole Party will stand with them and fight shoulder to shoulder with them in order to defeat the imperialists and their collaborators, defend our freedom which is under attack and strengthen it by freeing our economy from the grip of the Indian and foreign monopolists.

The Central Committee is confident that all the committees and units of the Party, all the members and friends of the Party would continue to mobilize its strength and thus help and support to carry forward the struggles in which the Party engaged itself in this period and in further strengthening the Party as the organ of the people's democratic movement.

The Committee is conscious that, while in this period the Party had creditable achievements, it had some shortcomings too. Due to these shortcomings the Party failed to rise to the occasion in developing and strengthening the mass organizations of the working people and thus building the united organs of people's struggles. On some political issues like Vietnam and Indo-U. S. relations, too, we did not develop that powerful mass movement which it was possible to do.

At the same time, the Party has proved its capacity to take effective measures to remove these shortcomings. The regular publication of the central and state organs of the Party; the explanation and popularization of the Party Programme by them; the application of the programmatic and political stand of the Party to the changing and developing situation; the exposure of and struggle against imperialism, specially U.S. imperialism, both in world politics as well as in the context of its attacks on India; the reorganization and functioning of the Party committees at various levels when their work was disrupted following the arrests; the application of the tested method of collective functioning, and the evolution of a political line for the Party even on questions on which there are differences within the Party—all this has shown the inner strength of the party.

They have confounded those prophets of doom who have made periodical forecasts of the Party breaking up. The sixteen months since the countrywide arrests have shown that the Party will grow

in strength to the extent to which it bases itself on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and is in touch with the growing reality. The Central Committee pledges itself to the task of carrying forward these positive achievements and of removing the negative shortcomings.

The Central Committee calls on the entire Party to take lessons from the struggles that have been waged in this period and to show the same initiative and determination as during the last sixteen months. The period ahead is full of possibilities for making still further advances in developing the unity of the people in struggle against the Congress Government and its class policies.

The Committee calls for united action by all democratic parties, organizations, groups and individuals who are interested in resisting imperialist attacks on our freedom; in defeating the policies of collaboration with, and growing dependence on, imperialism pursued by our ruling classes; in fighting for a truly anti-imperialist foreign policy of support to all freedom-loving peoples and their movements and particularly to the heroic people of Vietnam; in defending the working people against the attacks launched on their living and working conditions by the government and, with its full support, by the capitalist-landlord classes; in resistance to the attacks on the democratic rights of the people and for the withdrawal of the Emergency and the Defence of India Rules; and so on.

The Committee calls on all the democratic and patriotic sections of the people to demand of the Government of India that it should take the necessary initiative to settle the disputes with China and Pakistan and re-establish normal friendly relations with neighbouring Countries.

The Committee pledges itself to further develop the unity of all parties, organizations, groups and individuals in effective action to realize any one or more of the demands which will weaken the hold of imperialism on the nation, stop the onslaught of the government on the people and improve their conditions.

#### **(d) On Devaluation of the Rupee**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India considers the sudden devaluation of the rupee by the government, after repeated protestations and solemn assurances to the country, to be an act of

gross betrayal of national interests to appease India's creditors, the American Government and the World Bank dominated by it. One more outpost of economic sovereignty has been surrendered by the government without the least compunction.

The devaluation step of the government in the name of solving the foreign exchange crisis is a continuation of the process of surrender to American pressure that has been greatly accentuated during the last few months. In the name of solving the food crisis the government accepted the package deal and entered into the anti-national fertilizer deal; it was followed by increased demands for concessions to foreign monopolists, demands for rearranging our economy, changing the scope and structure of India's Plans. Then came the foisting of the Indo-American education foundation on India. Devaluation was demanded by the International Monetary Fund and the American creditors as the key demand to adapt Indian economy to their needs of domination. The threat to withhold PL 480 supplies to a famine-stricken India, the threat to suspend economic "aid" to a crisis-ridden India—all these were unscrupulously used to pressurize a government which had made the Indian economy helplessly dependent on American alms, because it followed the capitalist path and opposed the democratic path of national advance.

The devaluation of the rupee at the behest of American creditors has only served to uncover the state of abject dependence of our economy on American 'aid' into which the Congress Government has led it. The Government of India's pro-landlord agrarian policies had already made India dependent upon American food supplies; American aid in the shape of loans to finance our Plans strengthened this trend. The soliciting of American military help in 1962 in the course of the India-China conflict, the steep rise in the defence expenditure involving large amounts of foreign exchange and the Indo-Pakistani conflict intensified this trend still further. It is not India's Parliament, the Indian people or the Government of India that decide the value of our currency. It is now decided in Washington and New York by the U. S. Government and the World Bank.

This dependence of our economy on the USA, and the continued surrender of the government before it, constitute the most menacing

feature of the situation as it is undermining the foundation of our political liberty and freedom. The threat of neo-colonialism hangs over India unless the menace is fought.

For a developing country heavily indebted to foreign countries, devaluation produces disastrous results. The burden of foreign repayment will increase by more than 50 per cent at least so far as dollar payments are concerned. It has been calculated that by 1967, our annual debt repayments will exceed 160 crores of rupees. Devaluation will raise the burden to more than Rs. 200 crores making it unbearable and mortgaging more than 25 per cent of our export trade for repayment of foreign debt. This will still further shift the direction of our trade towards the western imperialist countries enabling them to dictate prices and terms of trade to us which are already adverse. The immediate effects of the devaluation on our economy will be ruinous. The foreign buyer will be able to purchase a larger amount of goods for the same foreign exchange; the demand for our exports being what it is, foreign exchange deficit will increase instead of decreasing; internal price-level will rise making living conditions unbearable for the common man. Government will be forced to resort to foreign loans to secure maintenance of imports which will give the foreign monopolists the opportunity to dictate the type of imports we can have; imports of capital goods will be restricted and diminish while only imports of components will be financed in the name of exploiting the existing industrial capacity. Without import of capital goods on a big scale Indian industry cannot advance as India does not still produce all the machinery and capital goods required for industrial progress. Restrictions of these imports because of the increased cost and also under pressure from our creditors will further curb our industrial progress. Devaluation is thus a measure for freezing the industrial advance to suit the needs of American imperialists.

The government claim that devaluation is resorted to correct the imbalance in international payments and relieve the economic situation has no basis in fact. It is not the free and voluntary act of a government to protect the economy of its country and meet the foreign exchange crisis ; on the contrary, it is directed from abroad

to channelize the economy into the direction wanted by foreign creditors. The claim that devaluation will increase exports, secure additional foreign exchange and relieve the balance of payments difficulty, helping our economy forward are just propaganda stunts to make the people accept it as a measure in national interests.

India's traditional exports like tea, jute, textiles are meeting strong international competition abroad. Even for her export of engineering goods she has not secured markets sheltered from competition. Devaluation will not automatically increase the demand for these articles. In face of severe competition it will at best enable us to cut down our international prices which means that we will have to export larger quantity of commodities for the same amount of exchange. Under these circumstances, even to earn important foreign exchange will have to export a much larger quantity of goods. In so far as this happens it will only send high the prices of such necessities of life as tea, cloth, etc. There is hardly any possibility of increasing our foreign exchange earnings through this step.

The common man is being made the victim of government's surrender to American pressure. Devaluation is already leading to a sharp rise in prices, which are already sky-high. This rise coming in the wake of the continuous increase since 1964 will make the people's conditions unbearable. Shortage of commodities and blackmarketing will be imposed on the people. Side by side, direct attacks on wages and living standards will be launched in the immediate future to safeguard and increase the profits of the capitalists. Devaluation is a class measure to pass on the burden of government's economic policies, of the crisis created by it, on to the backs of the workers. The workers, the peasants and the middle classes will be its direct victims. The Central Committee calls the attention of the people to the fact that they are in for an onslaught on their living standards and only through their efforts and struggles can they defeat it. It calls on the people to unite and resist this attack.

The devaluation of the rupee is only the beginning of a serious attack on our economy. The American creditors and their Indian collaborators want to use it as a battering ram to scuttle all controls on private profiteering and make way for a free economy—an economy in which foreign monopolists and their Indian collaborators are free



to loot the people. Already the big bourgeois spokesmen have started saying that devaluation without loosening of further controls will not achieve this purpose. The people must expect further attacks in this direction and further surrender on the part of the government.

The Central Committee takes note of the fact that the devaluation measure of the Congress government has evoked widespread protest from different sections of our people, opposition parties, members of Parliament and a section of the press. Individual Congressmen have also protested against it. It is clear that the measure has not the backing of the people. The Central Committee invites all those opposed to the measure to join their voice together to rouse the people against this anti-national act of the government.

The Central Committee is of the opinion that the people must demand a reversal of the present policies and immediate measures to protect the economy and the people by nationalization of foreign capital, of foreign trade, and of monopoly concerns and adoption of progressive agrarian policies to end our dependence on food imports, and remove the American stranglehold on our economy.

In this menacing situation, the Central Committee calls upon the people to protest against the treacherous act of the government and raise the demand for its resignation and be prepared to resist further attempts to barter away our economic and political freedom.

### **(e) On Food**

Serious scarcity and famine conditions have been prevailing over most parts of the country this year. In the worst-affected areas like Orissa, number of starvation deaths have taken place. Children are being sold or abandoned and there have been distress sales of land and cattle and large-scale migration of the rural poor to the urban areas. The situation is not much better in many of the other States.

The chronic food deficit of the country from the days of the British colonial regime has been perpetuated by the Congress rulers throughout the years since independence through their class policies. The country has been permanently depending upon U. S. food aid since independence.

The drought this year has only intensified and brought to the forefront the permanent agrarian crisis which is a creation of the Congress Government's pro-vested-interest policies.

The government refuses to undertake state monopoly of foodgrains trade, which alone, under conditions of chronic food scarcity, could have put an end to hoarding, speculation and blackmarketing in foodgrains. On the other hand, pursuing policies in favour of the big landlords and rich peasants, it refuses to procure the huge stocks with them. As a result, speculation and blackmarketing in foodgrains have continued merrily. Apart from the big traders and millers, the big landlords themselves have turned into hoarders and speculators. The policy of inflationary financing that the government has been pursuing since planning has further aggravated the problem and led to enormous rise in prices.

Refusing to undertake the responsibilities of feeding the people, the government has been resorting to ineffectual informal rationing, fair-price shops and statutory rationing in the whole State of Kerala and certain cities.

For this purpose it relies on wheat stocks imported from the USA under PL 480, some procurement, and purchases through the Foodgrains Corporation.

The quantum of ration in those areas are inadequate and even the prices of the rationed foodgrains have been increased. Informal rationing has been a hoax. What is even more grim is that there are no provisions made for the millions of our rural poor, who have been left to starve and die.

The government procurement measures do not touch the big landlords with huge marketable surplus. On the other hand, the government fleeces the poor and middle peasants, who are often forced to part with even their seed stocks at unremunerative prices and to purchase foodgrains at higher prices for their own consumption. No wonder procurement plans have collapsed in all the states.

The zonal system, instituted by the government and changed from time to time, cannot and has not put an end to speculation and blackmarketing. It has only led to low prices for the peasant's produce

in the surplus zones, quarrels between the deficit and surplus zones and conflicts between the states and centre.

Instead of abandoning these ineffective measures, instead of procuring the stocks that are available in the country and arranging for their equitable distribution in this year of drought and intensification of scarcity conditions, the government has sought increased food aid from the USA under PL 480. Such food aid from the USA, far from helping to solve the food problem, has only enabled the U. S. imperialists to dictate anti-national terms to the government in its economic, political and foreign policies.

As for increasing food production, the government relies on private U. S. capital to set up fertilizer plants and on the upper sections of the landowners who alone, in the present conditions, can put in the necessary inputs and set up big capitalist farms. But these schemes do not rely on the peasants and agricultural labourers, whose resources would continue to be meagre and hence will not unleash their creative and productive forces. Hence, these schemes are bound to flounder as previous schemes under the three plans.

The people have not taken these attacks meekly. Big struggles have already taken place in Bihar, Maharashtra, Kerala and West Bengal against the high prices and unavailability of foodgrains. These struggles, particularly the statewide struggles of Kerala and West Bengal, have been unprecedented for their sweep and people's heroism. Hundreds of thousands of people threw themselves into the battle with death-defying abandon and heroism. Throwing thousands of leaders and militants into jails under the DIR, continuous and widespread resort to police firings and even the calling of the military by the government which was bent on crushing the struggles, could not cow down the people. They answered these ferocious repressive measures by still greater participation and by raising, in addition to the demand for food, the demands for the release of those detained under the DIR, scrapping the DIR and the Emergency, judicial enquiry into the firings and punishment of the guilty. Thus the struggle for food gradually developed into a political struggle against the anti-people, anti-democratic policies of the government. In the face of the mounting anger and irrepressible

struggles of the people the government had to beat a retreat, release those detained under the DIR and give some relief. However, it has not budged an inch from its basic policies.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India demands the following urgent measures to solve the food problem.

(a) Radical agrarian reforms ensuring land to the cultivating peasants and agricultural labourers; credit and other facilities to the cultivating peasants as well as a remunerative price for the cultivator's produce;

(b) State monopoly of wholesale foodgrains trade;

(c) Procurement of all available marketable surplus from the landlords, exempting small holdings, the size of the holding to be exempted being decided from area to area taking into account normal produce from the land in the area; remunerative prices to the producer;

(d) Arrangement for adequate quantity of rations and for the equitable distribution of procured stock;

(e) People's committees to supervise the procurement and distribution of foodgrains;

(f) Reduction in the price of rationed foodgrains;

(g) Stoppage of all revenue and debt collections in all the scarcity-affected areas; relief work to alleviate the sufferings of the people; free distribution of foodgrains to those who are physically disabled from working.

The situation has become more critical and will worsen in the coming months which are the traditional lean months even in normal times. The situation will be further aggravated as a result of the devaluation of the rupee at the behest of the U. S. imperialists. The government, however, continues to be callously indifferent to the sufferings of the common people.

The Central Committee calls on the Party units to throw themselves into the struggles that are bound to break out and in cooperation with other parties, mass organizations and individuals, to give organized form to the resistance of the people.

The Central Committee calls upon all parties, groups, individuals and mass organizations, which are interested in a democratic solution of the problem, to come together and jointly mobilize the people against these policies of the government. The mobilization must be so very irresistible as to compel the government to retreat from its anti-people, anti-democratic policies.

### **(f) On General Election**

The Fourth General Election is coming in the midst of a deep economic crisis and a perilous situation created by growing American domination of our economic and political life. The monstrous burden of taxation, sky-rocketing prices, food shortages and famine conditions have imposed indescribable sufferings and misery on our people—our peasants and agricultural labour, our workers and middle classes, the entire electorate which is supposed to be the repository of political power in the country.

Politically, too, the Congress Government is attacking the people and suppressing their democratic rights, it is perpetuating the State of Emergency which has continued for nearly four years. It has thrown to the winds even the meagre fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution. Using the wide powers under the notorious DIR, it detained thousands of people fighting against its policies including almost the entire leadership of the Communist Party. It has refused to accede to the demand for the withdrawal of Emergency made by all sections of the people.

The failure to reach peaceful settlement with China, the failure to settle with Pakistan—these failures of our foreign policy have led to a monstrous increase in defence expenditure which adds to the burdens of the suffering people. The foreign policy of the government besides continues to be under constant American pressure and the government is unable to take a forthright stand even on the vital question of Vietnam.

The people have raised their voice against these policies of the Congress government which jeopardize the independence of our nation. Above all, they have fought against the policies which have imposed direct suffering on them. The great food struggles of Bengal,

Kerala and Bihar, the widespread mass actions of all sections in all parts of the country, have been the heroic reply of our people in defence of their interests. By their blood, their sufferings and their martyrdom they have repudiated the Congress policies in action. The elections offer another opportunity to the people and democratic parties to reject the anti-popular policies of the Congress Government.

In these circumstances, the Party has a tremendous responsibility in shaping the results of the coming General Elections. It must adopt such tactics, keeping in view the single-member constituencies and the absence of a system of proportional representation, as would foil the machinations and manoeuvres of the Congress party, lead to the breaking of its monopoly of power and secure the following results:

1. The reduction of the Congress party into a minority and the formation of alternative governments wherever possible;
2. Its defeat in as many constituencies as possible and reduction in the number of its members in all legislatures and Parliament;
3. Enhanced representation of the Communist Party and strengthening of the democratic opposition in Parliament and State legislatures;

For this purpose the Party will strike generally for electoral adjustments with opposition parties so that the opposition votes may not get split and the defeat of the Congress party may be ensured in the maximum number of constituencies.

In the states, particularly where the Communist Party is the leading opposition force and where there is a possibility of the Congress party being defeated, the Party will strive for electoral alliances with all those parties that are willing to shed their anti-communism and fight the Congress party jointly with the CPI. For forging such electoral alliances, the Party will join with other democratic parties to evolve a common minimum programme of immediate relief to the people while popularizing its own programme. Such alliances are necessary not only for defeating the Congress at

the polls but also for forming and maintaining non-Congress democratic governments. Experience has shown that the Congress will do its utmost to prevent the formation of non-Congress democratic governments. The mobilization of all the democratic forces alone will help to defeat such manoeuvres of Congress.

The Central Committee is happy to note that several opposition parties have also realized that the defeat of the Congress party in the coming elections is the foremost political task and also the need for such electoral arrangement among the opposition parties to bring about the desired result.

Against the background of the growing crisis, the Central Committee considers it the paramount duty of the Party to run the election campaign as the biggest political campaign against the Congress Government as the main enemy of the people, and against its basic policies, both home and foreign. The Party will also expose parties like the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party which advocate variants of these policies.

The Central Committee, therefore, lays the greatest stress on the Party campaigning and mobilizing the people on the biggest scale for its own policies and programme of People's Democracy as the only alternative to the Congress Government's path of building capitalism. The campaign must rouse the masses and bring them to the consciousness that the only path of peace, prosperity and democratic life for our country is the path of People's Democracy.

The Central Committee directs the State Committees to work out their election tactics in the light of the above understanding.

#### **(g) On Ideological Discussion**

The Party Congress directed the Central Committee to conduct inner-Party discussion on the ideological controversy in the international communist movement. But since almost the entire leadership of the Party was arrested before the first meeting of the Central Committee, the task could not be discharged.

Now, though the Party leaders have been released, the Party is faced with serious and pressing problems of the people like food,

famine, high price, etc., and the fourth general elections. A serious ideological discussion like that proposed cannot be undertaken now.

The Central Committee, therefore, resolves to defer the discussion. But while doing so, the Central Committee takes into consideration that in the eighteen months since our Party Congress adopted the Programme, divergent views have been expressed by some fraternal Communist Parties of various countries on the Indian situation and reiterates that what has been said in the Programme about the Indian situation has been amply proved to be correct and sound. The Committee, therefore, directs that the Party should be guided by the Programme as the only correct application of Marxism-Leninism to the Indian situation while rejecting all views expressed either divergent to or deviating from it.

The same attitude should be applied to the Central Committee Statement issued in November 1965 which is the collectively-evolved line of the Party.

The Central Committee is of the opinion that while it is not desirable to open any discussion on the issues deferred, it is necessary for the comrades to familiarize themselves with the viewpoints of all fraternal parties. The SCs are, therefore, directed to publish the authoritative pronouncements of fraternal parties. In making such material available to comrades it should be made clear that our Party is not committed to any of them. Care should also be taken to avoid as much as possible the publication of such material as undermine faith in the socialist system.

#### **(h) On Emergency and DIR**

The Congress Government has been forced to bow down before the growing volume of public opinion against the continuance of the Emergency and the draconian Defence of India Rules. They have also been forced to temporarily abandon their earlier action of treating our Party almost as an illegal party imprisoning the entire leadership of the Party. They had to release the leaders and members of the Communist Party of India who had been detained in various States.

But even now the government is resorting to a new manoeuvre. Instead of withdrawing the Emergency and scrapping the DIR as



democratic opinion had been demanding, the government has only stated that it would restrict the use of the DIR. The Emergency and DIR continue and past experience has proved that the government keeps them alive so as to use them against the democratic movement, popular struggles and our Party at any time. Fundamental rights guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution still remain suspended and the Congress Government continues to retain the extraordinary powers under the Emergency.

Comrade Syed Hussain (Assam) still continues to be in detention while the warrants against Comrades Biresh Misra and Suren Hazarika (Assam) are still not withdrawn.

There is no justification for the continuance of the Emergency. At a time when the general elections are approaching, its continuance is to make a farce of parliamentary democracy. The Central Committee of the CPI demands the immediate withdrawal of the Emergency, the scrapping of the DIR, the release of our comrade and the withdrawal of warrants and cases and release of all those convicted under the DIR for political offences.

### **(i) On Vietnam**

Vietnam today is freedom's outpost in Asia. Undergoing enormous hardships, making unparalleled sacrifices, the patriotic people of this small but heroic nation are valiantly fighting and dealing deathblows to the plans of the U. S. imperialist war maniacs for world domination. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India extends its warmest fraternal greetings to the freedom-fighters of Vietnam, their beloved leader President Ho Chi Minh, and the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation which leads the resistance war of the people against the U. S. aggressors.

It was after a decade of armed struggle, first against Japanese fascism and then against French imperialism, that the Vietnam people, through the Geneva Agreements of 1954, won peace and international recognition of their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Blatantly violating every clause of the Agreements, the U. S. imperialists have striven to perpetuate the temporary division of the country, convert South Vietnam into their military base and jumping-

off ground for aggression against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the North and the People's Republic of China. U.S. arms, equipment and troops have been poured into South Vietnam to prevent the people there from realizing the aspiration for uniting their Fatherland and choosing their own way of life. In eleven years from the end of 1954 to the end of 1965, the U.S. imperialists had killed 170,000 people, maimed or injured by torture another 800,000, detained more than 400,000 people and huddled more than five million people into concentration camps miscalled as "prosperity zones", "resettlement areas" and "strategic villages". They have resorted to chemical and bacteriological warfare and napalm bombing destroying crops and vegetation, cattle and human beings. All this in a country with a population of hardly fourteen millions.

But all their brutalities have failed against a people determined to win their freedom. Ill-clad and ill-armed though they are, they have not only stood up to the mightiest imperialist power but have also inflicted crushing blows on the aggressors. From the end of 1960 to the beginning of 1966, the South Vietnamese people and their liberation army put out of action 655,000 puppet soldiers and 36,000 U.S. troops, captured 70,000 weapons of all kinds, shot down or destroyed 3,000 aircraft of various types and razed to the ground 6,000 "strategic hamlets". They have liberated four-fifth of the territory of South Vietnam and ten million out of the fourteen million population. Starting from remote villages, today the freedom-fighters are operating in the towns and in the capital city of Saigon itself striking terror into the hearts of the Yankee aggressors.

The nearly 400,000 troops trained in special warfare and the billions of dollars worth of arms and equipment have been of no avail to the U.S. imperialists. Twelve puppet regimes they set up to suppress the people have toppled down and the thirteenth is on its way out. The U.S. imperialists find themselves in all-round crisis—political, economic and military. They are, on the one hand, madly seeking a way out by escalating the war with bombing of North Vietnam and also Laos and Cambodia, and on the other, to hoodwink world opinion talking of "peace".

This peace hoax has not hoodwinked freedom-loving people anywhere in the world. Demonstrations expressing solidarity with

the Vietnam's freedom-fighters are on the rise with every passing day, in London and Paris, Rome and Tokyo; in New York and Washington themselves, ten of thousands are on the march asking the U.S. to get out of Vietnam. The Central Committee greets these fighters for peace in Vietnam, specially the peace-fighters inside the United States who are challenging the policies of the Johnson Administration.

It is in this situation that the Government of India, to our eternal shame, pursues policies which only an apologist of imperialism can pursue. The Government of India, which has a special responsibility in Vietnam as the Chairman of the International Commission for Supervision and Control, closed its eyes to the U.S. violation of the Geneva Agreements and the aggression on the Vietnamese people.

And today when public opinion all over the world denounces the U.S. imperialist and their "peace" hoax, spokesmen of the Government of India including the Prime Minister talk about "understanding the difficulties" of the U.S. imperialists and their "desire for peace". Further, material help in the form of trucks produced by TELCO have also been sent to South Vietnam.

The people of India repudiate this stand of the Congress Government and stand foursquare behind the patriots of Vietnam who are in the forefront of the battle against U.S. imperialism which today menaces the freedom not only of Vietnam but of people all over the world.

The Central Committee calls on the entire Party to mobilize our freedom-loving people against the U.S. aggression in Vietnam, against the Government of India's policies of acquiescing in that aggression and in the firm solidarity with Vietnam's fighting people.

The All-India Trade Union Congress has called for the observance of a week from July 4 to 11 in solidarity with Vietnam. The Central Committee calls for demonstrations and rallies all over the country through out the week, specially before the U.S. Embassy and diplomatic and information offices wherever they exist.

### **(j) On Government Employees**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India expresses its sense of solidarity with and support for the central and state government employees who have been forced to resort to various forms of direct action including strike.

The government employees have been fighting along with other sections of the working class for a rise in their wages and dearness allowance to fully compensate the rise in the cost of living. The Central Government, however, has refused to implement in full even the recommendations of the Das Commission, which recommended only a partial neutralization in the price rise. The total absence of any effective grievance procedure or trade union rights has callously barred the way of settlement of long-standing grievances of the Government employees. A large number of employees have already been victimized for normal trade union activities and charge-sheets are being issued to many others. Hundreds of Government employees were arrested during their legitimate struggles and some have been victims of DIR for defending the interests of their fellow-workers. Recently in the name of economy in administration thousands of government employees are already facing retrenchment without any provision for alternative employment. The refusal of the central and state governments to implement the tripartite decisions has only encouraged the employers in the private sector to blatantly violate them. The Congress Government which claims to be building a socialist society not only refuses to force the private employers to accede to the reasonable demands of the employees, but deals with the government employees in such a way as to enable the private employers to carry on as they like. The struggle of the government employees, therefore, is inseparable from the general struggle of the working class as a whole.

The Committee notes that the unity shown by the employees have forced the central and some state governments to make small concessions to their employees. These concessions are, however, not only inadequate but are used to disrupt the unity of the employees. While giving some concessions to a section of the employees, other

sections are denied anything, or are given such meagre concessions that the authorities can set one section against the other. The Committee hopes that all sections of the employees will see through this game of the government and fight unitedly for the demands of all government employees.

The living conditions of the government employees, together with those of the rest of the working people, are going to further deteriorate following the recent steps taken by the government culminating in devaluation of the rupee. The Committee hopes that the unity of government employees manifested in recent struggles will be further developed and employees as a whole enabled to meet the new situation. The committee also hopes that other sections of the working class and the democratic movement in general would stand solidly behind the government employees in the struggles that are ahead of them.

#### **(k) On Automation**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India strongly condemns the recent automation measures introduced by some big business firms on the plea of more efficient and prompt services which have already rendered a large number of clerical staff jobless. Many more employers have planned the introduction of electronic computers.

The decision of the Life Insurance Corporation to introduce these machines has threatened the livelihood of thousands of employees. Various public sector undertakings with big central offices are also considering the use of these machines in the name of reducing the cost of management. In reality, automation has been an instrument to fleece the employees and of multiplication of the super-profits of big business concerns. Though the country is experiencing severe foreign exchange crisis, large funds are being exported in the form of hire charges for the electronic computers which are only adding to the critical foreign exchange difficulties.

When unemployment in the country is growing by leaps and bounds every year, the introduction of electronic computers which renders large number of employees jobless becomes an anti-social

act. In companies where mechanisation has been introduced in clerical jobs new recruitment has virtually ceased. In view of the backward character of our economy and availability of vast manpower resources, the declining employment opportunities are naturally causing serious concern to the new entrants to the employment market.

The tripartite agreement on rationalisation which provided formal guarantees against retrenchment has been implemented only in its breach by the bourgeoisie which resorted to dubious methods like “voluntary retrenchment” to cover up their callous retrenchment measures. The substantial reduction of employment in oil companies after the introduction of electronic computers has conclusively shown to the working class how the agreement was used arbitrarily against it. The workers have experienced that under capitalism new technology is only utilised by employers to intensify the rate of exploitation.

The Central Committee congratulates the workers’ and employees’ organisations which joined hands in a Convention against Automation in 1965 and initiated a broadbased nationwide movement against the offensive of automation. The magnificent response to the united observance of June 7 as All India Anti-Automation Day has clearly shown the indignation of the working class on this question. The Committee calls upon the working class to intensify their agitation and appeals to the democratic movement to wholeheartedly support this movement so that the unwilling Congress government is forced to take steps to withdraw all the automation measures without any delay.

### **(I) On The Naga And Mizo Problem**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India notes that relations between the Centre and the Nagas have not registered any significant change for the better. The talks between the Prime Minister and her colleagues on the one hand and the representatives of the Nagas on the other have not led to any political settlement of the problem.

Meanwhile, another centre of tension has arisen in the Mizo district of Assam. The Mizo National Front has raised its banner of revolt in the same way in which the Nagas did a few years ago. The leaders of the government and the ruling party themselves admit that the situation is getting serious.

The Central Committee is of the opinion that it is the government's failure to take necessary steps for economic and cultural development and to grant autonomy in time that led to the conflict with the Nagas and Mizos. The use of force to suppress them has only further intensified the conflict.

The Central Committee, therefore, demands that the government should stop its military measures and start talks with the representatives of the Mizos.

The Central Committee demands that the government should continue the cease-fire and talks with the Nagas.

The Central Committee further calls on the government that it should concede the demand for the formation of a separate Assam Hills People's State.

### **(m) Reorganisation of Punjab on Linguistic Basis And The Demarcation of Its Boundaries**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India congratulates the people of Haryana and Punjab for having realised their long-cherished demand for linguistic reorganisation of the states. This victory has been possible because the Government of India was faced with the united democratic movement of the Punjabi and Haryanvi people.

The Central Committee notes that having conceded the demand for the formation of the linguistic states, the Congress rulers have not abandoned the policy of utilising the communal division among the people. The terms of reference of the Boundary Commission were based on communal considerations, and not on linguistic principles, in order to preserve the basis for communal disruption in Punjab and wranglings between the people of the sister states of Punjab and Haryana. Therefore, the Boundary Commission and the

subsequent decision of the central government on that have created new problems and disputes instead of solving them. The government also has made the capital city of Punjab a Union territory. It has accepted as basis the unreliable 1961 census and has thus sought to create a permanent language controversy in the state based on communal considerations. It is the continuation of its policy of disrupting the growth of various nationalities and of creating feelings of tension between various states.

The Central Committee also notes that while conceding the demand for the formation of linguistic states, the central government has turned down the just demand of the people of Haryana for Vishal Haryana State including Delhi. It is precisely in order to divert the attention of the people of the Haryana from the demand for Vishal Haryana that the central government has engineered a controversy over Chandigarh.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India deplors this attitude of the Government of India and calls upon the people of Punjab and Haryana to unitedly fight for the demarcation of their areas on a linguistic basis taking village as the unit and the contiguity of areas. It appeals to the people of Haryana not to fall prey to the machinations of the Congress government and to continue their fight for Vishal Haryana with a view to fulfilling the aspirations of the Haryanvi people who are today divided into various states.

The Central Committee assures its full support to these democratic movements of the Punjabi and Haryanvi people.

#### **(n) On Mysore And Maharashtra Border Problem**

The Congress government has been persistently refusing to concede the formation of linguistic states. It is only after bitter struggles that it was forced to concede Andhra state, reorganisation of states in 1956, setting up Gujrat and Maharashtra states in 1960, and conceding Punjab State now in 1966.

But even when it is forced to concede the linguistic states, the borders of these states are not drawn strictly on the basis of linguistic composition of the areas, taking village and contiguity as the basis for demarcation, but on other irrelevant and undemocratic



considerations which served the interests of local vested interests and thus frustrated the democratic aspirations of the people and became seeds of discontent and unrest.

These led to various border disputes between different states which remain unresolved even to this day. The Mysore-Maharashtra, Mysore-Kerala border issues are among such problems created by the Congress Government and left unresolved during the last ten years. Even though the Congress Working Committee has come forward with the proposal of setting up of a one-man commission to go into the above two border issues, it has failed to define that the commission must settle the border problem on the basis of village and contiguity, but left it to the commission to bargain between the vested interests of the respective states and arrive at some arbitrary settlement.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India is of the view that the border problems can be satisfactorily settled only on the basis of village and contiguity, the only democratic solution for all border disputes of the states in India. Otherwise there is the danger that the conflicts, instead of being resolved, may get intensified.

The Central Committee appeals to all Party units and democratic elements in Mysore, Maharashtra and Kerala states to strive for a democratic solution of the border problems on the above lines and foil the attempts of the ruling classes of setting the people of one state against another and thus preventing a democratic solution of the border problems.

#### **(o) On Ghastly Railway Accident At Matunga (Bombay)**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India is deeply shocked at the ghastly railway accident at Matunga (Bombay) resulting in death of sixty persons and serious injuries to a large number of others. This accident coming as it does after a spate of similar accidents on railways during recent months, in which many people have lost their lives has caused deep indignation and horror

among the people. The Railway Minister has been trying to explain away these accidents by ascribing them to all sorts of causes such as sabotage, mechanical failure, human element, etc. He is, however, unable to explain why all the recommendations of the Railway Accidents Inquiry Committee under the chairmanship of Sri H. N. Kunzru were not implemented by the railway administration. The Central Committee condemns the Railway Ministry for its callous disregard towards lives of railway passengers. The Committee demands an impartial inquiry into the causes of the accident and full compensation to the families of those who were killed and injured in this accident. The Committee sends heartfelt condolences to the families of the unfortunate victims of this accident.

### **(p) On Famine Conditions In Orissa**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India notes with grave concern the acute famine conditions and starvation deaths in six out of the thirteen districts of Orissa. In addition to the starvation deaths, the flight of the people from their home after selling out whatever belongings they have, sale of children by parents, the use of tree leaves as food and the deformed figures of the people due to starvation and severe malnutrition depict the horrible miseries and woes of the famine-stricken people.

Although last year's drought resulted in shortage of food, the bankrupt agrarian and food policy of the Congress Government and the utter callousness of the state government are at the root of the famine conditions in Orissa. In spite of the drought, the procurement and levy policy of the state government allowed the hoarders and rice-millers to hoard at a low price and export whatever paddy was there to the blackmarket. Although since last September people of the area had started to leave their villages and sale of children was reported in the month of December, the state government remained callous about the situation as a result of which large-scale starvation deaths are now taking place. Yet the state and central governments do not accept the situation as famine and deaths due to starvation. The Central Committee condemns this method of the old British days of dealing with famine conditions.

The Central Committee demands of the Government :

(1) to open free kitchens in every village in the famine-stricken area in order to take the responsibility of feeding the people as well as to open subsidised fair-price shops in every panchayat;

(2) to make immediate arrangements for medical treatment of the suffering and ill-nourished people;

(3) to stop collecting all kinds of taxes, revenue and arrears and exempt land revenue for the year;

(4) to supply free seeds, manures and agricultural implements as well as enough interest-free takkavi loans to carry on agricultural operations;

(5) to start test relief works on a wide scale with special emphasis on irrigation works;

(6) to exempt students of the area from tuition fees and open midday meal centres in the schools; and

(7) stop the settlement work this year.

#### **(q) Repression In Warangal District (Andhra Pradesh)**

After the by-election in April 1965 to the Mahboobabad Parliamentary Constituency in Warangal district was completed, the landlords, aided and abetted actively by the government machinery, have carried on a reign of terror in Narsampet taluk in Warangal district to smash the Communist Party (whose candidate won the Assembly seat in 1962) and the militant kisan movement in the area. Looting, arson, torture, rape, brutal killings, launching of cases against hundreds of people, goondagiri, are the measures adopted in this heinous affair. In Maheswaram village, police, accompanied and encouraged by landlords gangs, opened fire on people, resulting in serious injuries to peasants and beat brutally all persons whom they could find in the street, resulting in fracturing the heads of many. Comrade Chenna Reddi, one of the injured in this brutal firing, died subsequently in hospital where he was kept with handcuffs on even on his death-bed and proper treatment was denied to him. About two hundred people were taken into custody and inhumanly tortured in the presence of

and in the compound of the landlords. People were tied to pillars and flayed with canes. Chilly powder and chilly water was poured over the wounds. Urine was poured in the throats of thirsty persons. Genitals of one were forcibly put into the mouth of another. People were forced to hold the testicles of police constables. Dozens of women were raped publicly, among whom were some pregnant women. Goats and chicken were stolen in large numbers. Houses were broken into and valuables looted. Ripe corn and greengram fields were destroyed.

Similar atrocities were committed in the neighbouring villages of Ramavarm, Gunturpalle, Rajipalle, etc. About ninetyeight people were charged with several crimes, among whom are persons ranging from ten to ninety years of age.

In Chandrugunda, Boya Bhikaya, a tribal, was assaulted by landlord goondas as a result of which his two legs and one hand were broken. His house was subsequently burnt and his son, aged about seven years, was thrown into the flames and burnt alive. Some more houses were also burnt and the village is being lorded over by the goondas. About seventysix peasants are being prosecuted in courts and the hearings are being held in far-off places putting these peasants to extreme difficulties.

Similar atrocities were also committed in Lingagiri, Narsampet and Ashoknagar villages where people were indiscriminately beaten, tortured, houses looted and so on.

Senior police officers of the district are personally carrying on all these attacks on the people. One who is a relative of one of the ministers is said to be even openly boasting that vengeance will be wreaked against the Communist Party for the Telangana struggle of some years ago. The landlords are openly propagating that they have got the backing of the minister in this campaign against people supporting and sympathising with the Communist Party. Police officers, while on the one hand, are torturing the people, on the other, forcing the people to leave the Communist Party and join the Congress.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India strongly condemns these fascist methods employed by the government machinery

and the landlord gangs to smash the Communist Party and the kisan movement and demands that the state government immediately put a stop to them, transfer the police officers and punish them, withdraw all cases against the people in the above-mentioned villages, proceed against the landlords and their gangs and compensate the peasants for their loss in police raids and firings.

The Central Committee warmly congratulates the peasants and agricultural labourers and the Communist Party members of Narsampet taluk who stood firm against this fascist terror and kept aloft the banner of Communism and assures that the Party will stand with them in their fight against landlordism and the corrupt machinery.

### **(r) Police Firing On Workers At Rayagada**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India condemns the unprovoked police firing on May 10, 1966, on the workers of the J. K. Paper Mills at Rayagada in the state of Orissa who were on strike to press their just demands for bonus, dearness allowance, fixing of minimum wages, etc. The entire police machinery of the district was used against the peaceful strikers, section 144 was promulgated, women workers were lathi-charged and the police resorted to teargassing and finally firing, resulting in the death of five workers and serious injuries to about twenty more. A reign of terror was let loose, workers were beaten while they were sleeping in the colony and were beaten again in the police lock-up after their arrest. It is still more shocking that the factory's security service officers also participated in this firing. By their repressive measures on the peaceful strikers, the government has thrown to the four winds the minimum trade union rights in the country.

The state government has not yet come out with any statement about the police firing despite repeated demands from various quarters which only conclusively proves that it has no explanation to give.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India, therefore, demands a judicial enquiry to go into the police firing on the paper mill workers by a High Court judge, and grant immediate compensation to the families of workers killed and wounded in the police firing.

The Central Committee further demands the reinstatement of the workers who were discharged during the strike and police oppression and fulfilment of the workers' demands.

### **(s) On East Pakistan Repression**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India extends its wholehearted support to and solidarity with the democratic movement of the people of East Pakistan and strongly protests against the repressive measures taken by the Pakistan government to suppress them.

The attention of the Central Committee has been drawn to press reports which state that the East Pakistan government has resorted to large-scale shootings, lathi-charges, arrests and other sorts of repressive measures recently in many places in East Pakistan to put down popular movements.

The Central Committee is definitely of the opinion that movements of the people can never be put down by repressive measures.

The Central Committee hopes that the East Pakistan government will give up its policy of repression and take steps to satisfy the legitimate demands of the people.

### **(t) On The Kisan Sabha**

While pointing out the weakness of the kisan movement, the Seventh Congress of our Party in its Resolution on Tasks had called upon the Party to activate and strengthen the kisan sabhas and to organise them on a wide scale.

The Congress directed the Central Committee to work out a detailed line for the kisan sabha and agricultural labour union. For this purpose the Central Committee was also charged with the responsibility of calling a meeting of kisan comrades within two months. In accordance with this decision, a meeting of kisan workers was called at Vijayawada in the third week of December 1964 but the Central Committee could not hold its meeting to sum up these discussions due to the government's attack on the Party and the task remained unfulfilled.

The Central Committee notes that the situation on the kisan front has further been weakened and it has become all the more necessary

to carry out the directive of the Party Congress if the lag in the kisan movement is to be overcome.

Therefore, the Central Committee directs all the State Committees:

a) to immediately constitute and function kisan and agricultural labour sub-committees;

b) to activate the kisan sabha and agricultural labour unions; and

c) to start enrolment campaign linking it up with the immediate issues.

The Central Committee also decides that the Polit Bureau should prepare a kisan document and place it before the next Central Committee meeting for finalisation.

#### **(u) On The New Ordinance**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India strongly condemns the “Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Ordinance” recently promulgated by the Government of India.

In the matter of suppression of democracy, the ordinance surpasses all the government’s own previous black acts. So wide are the powers assumed by the government under the ordinance that it can proceed against any individual or declare any association (body or individuals, whether the same is known by distinctive name or not) as unlawful, if the government is of the opinion that an individual or such an association takes any action or which is even intended on whatever grounds—

1. To admit or to support the claim of any foreign country to a part of the territory of India;

2. To disclaim or to question the sovereignty of India in respect of any part of the territory of India;

3. To support the claim, or to bring about, a secession of any part of the territory of India (secession includes the assertion of any right to determine whether such part will remain a part of the territory of India);

4. To incite any individual or group to admit, or support the claim, or to bring about the secession of a part of the territory of India;

5. To disrupt the integrity of India;

6. To render assistance to any enemy (enemy being defined as person or country at war with, or committing aggression against India, or any person belonging to such country, or *such other country which may be declared by the government* to be assisting the enemy);

7. To propagate the cause of any enemy country;

8. To pursue any direction of any foreign country;

9. To overthrow the government by (a) force or violence or by show of force or (b) by pursuing any direction of any foreign country;

10. The ordinance empowers the government to declare any association (or body of individuals) unlawful, if in government's opinion : (a) it has for its object any unlawful activity, (b) its members habitually undertake such unlawful activity, (c) where there is danger of the utilisation of the association for purposes prejudicial to the defence of India or its sovereignty, (e) it is organized or equipped in such a manner as :

—to enable its members, or to arouse apprehensions that its members, may be employed to usurp the functions of the armed forces of the Indian Union or police force or any other force constitute under any law for the time being in force;

—or to enable the raising of any secret or private armed group for the purpose of overthrowing the government;

—or which uses by any means to incite or induce any person belonging to the armed forces to cause any mutiny or to abstain from discharging duties imposed by any law for the time being in force.

Also falling under the scope of the ordinance is any person if the government is satisfied that such a person has a custody of money, securities or credits being used or intended to be used for the purposes



of an “unlawful association”. The government can not only prohibit such a person from dealing with the money, securities or credits, any officer selected by it can enter any premise belonging to such a person, examine books, search for money, securities and credits and question the person or any of his agents, servants, etc.

The government can notify any place which in its opinion is used for the purpose of an “unlawful association” and the district magistrate of the area can then prohibit people from entering the place or using any of the articles in such premises, and so on.

Penalties under the ordinance range from three to ten years’ jail imprisonment and fine. Not only can the central government exercise the powers under the ordinance, by notification it can direct that these powers can also be exercised by the state governments; further, the state governments, with the approval of the central government can direct any person subordinate to it to exercise these powers. From the highest to the lowest rung, the executive is being armed with extraordinary powers. The ordinance bars any appeal to courts against proceedings taken under it and prohibits any suit, prosecution or legal proceedings against the central government or any officers for acting under the ordinance. The fundamental rights of the people guaranteed by the Constitution are thus done away with.

Though the ordinance provides for a tribunal which has to confirm any declaration of an association unlawful, the central government has powers to put into effect its notification from the dates of its publication, without waiting for the tribunal’s confirmation. Also, though the ordinance provides that such notifications shall specify the grounds on which it is issued, the central government can refuse to disclose any fact on the ground that it is against the public interest to disclose it.

All this makes it clear that the ordinance, and the act which is to follow it, will be used to suppress democracy and the democratic opposition in general and the Communist Party in particular. The declared intention of using it only against those who endanger the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India and try to overthrow

the legally-established government will deceive nobody. Similar declarations had been made at the time of the framing of the Defence of India Rules but that did not prevent the government from shamelessly using them against the Communist Party, against all popular struggles against the people of Kerala who were deprived of their right to have their elected legislature, against innocent citizens just because they belonged to the muslim community at the time of the Indo-Pak conflict, etc.

The new ordinance is even more repressive than the Defence of India Rules which have been rightly condemned as so draconian as to turn our democratic system into a constitutional dictatorship, for the ordinance empowers the government to declare any party or organization illegal—a right which the executive never enjoyed ever since the framing of the Indian Constitution—and institute a Mc Carthy type of inquisition.

The timing of the new ordinance makes it still more sinister in the opinion of the Central Committee.

Sweeping powers to declare political parties illegal and harass their supporters are assumed by the government on the eve of the general elections which, if conducted freely and democratically, would lead to the formation of non-Congress Governments in a few states. The ordinance is meant to deny democratic freedoms to the opposition parties and to terrorize the electorate.

The ordinance comes at a time when as a result of the deep crisis created by the policies of the Congress Government, wider and wider sections of the people are taking to the path of struggle. It is to suppress these struggles and the organizations which lead them that the ordinance has now been promulgated.

The situation in the Nagaland, Mizo hills, Assam hills districts, Bastar and other places underlines the urgency for a change in Congress policies if national integration is to be achieved. Instead of making the necessary policy changes, the government seeks to use the big stick of the ordinance to suppress the tribals and other minorities and create further disintegration of the country.

It comes at a time when responsible opinion in the country and the mass of people are demanding a peaceful settlement of India's disputes with China and Pakistan. The ordinance by making illegal the putting forward of any reasonable proposal for the settlement of these disputes, seeks to suppress the growing volume of public opinion in favour of such settlement and force the people to surrender to the narrow interests of the ruling classes.

The ordinance comes at a time when the Congress Government, as an inevitable consequence of its pro-vested-interest policies, is surrendering more and more to the U.S. imperialists and these policies are posing a serious menace to the freedom of the country. The ordinance has been promulgated by these people who are bartering away the sovereignty of the country to attack those who are pledged to defend the country's freedom and for that, fight against the anti-national policies of the Congress rulers.

Surrender to U. S. imperialism has always and everywhere meant the suppression of democracy at home and the institution of police states. Communists and their Party are made the first target of attack by such governments, but it inexorably extends to all other sections of the democratic movement.

The Central Committee, hence, appeals to all those who have faith in the democratic system to declare to the government that they would resist this new attack on democracy.

The Central Committee appeals to all opposition parties to see that, when the new ordinance comes before Parliament for enactment, it is made impossible for the Congress rulers to have their way and defend the right of the people to replace the Congress Government by a government of their own choice.

The Committee calls on all Party units to initiate a powerful mass campaign for the withdrawal of the new ordinance and to cooperate with all other democratic parties, organizations, groups and individuals in making this campaign as broad and as irresistible as possible.

## Review of the Mass-Struggle of February -March-April 1966 in West Bengal \*

Review Report Prepared by the West Bengal State  
Committee of Communist Party of India (Marxist)

### A. Origin

The Seventh Party Congress is a bold attempt at putting an end to the revisionist out-look and the revisionist programme pursued over a long period. The Seventh Congress has endeavoured to rescue the Party boldly from the line of tailism of the bourgeoisie and to place the Party on the solid foundation of Marxism-Leninism.

The Seventh Party Congress has aroused immense hope and inspiration in the hearts of the Party Members and the innumerable Party supporters; it has opened up their thinking and has roused their urge for active political life.

Now, no more shamless hollow praise of the bourgeoisie in the hope of getting their favour i.e., the favour of a worthless seat in the camp of the bourgeois Government.

Now is the time for preparations for people's revolution with a view to overthrow the reactionary bourgeoisie-landlord Government. The party Members and sympathisers accepted the new programme of the Party with renewed hopes and aspirations.

But the landlord-bourgeois Government have made no

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\* This Review Report was prepared by the West Bengal State Committee of the Communist party of India (Marxist) and published as a booklet dated June 10, 1966 in Bengali. Its English translation is given here in full. In this Report where it is referred to as 'Party' or as 'Communist Party' - it means 'Communist party of India (Marxist)'.

mistake. They have correctly assessed who are their enemies and who are their lackeys; who are really their boot-lickers in spite of their occasional protests and oppositions. That is why since before the Seventh Party Congress the class-enemies attacked us, our Party. These attacks never slackened.

Although the outlook of the Communist Party has become clear and revolutionary since the Seventh Party Congress, the Party has been hurt and weakened by the repeated attacks of the class-enemies immediately before and after the Seventh Congress. Even then, there was no question of resisting the attacks of the enemy. Then, self-defence was the only task — the task of some-how to preserve the existence.

The revisionist leadership has tried over a long period to destroy the revolutionary out-look and revolutionary programme of the Communist Party in a well-thought-out and well-planned way; they have tried to restrain the class struggles within the confines of class-collaboration and within the limits dictated by the ruling class. Enraged at the revolutionary reorganisation of the Party, the ruling class who are ferocious, cruel and devoid of conscience, started attacking the Party even before the Party Congress, and thereafter they unleashed more barbarous attacks throughout the whole of India. Self-defence was, then, the most acute problem before the Communist Party.

It took at unusually long time to find out the way for self-defence. Due to ceaseless barbarous attacks of the enemy, Party leaders and workers were being almost regularly eliminated from the arenas of struggles.

Party was taken weak and was suffering from inadequate strength and resources but never bereft of popular support. In spite of bringing the party, wild charges against the representative of the class-enemy, the Congress Government, did not succeed in misleading the people and the isolating the Party from the people. They could not deprive the Party of the support of the people. The people in their own judgement and experience, took no time to recognise their genuine friends and companions of the struggles. The people have protected the

Party, sustained and nourished the Party in every respect - by providing with food and shelter to the Comrades.

Even under these circumstances, the State leadership has conducted many movements on release of the political prisoners, "reduction in prices of goods", for "food", for withdrawal of Defence of India Rule, etc., and arranged for many meetings, processions and organised agitations. At that time, the Nadia District Committee held a few big mass-meetings in Krishnagar and Ranaghat on issues of food and release of political prisoners; organised stay-in-strike before the Court in both the places continuously for two days, and after the lapse of these two days, satyagraha struggle was organised before these Courts. But it was not possible to make these movements strong and united and expand them due to organisational weakness of the Party, particularly due to lack of opportunity for giving a clear conception to the Party Comrades about the aims of the movements.

### **B. Movement Against Rise of Tram Fares in Calcutta**

Time did not come even then for gaining in strength. The Communist Party faced attacks and was weak. At that time when the party was in a state of complete unpreparedness, opportunity came in the month of July to develop the resistance movement against the rise of tram fares. Perhaps there were arguments and scopes for avoiding the movement ; but the outlook of avoiding struggles and by-passing the attacks of the enemies were not the chosen paths for preserving the existence of the Communist Party, now enriched with the experience of Seventh Congress based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism. The path of struggle is the path of survival for a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party. The path of mass-struggles is the way for the Communist Party to gain in strength. Only through mass-struggles, the struggles for protecting the interests of the people, the Communist Party gradually became immensely strong, irresistible and invincible.

The tram fares having been increased, all on a sudden, the Communist Party had to stand in West Bengal against it and face the attacks of the class-enemies in a state of complete

unpreparedness. It is necessary to admit here that though 8/9 months had elapsed after the Seventh Congress, it was not possible to build up the party organisation capable of facing the situation.

It was not possible as yet to build up a correct and effective organisation to ensure the security of the entire Party.

In protest against the rise in the fare at first one day's strike of the Tram workers and thereafter a statewide general strike were observed. Following it many leaders and workers of the Party were arrested. It was not possible to carry on the struggle any further. At that time, although the broader section of the general members of the Party were unwaivering in their loyalty to the Party and their limitless hatred and antagonism against the class-enemies and their lackeys remained undiminished, the Party as a whole, was not very strong organisationally. Nor was there any clear indication to show that the whole Party was firmly united on the basis of political understanding, attitude and thinking. Through the programmes adopted at the Seventh Party Congress the Party had been, in general, united and the foundation for a complete and firm unity had been laid down. But on account of failure to organise widest possible discussions on this programme immediately after the Seventh Congress, it was not possible to wipe out the divergence of opinions still existing in the Party.

In the early stage the people's demand could not be achieved in tram-fare resistance-movement. In the circumstances, the Party made all-out efforts to voice protest against that tram-fare-hike through mass-movements and this objective was undoubtedly achieved. The movement laid bare the anti-people character of the Congress Government. The mass movements could not be successful in the face of barbarous suppressive policy of the Congress Government against the interest of the people and in support of the indigenous and foreign capital. The people realised through the bitter experience of defeat that it was not possible for the mass movement to come out victorious because the Party was weak due to the oppression of the Government.

The mass-movement gradually faded out. But the leaders of the Communist Party were not released along with the release of many others. They remained locked behind the bars for a long time.

It has emerged clearly from the experience of the resistance movement of 1965 against the tram-fare hike that it is not possible to organise massive struggle on the limited demand of a section of the people without properly winning over the support of the large-section of the people.

And, that apart, the other thing which became clear from that tram-movement was that till now we could not make the widest section of people truly conscious of the devastating influence of the imperialist capital on our national independence and sovereignty; we could not lay bare before the people the character of the anti-national alliance between the indigenous monopoly capital and imperialist capital. That is why it was not possible to build up a prolonged state-wide movement by extensively propagating the influence and wave of the resistance movement against tram fare hike.

### **C. Reconstruction of The Provincial Committee and formulation of immediate programme.**

At that time there was no existence of the Secretariat of the State Committee. The members of the State Committee were scattered in different places. There was no central leadership of the State Party.

In this connection, the State Committee was re-constituted with the leaders of important districts. Along with it, the Secretariat of the State Committee was also constituted. Several Committees were also set up and reconstituted for conducting different mass-organisations.

After prolonged discussions, the State Committee resolved with complete unanimity that the first and foremost task of the movement was to build a Party suitable for the situation prevailing at the time; efforts have to be made in every respect to protect the Party-cadres, all the benefits of the opportunity for



working openly must have to be taken and the unity of the total leadership of each and every unit have to be kept in-tact. Communist Party cannot be nourished and strengthened merely on the strength of theoretical discussions without organising and conducting mass movements - on the basis of this Leninist principle, it was decided that movements have to be organised throughout the State immediately on the issues of food, bonus and release of political prisoners.

**Programmes taken are :**

(a) A big agitational demonstration in Calcutta on 2nd September, 1965.

(b) State Food Convention in Calcutta towards the end of the 1st week of September, 1965.

(c) Extensive agitational demonstrations, gheraos and stay-in-strike at administrative centres in the countryside during the first half of September, 1965.

(d) A largest mass-rally immediately before the puja vacation on 20th or on 22nd September. 1965.

Close-contact between the Provincial Committee and half of the District Committees was not yet established; but the District leaders who participated in this meeting of the Provincial Committee devoted, right from the end of the meeting, all their efforts to build up units of their respective districts with all sincerity and giving utmost importance. Simultaneously they integrated whatever strength the party had in that weak condition, and took steps to organise movements on food, for release of prisoners and bonus. But, unfortunately, the whole situation become unpredictably complicated due to the 'out-break of war between India and Pakistan.

**INDIA-PAKISTAN WAR**

**A. Party's resolution on War**

Indo-Pak war started on 1st September, 1965. The Government let loose its oppressive policy with a new zeal. Everywhere in West Bengal mass-movements came to a stop.

And, along-side the most tremendous oppressive policy and a massive chauvanistic propaganda was started by the Congress Government in cooperation with the Dangeites and a few petty bourgeois parties. This is a very effective weapon in the armoury of the ruling class to lead astray the ever increasing mass discontents and grievances of the people. In a society based on exploitation and oppression, the ruling class take to the path of confusing and dividing the people by resorting to chauvinistic propaganda, when ever they are unable to resolve the internal crises and conflicts. This is what the History teaches us. There was no departure from the basic teaching of the History in our country too, when a national crisis cropped up in last September.

With the commencement of the war, the Secretariat of the State Committee took up the matter for consideration in an extended meeting of the Secretariat. On analysing the class-character of the war in the light of the Leninist theory, the Secretariat came to the conclusion that no lasting and satisfactory solution of border dispute or Kashmir problem was ever possible by application of force or by means of war. It was, therefore, proposed that the war be forthwith stopped. With cease-fire, and initiative be taken, without any loss of time, for starting negotiation with Pakistan for a satisfactory and lasting solution of all the disputes including the Kashmir issue.

It can be said with certainly that the bold stand of the Secretariat of West Bengal State Committee against the violent nationalism reflected the feelings and views of the Party members and largest section of supports. The Party members and supporters were very much enthused and inspired by the correct Leninist stand of the Party in this regard.

The Party members and innumerable party supporters advanced with courage to oppose the propaganda of most violent nationalism unleashed by the Government and petty-bourgeois parties and it is necessary record it pride that our party members and supporters tried successfully to resist this harmful and dangerous propaganda among the masses.

## **B. Party Is United**

On the basis of these decisions of the State Committee the West Bengal Party became closely united in outlook, thinking and political perceptions, and gradually became organisationally united. As a result of this, the Party became strong to some extent.

Another matter of that period needs to be mentioned. At that time, the Party Committees, almost at all levels, were composed of inexperienced Comrades. But as a result of collective functioning based on mutual discussions, enthusiasm and initiative among the general Party Comrades increased considerably. It must be the endeavour of the Party leadership to see that this enthusiasm and inspirations of the general Comrades remain undiminished.

Here, another important matter should be mentioned. Till that time, at no level of the Party, there was clear and correct conception about the United Left Front. For this reason the other parties of the United Left Front took full advantage of our lack of alertness, and were able to collect the signatures of our representatives to their chauvinistic decisions. As a result of this, confusions and grievances cropped up for a while among our Comrades.

There was no mass movement anywhere in West Bengal in September and October, 1965. Some petty-bourgeois parties in competition between themselves on patriotism and nationalism and in collaboration with the Government carried on unbridled propaganda on violent nationalism. In this combined propaganda the situation that was created did not allow any expression of courage of mental strength among the masses to respond to the call of class struggle. Still it can be said that due to campaigns of our Party Members and supporters the people of West Bengal were not mentally swayed towards the violent nationalism. Among the Bengali speaking workers and poorer section of the people the positive effects of our campaign were visible soon. The people had openly criticised violent nationalism while travelling in Trams, Buses and in Trains also in slums, Markets and labour colonies.

**Re-starting of mass-movements.****(A) November Revolution Fortnight**

In the wake of the suspension of mass-movements for two months, disappointment began to develop to some extent in the minds of the Comrades and inaction among the Party Comrades increased. The doubt that perhaps the Government had succeeded by then to suppress and curb the Communist Party arose in the minds of the people. It is needless to say that even at that time the oppressive policy of the Government against Communist Party was in full operation.

In spite of this, in order to put an end to this adverse situation and to activate the Comrades again by assigning suitable tasks, the Secretariat of the State Committee took the decision for observing "November Revolution Fortnight". It was decided that the Party Units would make proper planning for observing that fortnight, and to activate the Comrades. It was further decided that after the 'Fortnight' largest rally has to be held in Calcutta Maidan.

The aspiration and planning of the State Committee of West Bengal Party were successful. The Party units became really active and a rally, one and a half lakh strong, was held in Maidan on the 15th November. This massive rally on the Party's own initiative turned the corner.

In spite of harsh oppressive policy and after a spell of prolonged inaction, this massive rally created unprecedented enthusiasm in the hearts of the Party Comrades of all levels and the supporters and the people realised that the party could never be destroyed, the Communist Party in West Bengal was sufficiently alive, active and strong.

At that time, the food situation in West Bengal deteriorated a lot. In 1965, about 3 crores of people in rural areas of West Bengal did not get food, The Government continually deceived the people with the modified rationing system in country-side; but food was not plentifully supplied throughout modified rationing areas, i.e., in the extensive country-side. The reports of

extremely miserable conditions and starvation in the rural areas were not published in any of the Congress dominated papers of Calcutta.

There was no valid reason at all for this unusually miserable condition of food in the rural areas. According to the estimates of the Government in the previous Year, i.e., in 1964-65, the production of Aman paddy alone stood at 50 lakh tonnes. In addition to this, rice to the tune of 3 lakh tonnes besides wheat, was received from the Central Government in 1965. The Yearly requirement for food for the whole of West Bengal was 60 lakh tonnes. So the shortage was only 7 lakh tonnes. But, with the indirect help of the Congress Government huge quantity of food-grains found its way into the black market and into the hands of the hoarders. In effect the unbearable situation developed in the rural areas and the food crisis became more acute.

It was apprehended beforehand that because of absence of sufficient rainfall in 1965, the production of foodgrain would fall further in 1965-66. But General Election was not far-off. If, for a simple and natural solution, all the hoarding were unearthed and the entire surplus foodgrains of the zamindars and Jotedars were procured by plugging the channels of black markets, the interest of the Zamindars and Jotedars of the countryside would be hurt and the hope of getting their supports for Congress Party have to be abandoned. These Zamindars and Jotedars are owners of vast stretches of lands and in the rural belt they are the main-stay and props of the Congress. So, the Government, in order to deceive the people declared a new food policy towards the end of the Year 1965.

### **B. The Food Policy of The Congress Government**

Towards the end of 1965, at the time of harvesting of paddy, the Congress Government announced a new Food-Policy and gave publicity to their programmes of State-Trading of food. Levy and procurement by Government. Though some oppositor members including the Dangeites greeted the hollow promise of the Government as a Radical Food Policy, "A Food Policy of New Type", etc. and created a furore, the State Kishan Sub

Committee and the State Committee of the Party in West Bengal came to the realisation after proper analysis and assessment that the underlying real object was to grant full opportunity to the Zamindars and Jotedars for hoarding and black-marketing and to snatchaway forcibly the entire stock of food grain from the middle and the poor peasants.

This was not enough. The price of paddy at the harvesting time as fixed and made compulsory by the Government by enactment of law, was also a possible cause for losses sustained by middle and the small peasants. For, as soon as the harvesting of paddy was over, the small peasants were compelled to sell almost their entire stock while the middle peasants had to sell a part of it : The rich peasants, the Zamindars and the Jotedars had no need of selling paddy at that time.

The State Committee of the Party with the assistance of the Kishan Sub-Committee giving due importance carried on prolonged discussions of the entire problem, particularly the food policy of the Government and came to the conclusion that the Food Policy of the Government of West Bengal would be the cause of ruination of the whole of West Bengal. As a result of that Food Policy, the entire stock of Foodgrains would be hoarded, the smuggling market and the black-market would have their hey-days and inevitably acute famine conditions would stalk over the villages. Alongside this (situation) the Government in its ill-attempts at driving wedge between the city dwellers and workers of the industrial area, on the one hand and the villages and the peasantry on the other, would snatchaway the food-grains of the middle and small peasants in their cunning attempts at maintaining the rationing system for providing half-bellyful of food for the workers of Calcutta and the industrial areas. This would lead to the weakening of the united struggle of the rural peasants, the workers of the industrial areas and the city dwellers who were equally oppressed and harassed under the Congress rule.

The State Committee further concluded that protest movement alone against ruinous food policy of the Congress Government would not be enough to fore-stall the famine in West

Bengal. This ruinous food policy of the Congress had to be resisted totally with all the might. The Government could be compelled to change this food policy under the impact of tremendous pressure created through extensive mass-struggle. Otherwise, it was not possible by any way to prevent huge loss of lives due to the famine. The famine was inevitable due to the intriguing Policy of the Congress Government.

In the months of November and December, 1965, and January 1966 the paddy, after the harvest, continued to be shifted to the secret places of hoarding and smuggled to other States almost openly but the Government was an idle on-looker. In addition to this, the Government having set up "Cordons here and there" indiscriminately, somewhere in the same sub-division, somewhere in the same police station, gave rise to causes for unnecessary and indescribable sufferings of the various sections of the people.

There had been open criticism against the food policy of the Government. Many proposals in opposition to Government Policy had been adopted. This food policy had also been strongly criticised on the floor of West Bengal Bidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly). The opposition members offered many effective and constructive proposals to ease the problem to some extent. But, not only for their election prospect, but also in the class interest of the ruling class, the Congress Government firmly refused to make the slightest change in the food policy by anyway hampering the interest of the Jotedars, Zamindars, the hoarders and the money-lenders. They remained unmoved in their ruinous food policy.

Not only the people of rural areas but also of the entire West Bengal became unnerved at the thought of the consequences of this food policy. They were struck with fear at the possibility of a famine.

### **C. Determination To Resist Food Policy of The Government**

The stand of the Communist Party regarding the ruinous food policy of the Government and the call of the Communist Party to

actively resist the food policy of the Government and side by side the call to organise movement for release of political prisoners — all these activated and inspired the Party members and supporters for strengthening the total movement for its success. Many inactive party supporters began Party work again. In the villages group meetings, processions, rallies and demonstrations and in some of the places 'guerao' were organised on the demand for food, for release of political prisoners, for withdrawal of Defence of India Rules, etc.

Then harvest of paddy was compelled to a great extent but the price of rice did not fall. The price of rice varied between Rs. 1.50 and Rs. 2.00 per kg. And rice was already out of market. In the villages people lived on 'Kalai' pulses (i.e., an inferior quality of pulses) for want of rice. In this situation people listened with interest the views of the Communist Party and its declared policy on food viz. (a) in case of procurement exemption at the rate of 12 maunds of rice per member of each family for their food and other needs, (b) to stop eviction from lands, (c) to make the cultivators owners of the lands, (d) seize all the surplus rice and paddy from Zaminders and 'jotedars', (e) introduce full rationing all over West Bengal, (f) fix selling price of paddy at Rs. 18/- per maund, and (g) supply food to the poor people of the villages at subsidised rates.

The villagers as well as the city dwellers realised that the food-policy of the Government would definitely bring about famine and devastations. The people thought out the ways for its prevention and arrived at the decision to launch the movement. They also realised that the release of the prisoners was necessary to make the movement strong and successful. It seemed that the people found the hope for survival in these struggles and resistance movement.

The prices of all the daily necessities of life went on increasing almost every day. The house-holds of the peoples of limited income were actually collapsing and they were numerous in the society. "Curb your profit" "Check the price-rise", "Reconsider the economic policy of the Government" and similar other demands were being continuously raised by the people from



all strata of the society. But the Congress Government refused to curb profit and to adopt any policy to check the price-rise on the false plea that the living standard of the people had gone up, the national income had increased, etc.

Barring a few families of the upper strata of the society, 90% of the people were facing immeasurable sufferings due to the rise of the prices of daily necessities of life. They all were aggrieved. Their burning grievances were about to burst. They had found rays of hope in the militant pronouncement of the Communist Party.

The clerical employees of the cities, belonging to low income group, faced insecurity of employment due to job-eating devices of Electronic Computers. Thousands of such clerical employees faced insecurity of jobs and retrenchments. So, they were all very aggrieved. Besides, hundreds of thousands of goldsmith artisans and workers of sweet-meat shops, rendered jobless by the policy of the Congress Government, were highly agitated and they along with their family members surcharged the atmosphere of anti-Congress movement in Calcutta industrial belt and in various urban areas. The oppressed people of West Bengal found encouragement in the policy of struggle initiated by the Communist Party.

On Bonus the policy of the Congress Government was subservient to capitalists and this was the cause of grievance of the workers all over India. The Congress Government firmly refused to reduce the profits of employers to pay legitimate Bonus to the workers. The retrenchment of workers was continuing but the Congress Government refused to intervene. In Cotton Textile industry the employers were declaring closure in their Mills, one after another, in order to maximise their profits but the Congress Government were a mere spectator. In Engineering industry the workers were deprived of their legitimate wage but the Congress Government were indifferent to the interests of the workers. In Jute industry, the owners were sealing looms and were resorting to large-scale retrenchment to maximise their profits but the Congress Government was inactive. In a situation like this the workers were fully inclined towards

struggles and they were considering to launch strikes. In Engineering and Jute industry the workers were discussing about launching strikes.

The oppressed and exploited people, the people of lower strata of the society desperately desired relief from their unbearable existence, the magnitude of which was increasing everyday and they were eagerly looking for a way out for some relief. In this situation the Communist Party was the only organisation to give a call for survival through struggle. Naturally, these oppressed and exploited people saw their hopes blossoming in the call of struggle given by the Communist Party.

In one sector of the economic policy the Congress Government were very sensitive. The Congress Government could take no such action or allow any measure which could reduce the profits of bourgeoisie and monopoly capital as they placed Congress in power and were also the main patron of the Congress Government. Precisely for this reason the Congress Government shudder and also loose their balance when they confronted the call of strikes.

#### **D. Strike And Mass-Resistance : Effective Weapons of Struggle**

Marx-Lenin had given the working class the concept of all out general strike which is an effective weapon to shatter capitalism based on exploitation and oppression. For resisting this effective weapon the Indian ruling class representing the monopoly capitalists and bourgeoisie had created the leadership of Indian National Trade Union Congress and also made the Dangeite leaders their stooges.

In the background of the deepening crisis, massive discontent, the increasing tempo of the all out protest movement of the people and the impending famine — the State Committee of the Party took the decision to resist the anti-people food policy and the anti-national policies of the Congress Government and also demand their revision by taking recourse to the effective weapon of general strike and if necessary, continuous strike of more than

a day and side by side organise people's resistance.

The labour movement of the country on the whole was so long plunged head and shoulder into the mire of economism. Thanks to the well-planned and tactfull management of the long-standing revisionist leadership. If the working class have to display its proper leadership and act as vanguard in the struggle for overthrowing the reactionary ruling class, then the labour movements have to be rescued from the confinement of economism, the working class has to be equipped with political consciousness. If "all-out general strike of the workers" is accepted as one of the main weapons for striking the ruling class effectively, one of the main tasks of the Communist Party would be to give special attention for further consolidation of the working class, to strengthen the mass organisation of the working class, to help the working class be inspired with political consciousness and to devote all the strength for organising all-out general strike in each and every industry.

The State Committee has considered these serious problems and the indispensable tasks giving weightage and in due time. But it is a fact that much headway could not be made in this direction for various reasons inter alia, want of cadres and workers having experience of enough trade-union work and labour movement. But all the Party workers in the Trade Union Front tried their best relentlessly to attract the immediate attention of the workers and build up their consciousness towards the General Strike as an effective weapon in the struggle against the Congress Government.

Against the background undescrivable miseries and limitless discontent of all sections of the people and on the basis of the programme of the Seventh Congress, the State Committee of the Party, after analysing the entire political and economic situation had taken decisions regarding some matters.

"Day by day the crisis is growing deeper and deeper" — this analysis of the programme of the Party proved to be correct by the actual experience.

So the tasks for this important period of the Party are to infuse political consciousness into the masses, to help the people know the real character of the ruling class and their representatives, the Congress Government.

The people must be organised by giving them the confidence that it is possible to realise the immediate demands partially from the unwilling Congress Government by organising strong and broadbased mass movement. The people should also be educated through campaigns and day-to-day work that so long the basic problems are not solved and the Congress Government is not removed from power, satisfactory and permanent solution of any problem is not possible.

At the time of organising these mass movements on the demands for food, release of political prisoners, Bonus, etc. the underlying anti-people character of the Government policy has to be clearly revealed.

In order to increase the food production the Government is not effecting land-reforms in the interest of the peasants, but depending increasingly on imperialist aid. Taking advantage of this dependence, the imperialists have jeopardised our independence and sovereignty. The food movements have to be inseparably connected with struggles for land reforms and the struggles against imperialism.

The movement for food cannot be kept confined to the demand for food only. It should be connected with the movement on the demand for release of political prisoners, withdrawal of National Emergency and abrogation of Defence of India Rules, restoration of democracy etc. and elevate the total movement to the level of political movement.

The Congress Government is indulging in the worst type of politics, on the issue of food for the people. By using the State Power, they are protecting the interest of Jotedars, Zamindars and the money-lenders and pushing the people into the jaws of famine and starvation. So the solution of the food problem is possible only on political plane. It has to be clearly kept in mind and never be forgotten that struggle for food, release of political

prisoners or other struggles for realisation of other partial demands are in no way the struggles for Democratic Revolution. But the present struggles for realisation of immediate and partial demands are not basically different or separate from that struggle for basic Democratic Revolution; they are mutually dependent on each other. The first is the complementary of the second. The 2nd is the aim of the first and the determinant of its course. On the success and development of the present movements, depend on the ability of the people and their direction towards the struggle for the Democratic Revolution. But it is indispensable for the party comrade, specially for the leading Comrades to have clear conception about the aims and scope of our present struggles.

The people of different strata and sections must have to be inspired in their struggles on demands relating to their respective level and field. The working class must have to be helped in intensifying the class-struggles in their respective fields. In the fields of Engineering, Jute and other industries, the struggles on partial demands have to be intensified for creating the possibility of a big unified struggle.

After the best possible preparations these struggles in the different fields have to be unified in order to build a more extensive mass struggle.

The policy of the Congress Government is against the interest of the people and is aggressive in every field of public life. So the basic character of the mass-struggles should be resistance-oriented.

The partial struggles in different spheres have to be unified by observing one day's State-wide strike and Hartal in the middle of March. This one day's strike and Hartal would be the first initiative and first step towards building larger and more prolonged struggles in the subsequent period.

As a preparation for unified mass-struggles a massive mass-rally will have to be organised in order to unite the militant masses of the various sectors and to show them the rally of the unified strength.

#### **4. Mass Movement**

##### **(A) January 30, 1966 :**

On the basis of the aforesaid analysis and decision the State Committee of the Party decided in a meeting on 20th November, 1965 that the biggest rally will be organised in Calcutta Maidan on January 30, 1966. It was decided that with the help and cooperation of our Party members and sympathisers in Calcutta city area and the adjoining districts a mass rally of half-a-million people will be held. A large number of peasants will be brought from the villages to this rally to demonstrate the unity of workers and peasants in a robust way. Through this rally the attention of the Party Comrades will have to be drawn to the formation of the foundation of the Democratic Front. As a preparatory step to bring the peasants from villages and the workers from the industrial areas the food policy of the Communist Party and the policy behind the struggle—will have to be propagated to them and they should be inspired to build up resistance movement against the anti-people and anti-national policies of the Congress Government. If they are inspired by their convictions to fight against it, then they will not be reluctant to take the trouble of coming to Calcutta to participate in the rally. It was so decided that the village people will bring their own food (puffed rice etc.) while coming to the rally in Calcutta. Thousands of peasants — men and women actually did it. They brought their food tied in bundles at the end part of clothings and came to Calcutta Maidan to hear the message of struggle and to search out the path for their own survival.

At the combined efforts of the District Committees and Local Committees of the Party in Calcutta city area, and in the districts of 24 parganas, Howrah and Hooghly about half-a-million people assembled in the rally in Calcutta Maidan on January 30, 1966. "MARCH TO CALCUTTA ON JANUARY 30" - this slogan tremendously encouraged the Party sympathisers and the general public. Some people also came from the districts of Burdwan, Nadia, Bankura and Birbhum at their own expenses to participate in the rally in Calcutta.

Remembering the experience of the year 1959 (when 80 people were killed by the Congress Government in a Food Demonstration in Calcutta) in some places the peasants asked the Party workers : "When the peasants go to Calcutta in groups, the Congress Government attack them with lathis, resort to firing and kill them; the Communist Party cannot give them protection, so why again to Calcutta?" The Party workers explained and convinced them saying: "We will have to protect ourselves with our own efforts. The policies of the Congress Government have blocked all avenues for survival for all sections of people and struggle is the only weapon to re-open these avenues. Representations or prayers have no importance before the Congress Government and the Congress Party, they only understand the language of people's movement. It is only through the people's struggle the way to survival can be opened up. If the Congress Government become power-crazy and revengeful and resort to lathi-charge and firing at the very beginning of the mass movement, then the people will have to unitedly confront the attacks for their survival. But the main aim and objective is to avoid the provocations and make the mass rally at Calcutta Maidan a massive success."

On hearing the explanations and arguments of the Party workers, the peasants were convinced and were enthused. Despite the possibility of lathi-charges and firing by the Congress Government the peasants came in thousands and participated in the mass rally in Calcutta Maidan on January 30, 1966.

Thousands of workers came from the slum ('Bustee') areas of the suburbs of Calcutta. They came with firm steps, conscious of their united strength, in well organised and well decorated processions. Their voice was firm and their slogans gave directions to the immediate future - "Communist Party Zindabad" (i.e. Long Live Communist Party), "Down with the Congress Government", "Release Political Prisoners", "Withdraw Illegal Defence of India Rules", 'Resist the Ruinous Food Policy of the Congress Government', 'No more Death in Silence,' 'We must Live', 'Struggle is the way to life', "Strike" is the Way to Struggle'.

The intelligentsia, students, workers and the people from lower middle-class came to the rally of January 30, 1966 at Calcutta city and its adjoining districts. They came not in hundreds but in thousands for liberation from their intolerable lives. The processions of the workers advanced shouting slogans in firm voice - an illuminated expression of strength. This was life. Frustrations disappeared from the minds of the middle-class. Unable to suppress their enthusiasm hundreds of men waiting on the road-side took part in the well-decorated processions and they were students, shop owners, teachers, Bustee-dwellers, hawkers, Rickshaw-pullers, Handcart-pullers and clerks.

I am not alone, nor we are a few, we are thousands, we are hundreds of thousands : We are everything, we are the nation. Our strength is unlimited — invincible and irresistible. Hateful Congress Government. Now destroy this Congress Government through struggle. This was the feeling of every person who participated in the rally of Calcutta Maidan on January 30, 1966.

On 30th January, the inhabitants of Calcutta have witnessed a new scene. Rallies of many lakhs of people took place in Calcutta many times in the past. But the people who came to Calcutta in the afternoon of 30th January, 1966 on foot reverbrating the city from one end to the other were not the same types of crowds who usually came from the either banks of the river Ganges, loaded in lorries to spend their unexpected holiday by enjoying funs. They were different people. Dry and Withered-face, tired from long journey on foot, but there was assurance of life in their voice, limitless hatred in their eyes against the Congress Government in gesture the firmness of a fighter. For an afternoon, the great city of Calcutta was overwhelmed and overflowing. No more ceaseless sufferings - no despair or disappointment any more. Now the path of life is opened up. Now shall begin the combined fight against suffering and starvation.

The Maidan was an ocean of people on the 30th January, 1966. The colossal mass-rally had instilled new consciousness



into the minds of the fighters of class-struggles. The Communist Party had given the Call : "No death any more in silence," "Release the political prisoners" "Resist exploitation", "Resist persecution", "Prevent the famine". In the minds, in the thinking, of the lakhs of people at Calcutta Maidan, were echoed - 'Yes, Yes the path to life; the path of struggles and resistance".

The peasants remembered their villages, their farm lands, imposition of Government's levy on their crops and forcible collection. Worries crop up in the minds of peasants. The workers remembered their work places - factories and mills, threats of retrenchment, high prices and their wants.

The educated middle-class people thought of automation, retrenchment, price-rise, unemployment and of uncertain future. Anxieties come into the minds of all about the food policy of the Government, unemployment and high price, famine and death.

They also remembered the call of the Communist workers - 'Way to Life, Way to Struggle'. In the speeches of the leaders in Calcutta Maidan innumerable people, in deep eagerness, expected answers to all their questions. With their eyes, with their ears, with their whole hearts they absorbed every word uttered by the leaders in the meeting.

The rally of January 30, 1966 gave a new experience to the struggling people of West Bengal. The dimension of the rally, its spirit and decorations and the call of the rally - gave immense courage to the people eager to launch their struggle. The determination to launch struggle was made certain which was uncertain and those who were in despair and lost hopes, were illuminated with new inspiration of life. The peasants of the villages realised that in confronting the oppressors they would not be alone, now innumerable workers from the cities were with them. The oppressed lower-middle-class people of the cities realised that this time the entire people were with them in the struggle and this struggle would be state-wide. The struggle for survival for food, for release of political prisoners and for restoration of democracy - all the demands would be combined in one struggle.

The historic mass rally in Calcutta Maidan on January 30, 1966 was a departing line between the path traversed and the new path of struggle. The District Committees of the Party in Calcutta, Howrah and 24 parganas arranged food for thousands of people who came from off places to attend the mass rally on January 30. The people of these three districts gave financial help to make the mass rally a success and thus identified themselves with the aim and object of this rally.

### **The Declaration of the 30th January**

At the historical rally of the 30th January, 1966 it was stated in the Declaration of the Communist Party.

"So, the Communist Party is calling upon the people : Stand against the anti-people, anti-national ruinous policy of the Congress Government; the industrial workers, the peasants of the villages, the middle class of the cities, the students, the youths - everybody wherever they are, must be united, and take up the weapons of struggles. Resist the anti-people policy of the Congress Government by giving blows after blows in a ceaseless struggles".

"Proceed in the direction of a state-wide general strike in preparation for a prolonged struggle."

"Bear in mind that realisation of some of the demands is possible only through a united and strong organisation and through sustained struggles".

"No longer dying in silence; find the path of existence. The path of existence is struggle - And the path of struggle is general strike".

Friends, You must bear in mind that without the removal of the Congress Government from power the basic problems of the people cannot be solved. With the resistance struggle this Government will be weakened, the fighting spirit of the people strengthened and foundation for peasants and workers unity will be laid - with the workers leading such a unity. The basic points of "the 30th January declaration" form the basis of the present as well as future trends of thought of the Communist Party of the State.

The main points of this declaration which may be considered as guidelines for immediate party programme, can be summed up as follows :-

(a) Not only the fight for realisation of economic demands, we have to resist the anti-people policy of the Congress Government; secure release of political prisoners and resist all attempts of attacks against democratic rights.

(b) We have to wage ceaseless mass struggles; only through it the peoples' demands are realisable.

(c) The most effective mass struggle - the mass struggle which can really hit the Government and weaken it - is general strike and general strike for several days.

Here from begins the new path of struggle. Gone are the days only of meetings and processions and deputations. We must take to the path of ceaseless peoples struggle, resistance struggle. We have to organise meetings, processions, squattings, 'Gheraos', strikes, 'Hartals', To make this proposal effective we need to exert all our energies. This in a sense, is the cardinal point emerging from deliberations at the Seventh Congress of C.P.I.(M).

After the Maidan Rally, party workers of different districts held numerous meetings with the local people to discuss ways and means for chalking out programmes of struggles at local level.

In these meetings and discussions the Party Comrades shared the views and experiences of the peoples with regard to strategy and tactics of struggle and thus enriched themselves and carried on these discussions further for organising future struggle.

On 8th of February 1966, the Secretariat adopted the following programme for mass movement :-

16th February :- Support for Statewide demonstration and squatting by primary teachers; state-wide demonstration on local issues.

17th February :- Mass deputation to Chief Minister demanding the release of political prisoners.

20th January to 20th February :- Local 'Gheraos' and demonstration by Engineering Workers.

25th February :- Large scale demonstration and processions for release of political prisoners for food and protest against the Bill to restrict processions.

28th February :- Jute Workers' Strike and 5th March :- State level food Convention.

It was later decided that on the 28th February there will be strike in the Engineering Industry. But due to anti-struggle role of the revisionist group, 28th February engineering strike did not materialise.

After taking stock of the whole situation, the State Committee of the Party in its meeting of 11th February 1966 adopted the following objectives and programmes for organising peoples movements and struggles :-

(a) There will be a one day General Strike and 'Hartal' between 15th and 25th March, 1966.

(b) This strike and 'Hartal' will be the first step towards organising much bigger people struggle within the next 3 months tentatively in May-June.

(c) The food situation will further worsen in May-June and famine will come; thereafter to fight the famine, we need to organise bigger and extensive people's resistance. The main plank of the resistance will be in the form of 2-3 days continuous strike and 'Hartal'.

(d) On the day the Bill relating to control of processions is introduced in the West Bengal State Assembly for discussion, there will be general strike and 'Hartal' throughout the State.

(e) For any reduction in the quota of ration, sit-in-strike the same day all over the State.

To spread this movement to villages and with a view to forming a basis for peasants-workers' friendship it was decided :-

(a) At three/four places in the village areas of 24 parganas, Howrah, Hooghly and Burdwan districts large scale peasants' rallies have to be organised on a Sunday in the month of April 1966. In those rallies all efforts should be made to ensure workers' participation from City areas in good number.

(b) From the end of February to the middle of March 1966 to organise "Gheraos" and squatting before panchayets and B.D.O offices and houses of local Congress leaders.

(c) Between 15th and 25th March 1966, in sub-divisions and districts Headquarters to organise "Gherao" of offices and Courts and squatting for one/two days.

(d) On the Strike and 'Hartal' day to organise local Hartal at village level and mass scale demonstration.

After careful consideration, the State Committee of the Party decided that since not much time was left for preparation, to give a strike call before the 15th of March 1966 would not prove very useful for preparation.

The political, economical and food situation of West Bengal was extremely unsatisfactory. The people at large were extremely aggrieved and restive. As a result of sustained campaign and endeavour of the Communist Party, People were eager to fight, people at most places heard the Communists with attention pondered over it and prepared themselves for the fight. On top of it, the impatience, inconsideration and anti-people policy and repression of the Congress Government worsened the situation still further.

## **B a s i r h a t**

Four days after the State Party Committee's adoption of this programme, the Government resorted to brutal firing on a peaceful movement of the students demanding food and kerosene at Basirhat. This changed the situation in the whole of West Bengal instantly. The anti-people policies of the Government changed the aggrieved people of West Bengal into a store house of dry gun powder. The Government's firing on the students at Basirhat acted to ignite the said gun powder. The

common people reacting in hatred and deep anger became restive and gave expressions to their feelings in an unprecedented scale and depth.

When the students of Basirhat were attacked without provocation on 16th February 1966 a few of them jumped into the River "Ichamati". But the boys were brutally attacked with bullets there also. A boy who was shouting slogan, was brought down on his back and there was attempt to tear his tongue. The girls were subjected to indecent behaviours. Not only that, when people went to Hospital to see the bullet-hit persons, the police of blood hunting rulers resorted to indiscriminate firing on those people inside the Hospital itself. Moreover, in the same night a large number of police force entered Basirhat City and its neighbouring villages on the plea of arresting men and resorted to ruthless attacks on the people irrespective of sex and age.

At 'Swarupnagar' the next day and a day after at 'Baduria', the students' and people's movement became highly intensive. Braving death, the people faced the attacks and atrocities of the Government. In all these struggles, the local leaders and party workers were always on the front line of struggle.

The attacks on 'Basirhat' students enraged the student community everywhere. As a result, the anger also spread amongst the peasants and lower middle class.

The people's movement no longer remained within the bounds of 'Basirhat'. It spread to other areas of the district of 24-parganas the next day. In places like Barasat, Barrackpur, Bangaon, Garia, Baruipur, Rajarhat and in many other places, the people under the leadership of the Communist Party and other mass organisations 'gheraoed' Government offices and the Government employees demanded explanation for students' killing.

After the Basirhat incident, a few local Congress leaders and a few residents of the area established a 'Council for Struggle'. In the Council only two members from local workers' organisation were included. A section of the Council members tried to channelise the peoples movement towards 'Satyagraha'

thereby limiting its activities. However, due to the efforts of our local Party leaders and workers, the peoples movement could not be kept confined to the actions of 'Satyagraha'.

The day after the 'Basirhat' incident a few Dangeite revisionists tried to divert the movement towards peaceful 'Satyagraha' and mass-fasting. But being rejected and abused by the people these anti-movement and reactionary elements had to beat hasty retreat.

It may be mentioned that since December 1965 the Communist Party had been trying to unmask the Class Character of the Congress in cities, villages and industrial areas. Through extensive campaign it tried to enlighten the people about the anti-people policies and activities of the Congress Government and also enthused the people to prepare themselves for struggle. Fearing that the accumulated discontent might lead to explosions, the Dangeites desparately tried to divert peoples' displeasure and mass movement to the path of mass-fasting right from the beginning. They sabotaged the Engineering workers, strike of 28th February 1966 by advancing lame pleas. Unfortunately at that time in no industry in West Bengal we were strong enough to make a successful strike in opposition to others.

As a matter of fact, the Basirhat student demonstration of 16th February 1966 was not properly planned. But that day's student demonstration and the people movement that followed there-after, were not incident per chance nor were they totally unexpected. The pungent remarks of the teacher drove the aggrieved students to mobilise and go to S.D.O. demanding food and kerosene. It was due to senseless and inhuman repression of the rulers that large number of boys were injured, a few also died. The local Party leadership and Party Comrades immediately intervened to consolidate students' and peoples' discontent.

Before the 'Basirhat' incident and immediately thereafter, a larger number of Party workers and leaders were arrested. But with the help of District leadership, the remaining party

members organised themselves as the situation demanded. The party workers of 'Basirhat' area played the key role in organising peoples' movement in that area.

The barbaric repressive policy of the Government in 'Basirhat' made the aggrieved people of West Bengal restive; their hatred and anger towards the Government mounted. A section within the Congress were also moved and felt embarrassed at the senseless firing on peaceful demonstration and killing of students. As a result some local Congress leaders resigned from the Congress and a proposal demanding judicial enquiry into the incidents was passed at their District Committee meeting.

Inside the State Assembly and the Legislative Council all opposition members condemned the barbaric actions of the Government and demanded judicial enquiry into the violent repressive acts perpetrated by the police in 'Basirhat'. The Government having refused to concede the opposition demand, the opposition brought the Assembly and Council work to stand still.

It has to be admitted with regret that at this hour of need the State leadership failed to give necessary advice and guidance to our party legislators. The combative role of the opposition in this period had opened a new and glorious chapter in India. However, in the Assembly, although our Party members were with the others, they could not take the leading role. At last the entire opposition and independent members of West Bengal Assembly unitedly decided to boycott the State Assembly and the State Council, the implementation of which somewhat salvaged Communist Party's prestige.

When there was stalemate inside the Assembly and all work inside it totally stopped, the Chief Minister, Prafulla Sen, in a bid to resolve the stalemate held talks with the opposition and fixed another date for further talks. But immediately thereafter on the plea that the opposition did not condemn the burning of a State Bus which overran and killed a pedestrian in the 'Basirhat' area, the Chief Minister cancelled the scheduled meeting. The opposition members, however, truly reflected the public anger



and indignation inside the Assembly and gave a fitting reply to the haughty and incivil behaviour of the Chief Minister by Adopting a resolution of Assembly boycott.

**(d) The 10th March decision**

At this time a proposal was mooted by the Constituent parties within the left front that a general strike and 'Hartal' be called condemning the barbaric action of the Government; also the Government be pressurised to concede the demand for a judicial enquiry into the 'Basirhat' incident. The Dangeites proposed that the General Strike could be called either on 22nd or 25th of February 1966. All the Left Parties leaders present realised that calling a General Strike on 22nd or 25th February would afford them very little time for its preparation. The Dangeites nevertheless insisted with their proposal in spite of palpable unpreparedness. The State Secretariat, however, rejected outright the motivated proposal of the Dangeites.

In the 22nd February 1966 meeting, the Secretariat reviewed the entire situation and decided to call a general strike and 'Hartal' on 9th March. The Secretariat made a request to the joint left front to fix 9th March as the date for General Strike and 'Hartal' and to make an announcement to this effect at the Maidan Rally of 25th February so that organisers could start preparation for a successful general strike.

In the meeting of the Joint Left Front the motivated proposal of the Dangeites was totally rejected by all other parties. The Dangeites put forward an alternative proposal and said that we need not go in for a general strike, instead we resort to mass-fasting in front of Governor's House. A mass-fasting would be a more effective weapon than a general strike. It was not only the left parties but even members of the mass-organisations owing allegiance to Dange rejected with contempt the proposal as being totally ridiculous. The Communist Party proposal was accepted after minor modifications. The 10th of March 1966 was fixed as the date for General Strike and 'Hartal'. When the date of General Strike and Hartal was announced at the 25th February

(1966) Rally at Calcutta Maidan, it was greeted with unprecedented enthusiasm by the large audience present there.

It needs to be admitted that the State leadership could neither gauge the extent and depth of peoples' anger and hatred towards the Congress Government nor could they truly realise that it would explode so soon. Nevertheless, the decision of the State Secretariat dated 22nd February, 1966 was very vital. That the Secretariat reconsidered its earlier decision and fixed 9th March 1966 as the date for the general strike showed that they did formulate correct programme of action.

It is necessary to mention here that at the 24th February (1966) meeting of the joint Left Front wherein 10th March was fixed as the date for state-wide strike and Hartal, a number of left parties at Dange's behest opposed the inclusion of release political prisoners as principal demand. But due to strong determination of the Communist Party and support received from RASTRIYA SANGRAM SAMITY, West Bengal the left parties unanimously accepted the proposal for release of political prisoners as a principal demand.

In the Basirhat area the students' and peoples' movement continued; also continued with it the police atrocities with more ferocious attacks. In the meantime large number of student leaders and workers were arrested; Party members in the Student Front and leaders and workers on the Student Front under our Party's influence formed the majority. As a result of barbaric police attack on the students of Basirhat and the death of a school student in the police firing at Swarupnagar, the student community of West Bengal became greatly agitated and launched fight against the authorities. In almost all places, the students guided by students leaders came out of schools and colleges and organised street demonstrations. the principal demand of the student was judicial enquiry into police atrocities in 'Basirhat'. The Dangeite student leaders demanded cessation of student movement on the plea of impending examinations; our student leaders protested against the proposal and instead demanded that one of the main demands of the students

movement would be postponement of all examinations. At the 28th February (1966) meeting of the CHATRA SANGRAM COMMITTEE the Dangeites were defeated and a resolution to hold demonstration and gherao at the time of the Syndicate of Calcutta University meeting to press the demand for postponement of examinations was passed. But at the time of demonstration and gherao, the Dangeites could not be seen anywhere; students only of our organisation assembled there. As a result of the demonstration and gherao, the Syndicate decided to postpone all examinations.

The CHATRA SANGRAM COMITTEE gave call for state-wide student strike on 4th March, 1966. Dangeites and few other student leaders wanted to limit that day's movement to organising a big procession only. But when under the leadership and direction of our student leaders the massive procession resorted to sit-in demonstration in Sealdah area, student leaders of other folds and their followers left the place. The Dangeites were the first to go hurling abusing languages at our student leaders. Some time later in the late noon, the police resorted to brutal attack on this peaceful rally. As a result the situation of the entire North Calcutta was totally changed. The fighting students and people unitedly confronted the police attacks everywhere. In some places the police had to beat hasty retreat. Some Government busses were set ablaze, some police and students sustained injuries.

### **Krishnanagar**

On 4th March, 1966 when a massive and peaceful student procession under the leadership and direction of our student leaders was proceeding in Krishnanagar City, the police unnecessarily resorted to firing and killed a student. The news of this unprovoked killing of the student spread like lightning everywhere and within a few hours the people were seen engaged in direct action against the police. In Ranaghat, Santipur, Chakdaha, Fulia, Pairadanga, Madanppur and in some other places the people braving death organised determined resistance against the Government atrocities. It soon spread to Beldanga, Lalgola and other places of the neighbouring

Murshidabad District. The situation, in Ranaghat and Krishnanagar Sub-Division, created by police provocation, went out of Government's control and vast areas of these two subdivisions and cities like Santipur, had to be placed under Army's control. Being protected by Army personnel, the police unleashed inhuman terror in Krishnanagar and other places. The people at large, however were not frightened nor did they lose heart. In Krishnanagar and other places they faced the Army and Police with exemplary courage and bravery.

Despite the presence of Army and also Police repression coupled with curfew and Section 144 of Cr. P.C., 3 days, continuous 'Hartal' was observed in the City of Krishnanagar as a mark of protest against Congress Government's atrocities.

The unprovoked firing on the procession of the martyred student led to the burning of a Minister's House by the agitated mass. Railway bogies were burnt and rail lines damaged in some places in spite of Army resistance.

That the agitation in Nadia took such a tense shape was mainly due to acute food shortage in Krishnanagar and other cities. Besides, against the Government's anti-people food policy, our Party Comrades in the deficit districts used peoples discontent and mobilised them in rallies and 'gheraos'. As mentioned before it was due to meetings and rallies demanding food that the minds of the peoples turned towards the mass movement.

### **Food Convention of March 5, 1966**

The anti-people attitude of the Government towards food policy, inhuman treatment melted out to lakhs of people engaged in the Gold trade, total lack of concern towards thousands of people in the sweetmeat industry and Chief Minister' advice for changing the food habit-generated among the people deep rooted hatred and anger. Police firing in Krishnanagar and Basirhat areas without any provocation and killing of a few school children further infuriated the people in general.

When vast section of the population was passing through such

a state of mind the General Strike on 10th March (1966) provided them with the opportunity to vent their anti-Congress sentiments.

The State Committee of the Party had no doubt about the complete success of the 10th March state-wide strike and HARTAL. The Secretariat, however, was apprehensive that due to Government's unbridled repressive measures, as was witnessed in Basirhat, Krishnanagar and Ranaghat areas and in Calcutta, the situation might deteriorate on the day of the strike. Faced with this possibility and with a view to tackling such an eventuality, the Secretariat on 4th March (1966) adopted the following resolution :

*"We will get in touch with other parties and leaders of the RASTRIYA SANGRAM SAMITY, West Bengal and urge upon them to announce at the food convention of 5th March, 1966 that in the event of police firing or police atrocities on the day of General Strike, the Strike and Hartal will continue for the next day also".*

The efforts of the Secretariat of the State Party met with partial success. At the Food convention held on 5th March (1966) the two Secretaries of RASHTRIYA SANGRAM SAMITY, West Bengal, gave similar call to the people of West Bengal to the effect that in the event of police atrocities on the day of General Strike, the General Strike will continue the next day and they also warned the State Government about the consequences of such police atrocities. We, however, did not know then that in the absence of concrete proposal before the joint meeting of the Left Front and RASHTRIYA SANGRAM SAMITY, West Bengal, there would be hesitations and reservations in the minds of some leaders of the Left Parties and RASHTRIYA SANGRAM SAMITY, West Bengal, about the efficacy of our logical and most practical proposal of continuing the strike the next day in case of police atrocities on the day of the General Strike. Subsequent developments proved that our proposal was correct and completely in consonance with the fighting spirit of the people of West Bengal.

**10th March 1966**

“BANGLA BANDH” “All activities in Bengal will come to a stop”, “Functioning of the Congress Government will be disrupted” – with this belief and complete self confidence, the people of West Bengal, specially the workers and lower middle class people of the City areas began the 10th March (1966) General Strike and HARTAL in the morning. Almost all factories and mills, shops and establishments were closed. But in a bid to show their might and engineer provocation, truck-loads, and bus-loads of police personnel went round the streets. There was also attempt to run trains with the help of armed police. The people naturally took it as a challenge, faced the Army and the police with united determination and foiled the attempts to run buses and trams wherever possible.

In places like Naihati, Panihati, Agarpara, Khardah, Konnagar, Hind Motors, Uttarpara, Rishra, Srirampur, Chandannagar, Asansol people at large put up stiff resistance against Army and police atrocities. In many places trains and railway buildings were set on fire and rail lines uprooted. All the atrocities of the Gun-trotting police proved ineffective in the face of resistance by thousands of agitated people who nurtured deep hatred and anger towards the Congress Government. The people laid down their lives but never looked back nor hesitated to do things they were called upon to perform. Only on the 10th March, itself the death toll in police firing exceeded, thirty in number. It is also a matter of pride for the peoples movement that in place like Hind Motors, Rishra, Srirampur, Khardah the workers were the dominant force in organising resistance in those places and the ancillary support was provided by lower middle class people of the areas.

The General Strikes and ‘Hartal’ was observed almost throughout the State of West Bengal on March 10 (1966). The whole of West Bengal including the remotest villages witnessed total ‘Hartal’ - all shops and markets remained closed and courts and offices did not function. Only in the Darjeeling hill area there was no effect of ‘Hartal’. Almost all the industrial

establishments in West Bengal were closed on that day. In most cases the workers struck work voluntarily; there had been no picketing for enforcing the strike. Only in Burnpur Iron & Steel Factory, in Birlapur and in one or two other places the strike did not take place. Vast areas of Collieries also remained unaffected by the strike. The strike and HARTAL of 10th March was an unprecedented success in totality. Not only in terms of expanse but in the matter of peoples' support and participation especially of the working class and that too non-Bengali workers, the success of the 10th March Strike was incomparable with any other strikes held hitherto in West Bengal. Through various peoples resistance, the March 10 strike assumed historical importance and secured a place of pride. In the face of unabashed Army and Police repression the people at large did not remain inactive. The people at large though unarmed faced the might of Army and Police with unparalleled determination, courage and bravery. Sensing the mood of the people the Army and the Police personnel had to retreat at many places. The 10th March peoples' struggle took the shape of peoples' revolt and reached such a height at many places.

At students' initiative, large scale students' strike and demonstration took place in many districts. The heroic role the youth and students played on 10th March is of special significance. On that day the youth and students everywhere were in the front line of struggle and peoples' resistance. Due to organisational weakness in Districts like Maldah, West Dinajpur, Bankura, etc. our Party could not make adequate preparation and carry out sufficient campaign in support of the 10th March strike and HARTAL. But the youth and student community of these districts took the initiative for the success of the strike, organised demonstrations and made all efforts to make the strike successful in the rural areas. In places, the students and the youth fought the Government atrocities. In a few places of West Dinajpur and at Sonamukhi village of the district of Bankura, the student community confronted the armed police and with public help forced them to retreat.

It can be said without fear of contradiction that through large scale students' demonstrations and students' initiative in many a mass struggle, the discontent of the peasantry and lower middle class people did find an opening for its expression.

On 10th of March in many places the Government Administration totally collapsed. In all places where there were provocations from the Government, the people heroically resisted it.

Law and order as determined by Government evaporated like camphor from many areas. Congress Government was forced to deploy Armed Police and Military in extensive areas of Hooghly, Asansol, Andal, Barrackpur sub-divisions and Calcutta.

After this inhuman police atrocities causing mass murders, it was naturally expected that as per declaration of Food Convention of March 5, (1966) the Left Front will declare that the strike and Hartal will continue through the next day, i.e., the 11th March. But just before afternoon it was learnt that Left Front had no meeting scheduled for the day. This meant that on the following day there would be no Strike & Hartal as no call was being given. It is quite evident that the parties were vascillating.

With great difficulty the Secretariat of the State Party contacted in the afternoon a few big left parties and requested them to convene a ULF Committee meeting on that day itself and to declare the programme of strike and Hartal for the following day. But everyone conveyed that the United left Front would met the next morning at 9.00 A.M. and the entire situation would be reviewed in that meeting.

On the other hand, Party units from different places of Calcutta, Howrah and 24-Parganas districts started enquiring about the programme to be observed the next day and time and again requested the State Committee to declare continuation of the strike & Hartal for the next day. They informed that because of Police excesses and heroic resistance of the people at various



places the predominant mood of the masses was such that whether Left Front issued a call or not, spontaneous strike and Hartal would take place the next day everywhere including the factories. Further, they added, even if the Left Front failed to issue such a call, our Party on its own must give the call for continuation of the strike & Hartal on 11th March, 1966.

At this juncture it was known that barring a few small parties, all others of the Left Front were not in favour of issuing such a call.

The Secretariat of the State Party carefully considered the entire situation and decided that the strike would have to be continued, the next day. This decision was immediately communicated to Calcutta, Howrah and 24-parganas. This was conveyed to the other left parties of the Front (who were contacted earlier) that the Communist Party considered that non-issuance of such a call would create great frustration amongst the struggling masses.

Most of the Left Parties took the stand that it was possible for the Left Front to meet in a meeting on 10th March night to take the decision for continuation of the General Strike and Hartal on 11th March, 1966. From our Party we told them that this position was not acceptable to us.

Under the circumstances, the Secretariat decided that Communist Party should unilaterally issue press statement giving a call for strike & Hartal on the next day. When preparations were being made to implement this decision certain important questions cropped up and the Secretariat reconsidered the whole matter. After discussions the earlier decision was changed since it was strongly felt that any unilateral call for strike the Hartal issued by the Communist Party would result in deterioration of its relation with the United Left Front and may result in our Party being isolated. In such circumstances if there was any serious incident, the peoples' struggle would be endangered. If there was any division amongst the leadership when the struggle was continuing, it would result in weakening of the struggle and consequently lead to frustration in the

fighting masses. Therefore, it would not be advisable for the Communist Party, under the present situation of the struggle, to unilaterally issue any such call publicly. While the State Party leadership would advise the Party Committees of the districts to continue the strike and Hartal it would not issue any such public statement which could highlight disunity and division within the fighting leadership. The Secretariat of the State Party, as far as practicable, communicated this decision to all levels of the Party within the night.

In the mean time, as per earlier decision of the State Party Secretariat, widespread handwritten posters were displayed the same evening by the Party units in Calcutta in different areas of Howrah and 24 parganas districts adjacent to Calcutta.

The sequence of events influenced United Left Front's to issue a statement on the day. It was published in all newspapers the next day that the United Left Front's called upon the people to carry on the struggle and that the Front meeting to finalise the future programme would be held on 11th March at 9.00 A.M.

The situation in which a mass struggle of high intensity was not left to sponteneity and at the mercy of the Government and was at least brought under control by the United Left Front's decision to carry on the struggle. A clear-cut decision for strike and Hartal, however, could certainly have created much wider possibility of developing people's struggle but this could not be achieved.

It should be admitted here that had the call for continuation of the strike and Hartal on 11th March been unilaterally given by our Party it would have given tremendous boost to the fighting people and undoubtedly would have enhanced our Party's prestige.

### **On 11th March (1966) :**

Though there was no official call from the leadership the strike and Hartal continued as on the day before (i.e.10th March); people's resistance was as intense as on the previous day. Police repression continued with same intensity and excesses. At least 13

people died of Police firing during the day. Curfew was clamped in large areas of Calcutta. The panicky Congress Government and scared Congress leadership could not muster enough courage to break the strike & Hartal.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) placed before the United Left Front meeting on that day that it was improper not to have issued the call for strike & Hartal on the previous day and suggested at least today itself a joint call be issued for strike and Hartal for 12th also said that if, however, in the opinion of the United Left Front it was not possible to continue the strike on 12th, if the Front considered that some time was needed for the minimum preparations, then the Government be given seven days notice starting from today to meet the demands and let it be declared that if the demands were not fulfilled within this week, there would be a statewide General Strike and Hartal on 18th March. Our Party also informed the United Left Front that this proposal had to be considered seriously by the Front on that day itself.

At the outset of the meeting on 11th March, the Dangeites proposed that since the Communist Party of India (Marxist) did not communicate its proposal to all constituents of ULF including the Dangeites and since Dangeites name was not included in the ULF statement issued in the night of 10th March, Communist Party had acted like a divisive force unworthy of being within the ULF. Dangeites further proposed that the Communist Party be censured for this. The so-called middle-liners supported the proposal of the Dangeites. But when our party reminded every constituent emphatically that the Communist Party's proposal and demand of the day before, all other constituents discarded the proposal of Dangeites and Middle-Liners' forthwith.

After this discussion was held on our proposal, Dangeites sternly opposed our proposals and said the question of strike should not be considered at all. But all others accepted the arguments advanced by our representatives and agreed to continue the struggle and give seven days ultimatum to the State Government for fulfilment of the demands. None however,

One of the main demands of the movement was that judicial enquiry should be held regarding Police and Military excesses. So long the State Government did not accept this demand. The Union Home Minister, Shri Nanda and the State Chief Minister conspired to announce a so-called Enquiry Commission to confuse the people. On 13th March they released in Calcutta a well calculated and deceitful statement of formation of a Government Enquiry Commission.

On this day the Government was also forced to release 18 Members of Legislative Assembly from detention. Shri Nanda and the State Government had a firm conviction that the leadership of the struggle would now come forward for discussion with the Government and it would be possible to diffuse and liquidate the movement by involving the leadership in the blind alley of dialogue and discussions. The whole morning of 13th March the Chief Minister of West Bengal eagerly awaited in his office for the leaders of the movement to come forward for discussion.

Some time back on the demand of food Kerala witnessed widespread mass-movement in West Bengal the mass movement on the demand for food, on release of detenus and other demands assumed proportions of a mass-upsurge. All these struggles were conducted against the Congress Government.

This resulted in adverse opinion all over the world against the Congress Government in India. Being in unlimited state power and unrestricted use of administration for a long time the Congress leadership had lost faith even on limited bourgeois democracy and had become ruthless and wanton. This is why they could not recognise the interests and desires of the wider section of the people at the foundation of the mass-movement. They considered it merely as a political manoeuvre of the opposition parties. To ally the adverse opinion against Congress abroad, Prime Minister. Smt. Indira Gandhi declared on 13th March that there was no merit in the movement in West Bengal, in fact, it was the usual election stunt of the opposition parties in the pre-election year to increase their seats in the coming general

elections. The people of West Bengal, however, give a fitting reply to this incoherent statement of the Prime Ministers of pro-imperialist and pro-monopolist Congress Government in the first week of the following month.

On this date the Communist Party of India(Marxist) clearly communicated to the ULF that under the present circumstances leaders of the struggle should not hold any discussion with the Chief Minister. The Communist Party appealed again that without wasting any more time the date should be fixed and declaration be made for the next strike and Hartal and that preparatory steps should begin immediately.

The Enquiry Commission and the Government's deceitful announcement and releasing only a handful of political detenus could not satisfy the people. United Front statement also expressed resentment on the minimum demand not being met and declared wider and more intense mass-struggles if the demands were not immediately fulfilled.

### **14th March 1966 :**

On 14th March conditions became normal. Police and Military were withdrawn from many places and Sec. 144 and Curfew was also withdrawn from extensive areas. But the Government did not come forward to meet the people's demands.

Failing to resolve the impasse the Government on 14th March 1966 released 48 political prisoners including Comrade Jyoti Basu. Realising that the Communist party i.e. Communist Party of India (Marxist) was in the leadership of the movement and that the movement could be terminated unless the Communist Party agreed to it, the Government set free leaders of the movement particularly those belonging to the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

There is no denial of the fact that this release of the leaders, even before the struggle is withdrawn, constituted a big victory for the mass-movement. It had enhanced the prestige of the West Bengal's rich heritage of mass-movements.

Partial defeat of the Government before the mass-movement created within the Congress leadership and the Congress Government confusion, discord and quarrel. When the mass-movement became intense, the higher level of Congress leadership and Ministers, to escape people's wrath, took refuge in Governor's House and big hotels. But the leaders in Mofussil who did not have such advantages were target of peoples anger and hatred. Naturally they sharply criticised the higher leadership and the Congress ministers. In Congress meeting of 14th March 1966 the discord and quarrel reached such a serious proportion that the Chief Minister was forced to submit letter of resignation. However, after reconsideration of the situation, everybody arranged for withdrawal of Chief Minister's resignation letter.

### **Situation After 14th March (1966)**

Mass-movement continued but the mass-struggle was waring. Though a few concessions were granted, the Government stubbornly resisted other demands of the mass-movement. People, having attained sense of victory were yearning for further call of action to win further concessions. Sensing this mood of the people, ULF leaders were not agreeable to hold discussions with the Government, nor could they finalise the date of next strike-struggles. This resulted in uncertainty in the sphere of movement.

It is dangerous to let this state of affairs continue for a long time. When such conditions arose, when the people could not move forward any more, it was the task of the leadership to organise a disciplined and planned retreat. If this time and opportunity was not properly utilised, it could disrupt the struggle within a short period.

In accordance with the above principle, when the Secretariat of the State Party was certain that there was no possibility of concerted mass-action within the next 5/7 days they took the following decision :-

(1) Attempts to be made to remove uncertainty from the struggle.

(2) Efforts should be made to attain normalcy with normalcy restored to some extent it would be easier to organise further strikes and struggles.

(3) If the Government, in order to resolve the impasse, invited Left Parties leaders for a discussion, the invitation should be accepted, if the prestige of the leadership was not compromised in any manner.

It would be infantile impetuousness not to take advantage of the favourable situation created by partial retreat of the Government. Otherwise, backward masses will be more confused which would have helped the Government. It is unfortunate that PSP and Forward Bloc chose to take this cheap revolutionary stance and made a futile attempt to tarnish Communist Party and the United Front.

(4) The date for next strike and Hartal should be decided before holding discussions with the Government or else uncertainty regarding movement would cloud people's mind and the Government and anti-struggle forces including Dangeites would take the advantage.

Secretariat of the State Party was of the firm opinion that since the Government was more eager for the discussions, it would be to our advantage to participate in the discussions after deciding the date of strike. This would also increase the chances of the demands being conceded.

As per this decision, Communist party representatives demanded fixing the date of next strike in the United Front meeting. Since in the previous statement released on 11th March (1966) the Government was given 7 days time to meet the demands, we should now fix the date of strike on 18th or 22nd or at the latest 25th March. After discussions the Front meeting accepted this suggestions. However, specific date of strike was not finalised on that date.

Therefore, the United Front meeting of that date expressed this opinion -

- (1) It would be wrong not to give call for strike again.
- (2) The date be finalised within a short span and demand be made to the Government to fulfil our demands.
- (3) The date of strike be decided in consultation with others realising people's demands.

The date of strike either on 23rd or 25th March 1966 could not be finalised since without discussions with Rashtriya Sangram Samity, West Bengal it was not possible to finalise the date of General Strike. That is why United Left Front's statement issued on that date outlined that if the Government did not concede the 11-point demand of the mass-struggle, there would be no other alternative but to resort to strike again. This statement, however, created uncertainty in the minds of some people. On the same day, in another statement, United Front rejected the Enquiry Commission appointed by the Government.

Opposition MLAs declared from a meeting on that day that since the Government did not accept the vital demands of the people, there was no question of either participating in discussions with the Chief Minister or joining Assembly sessions.

The Chief Minister of West Bengal said on that day that he had not received the statement and the resolutions of the opposition yet. He would finalise his plan of action on receipt of the same.

We are of the opinion that United Front's inability to finalise the date of next strike and failure to decide a timebound schedule for realisation of the demands created uncertainty and confusion in the minds of the people regarding movemnt.

UF resolutions and demands were sent to the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi and copies were endorsed to the Chief Minister of West Bengal. The Chief Minister in his reply, the following day, said that there we are many demands and many points which could not be clarified by the next of the letter and could only be explained through discussions.



United Front considered the reply of the Chief Minister in its meeting held on Thursday, the 17th March 1966 and expressed the opinion to meet the Chief Minister for discussions.

On Friday the 18th March 1966 discussions and meeting took place between the Chief Minister of West Bengal and the leadership of the United Front.

Before the discussions began the United Left Front revised a few of its earlier demands.

### **The Demand of The Struggle and Proposal for Next Strike :**

On 16th March United Left Front submitted the following 11 point demand to the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi and the Chief Minister, Shri Prafulla Chandra Sen.

#### **1. Full Rationing all over West Bengal :**

Adequate supply of food grains through modified Rationing till the above demand is fully implemented.

2. The reduction in Ration-quota in Statutory Rationing Areas should immediately be restored.

3. No reduction in Ration-quota in Tea-Garden areas.

4. Adequate supply of Kerosene oil all over West Bengal.

5. Police and Military Repression should be stopped; section 144, Curfew, Armed Forces and Police should be withdrawn from all places.

6. All persons arrested in connection with present movement should be released and cases instituted against them to be withdrawn. All warrants of arrested and detention orders be revoked. Family of Martyrs and all persons injured in Police repression should be given compensation.

7. All political detenus including 20 MLAs should be released.

8. Emergency and Defence of India Act should immediately be repealed.

9. All incidents of firing and Police excesses should be investigated by Judicial Enquiry.

10. Teachers' demands should immediately be met.

11. All Educational Institutions should be immediately reopened.

On the first day of meeting with the Chief Minister of West Bengal general discussions were held on all the above points. The meeting on that day ended desiring a clearer explanation through exchange of letters and expressing possibility for meeting again at a later date.

From the beginning the Communist party demanded full Ration for all who have to buy foodstuff. Communist party had developed and organised movement with this as the focal point of its campaign in the villages.

But the United Front had practically given up this demand. Though it was still being mentioned, more emphasis was given for introduction of modified Rationing in villages. After the dismal experience of the modified Rationing in villages in 1965 we should not accept this partial Rationing for crores of people and we should seriously endeavour to see that the demand for full rationing got proper weightage. Later in the convention of 3rd June 1960 the demand for full Rationing was again included.

### **Period After Discussion and Decision to Strike**

Comrade Jyoti Base went to Delhi on 18th March 1966 night. On 19th March he met the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, before her departure for America, and discussed the issue of release of the detenus.

On 14th March the Secretariat decided to call a meeting on 19th March at Maidan. It was decided that Communist Party would place the next programme and review of the current situation in the above meeting. Good publicity was given to this meeting in Calcutta and in the adjoining places. Though Section 144 was withdrawn from Calcutta on that day, due to some misunderstanding and the lack of communication with the Party's

a State Committee office the meeting could not be held on 19th March. Party comrades and sympathisers resented on this incident. Apart from this, the reason for cancellation given in "Desh-Hitaishi" enraged them further. "Desh-Hitaishi" reported that the meeting had been postponed since no permission was obtained from police authorities. In the background of the intense mass-struggle and massive Condolence-Procession of 13th March, Party member and sympathisers considered the above reason for cancellation derogatory to Party's prestige.

The outcome of discussions of the United Front representatives with the Government were not satisfactory. Since the date of the strike was not finalised and since no specific declaration of the next phase of struggle was made, the Government considered that the mass-movement would no more be there and even if there was any movement, it would not have earlier intensity. So the Chief Minister's attitude became sterner and many of his earlier assurances were withdrawn.

Not only that considering that mass-movement would not reach its earlier high peak the Congress leadership and the Government became emboldened enough to organise the anti-socials under the banner of "Resistance Force" in many places. The real intention of the Congress leadership and the Government was to organise attack by these forces on the leaders of the movement, particularly individual attacks on leaders and workers of the Communist party, their relatives and their places of residence creating a reign of terror in anti-Congress areas.

Letter of the Chief Minister Prafulla Chandra Sen to UF written on 22nd March 1966 did not mention anything regarding introduction of full Rationing in the whole of West Bengal nor did it mention about Government's responsibility in supplying necessary foodgrains to villages through modified Rationing. It did not give any indication of increasing rice-quota in Statutory Rationing areas in May or reducing the price of rice. It did neither mention the increase of 100gm. in the wheat-quota in statutory

rationing areas even though the last item and adequate supply of kerosene were earlier broadcast through AIR. The letter did not contain any assurance on release of detenus or conducting judicial enquiry into Police-excesses. The demand for people's Food Committee at all levels was also not accepted.

This attitude of the Government created strong discontent and resentment among the masses. The backward section of the people could realise through experience that the Government was not keen for a settlement. Under the circumstances the United Front had no other alternative but to resume the mass-movement.

In the UF meeting of 23rd March 1966 as per proposal of the Communist Party Wednesday, the 6th April 1966 was fixed as the date of next General strike and Hartal. UF also declared that the strike would be peaceful and in the event of any attack from the Government the strike would continue the following day also.

Congress leaders through INTUC gave statement opposing the strike. It was also realised almost immediately that the Congress leaders were conspiring to incite a riot between Bengali and Non-Bengali workers in the industrial areas on or before 6th April 1966 to foil the proposed general strike.

To implement successfully the decision of strike on 6th April 1966 despite all opposition and to avoid any communal disharmony prior to that the Secretariat of the State Party adopted the following programme :

(1) In the industrial areas with concentration of non-Bengali workers the campaign for strike had to be carried out very carefully and with great patience. In no way will the strike be thrust upon the non-Bengali workers.

(2) If in any Industrial Establishment the Non-Bengali Workers, who constitute the major work force, decided not to strike, no pressure should be brought on them to enforce the strike-decision.

(3) On 6th April we should arrange maximum mobilisation in industrial areas with concentration of non-Bengali Workers.

(4) Right from the morning on 6th April big processions should be organised everywhere, particularly in cities and Industrial areas.

(5) Congress Hoodlums, Resistance Force and Congress leaders should be made to retreat from public places by mass-mobilisation and mass-resentment.

(6) Wherever possible, local Congress leaders should be gheraoed in a peaceful manner and asked to give statements supporting these demands of the people.

Shri Prafull Chandra Sen, Chief Minister of West Bengal while elaborating on this mass-movement in a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party on 28th March 1966 had said that this mass-struggle of West Bengal was but a part of the international fighting strategy of the Communists and a preparation for capturing power in different countries. He made a ridiculous attempt to corroborate his point quoting from the works of Mao-tse-tung and Lenin.

The autocratic ruling classes of all countries try to detach all democratic movements of the people from the masses, branding them as Communist conspiracies and thus pave the road for the establishment of Fascism. The speech of Shri Sen was also nothing other than such an attempt on the lines of the ruling classes of India. The innumerable people among the broad masses of the State who had participated in these struggles or had extended their support for it, took this well-thought-out statement of the Chief Minister as nothing but a delirium. But the State Committee of the Party took this statement of the Chief Minister as a faint signal of the future course to be pursued by the Congress.

After reading the mind of the people and realising the boundless hatred and resentment against the Congress Government amongst the broad masses, the Government declared on 4th April 1966 that no State Transport Buses or Trans would

be allowed to ply on the day of the sterile. This clear admission of defeat and back-tracking by the Government was a great victory of the movement launched by the democratic people of West Bengal. Just like the release of the leaders while the movement was on, this achievement of compelling the Government to suspend Railway and Bus and Tram transport marked an unprecedented and glorious triumph of the mass-movement.

### **6th April 1966 : The Day of General Strike :**

General Strike and Hartal had been successfully observed throughout West Bengal on 6th April 1966.

Shops and establishments, markets, offices, courts and transport services remained closed everywhere including in the rural areas.

In all industrial establishments, except only a few, the workers enmassee took part in the strike. The special feature of 6th April was that in the tea-belts of Darjeeling District and Dooars. The strike was total. But there was no strike in the coal mine areas.

For 24 hours on 6th April, no Trains ran anywhere in West Bengal, no Bus or other public transport were seen on the roads.

6th April was nearly peaceful almost everywhere. There was no police force in any public place during the day-time there was no news of any Police raid or Police terror from any-where.

Only in the Maincktala area of Calcutta a child was killed after being run over by a Police van and some local disturbances followed which continued for two days after 6th April.

Preparation for the general strike and hartal of 6th April 1966 was in no way lesser in dimension and effectiveness than that for 10th March. Depending upon the fighting spirit of the wider sections of the masses, our Party workers and close sympathisers had maintained contacts everywhere with the people right after the 10th March General Strike. In every place, Party comrades and the people had aptly prepared themselves to resist the hooligans of the Congress and the torture of the police and the army.

The special feature of the strike of 6th April was that despite the opposition and conspiracy of the leadership of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, the strike was total everywhere and in areas like Darjeeling, where there was no strike on 10th March, observed this strike in full. Organised anti-strike mentality was nowhere to be seen among the workers, nor was any trend of communal differences anywhere.

On the 6th of April, the fighting people of West Bengal had isolated the Congress Government and compelled them to step back.

It is necessary to mention at this point that during pendency of this struggle the opposition members of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation continued a programme of hunger strike in the Corporation building demanding immediate release of all arrested councillors and this movement received tremendous mass support. The uncompromising attitude of the hunger striking Councillors and their rigid adherence to the demand for the release of political prisoners brought success to the struggle.

The programme of struggle for securing the release of the arrested student leaders at the initiative of our student Comrades was also very important. The role of our students in organising and steering the movement as observed, was very glorious. It became possible to secure the release of the student leaders due to the sit-in-demonstration and gherao movement in the University, rally of the students and their processions. It cannot be denied that our students played a special role, as a result of which the Students' Movement Committee had to adopt a fighting programme.

The Special Programme of struggle conducted for the release of the arrested councillors of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation and the student leaders assumed special significance in the extraordinary situation of mass-struggle.

The active programme undertaken by the students, youth and refugees in different localities during the two months of the entire period of movement was worthy of special mention. It was true that the mass-struggle of February, March and April 1996

could not help to realise all the demands of the people although some demands relating to the release of prisoners, supply of kerosene and foodstuff had been fulfilled. But the expansion, sharpness and mass-support earned by this mass struggle had helped to enjoin a new and more glorious chapter in the already brilliant history of mass-movement in West Bengal.

Mass-struggle escalated to a high peak on 6th April, 1966. Then came a phase of descent. But a higher peak of a greater mass-struggle is seen. It is the responsibility of the Communist Party to take mass-movement to that peak. This responsibility devolves on every unit of the Party, every Party comrade and sympathiser. Only two months are left. The message of call and preparation for the people reads :-

Resist the conspiracy of famine hatched by the Congress Government.

Repulse the attack on the workers and peasants by the class enemy. No more silent death, take the path of survival.

The path of survival is - path of struggles - path of struggle - path of general strike and path of peasants' struggle in villages.

### **Characteristic of Mass Struggle**

Several special features of the mass-struggle were worthy of mention. The mass-struggle this time had been unprecedented, as much for its expensive nature, as for its sharpness, depth and duration. Given the bulk of mass-support and from the stand point of direct participation of the number of members of the public, this struggle had surpassed all the past records of mass-struggle in West Bengal. The strong resistance of the people lasted for several days in the Food Movement of 1959. This time it continued for one and half months.

This struggle was principally political in character. It mainly centred round the demand for foodstuff but alongside we were able to link up undetachably some political demands with it despite the reluctance of some other parties to do so.

Along with the demand for foodstuff the release of political prisoners, withdrawal of emergency, withdrawal of Defence of



India Rule and protest against repression could be combined together due to consciousness of the people.

Large numbers of the people had taken an active role in the struggle and almost everywhere took the initiative in resisting Government attacks. Where such attack had been stronger, people have resorted to active methods of self-defence.

The Government could not confuse the people very much by raising the question of violence or non-violence. The question was reduced to a trifle in the face of the colossal violence perpetrated by the Government. In front of the virulent attack of the Government the people resorted to as much of self-defence as they could. However, the Dangeite revisionists (as per the statement of their student leaders) tried to villify the resistance of the people by calling it violence. They had been eulogised by the Government but condemned by the people. Despite the evil-attempts of the revisionist followers of Dange, people abandoned the path of mass-hunger strike and resorted to militant strike struggles hartal and active self-defence.

Resentful of the violent attack of the ruling class, the impact of the people's wrath damaged public property, for which the Government made an evil attempt of accusing the people. But the broad masses were not to be confused. They had made the Government responsible for these developments and had taken it merely as the consequence of the legitimate resistance struggle of the people. The intensity and depth of the mass-movement was so much that during the days of the struggle even the bourgeois newspapers Congress supporting could not take the courage of coming out in support of the Government. They had rather shown these as manifestations of the people's anger against the Congress Government. They had shifted their style of news catering and were compelled to reflect public opinion to some extent lest they would have lost the patronage of newspaper readers.

On the whole the mass struggle took the form of almost a national struggle. Wide sections of the people had in various

ways expressed their discontent and resentment against the Congress Government. The resentment accumulated in different sections of the people had combined together to give rise to an unprecedented momentum and vigour to this state-wide mass struggle and this had burst into an explosion of people's movement.

It has never been possible in the past to isolate the Congress so much from the people as had been possible this time. Only the Congress Government had opposed the General Strike on 10th March, 1966 but the Congress party had not as an organisation ventured to take the field for opposing it and became a bit frightened and bewildered. Later on, on 6th April, 1966 however, the mind of the Congress changed and they frontally opposed the General Strike. To this end they engaged the Indian National Trade Union Congress on one side and the resistance groups on the other side to thwart the strike. But these evil attempts proved futile.

A noteworthy aspect of the mass-struggle launched this time was that the Government had to retreat when the movement was on and they had to bow down before the people, even if temporarily. The Government had under-estimated the level of consciousness and resisting capability of the People. They were under the impression that by putting behind the Bars many leaders of the Communist Party, the main organisers behind the struggle, and by perpetrating a prompt and ruthless attack on the people with the aid of the police and the military, they would be able to destroy the mass-movement. But they experienced a despicable failure. The Government was so cornered that they had to retrace their steps in the midst of the movement itself and dared not attack the silent procession on the "Martyrs' Day" on 13th March, 1966. The Government was compelled to release some of the imprisoned leaders, open dialogue with the Leftist Front and meet some of the demands. Under the pressure of this movement the Government had to release the arrested Councillors of Calcutta Municipal Corporation and some leaders. It cannot also be denied that as a result of this movement, all the State prisoners kept under custody without

trial, secured their release in later days. In the previous year the Government broke general strikes and hartals by appointing force and even if they could not do so, they were at least able to some extent curb the General Strikes and hartals. But this time on 10th March, 1966 their evil attempts were not only defeated, but the application of force served to intensify the peoples resistance. Due to this reason the Government was compelled to concede defeat much earlier.

In this struggle the working class gave much more of active participation. It is to be specially noted that consciousness and interests had also been enhanced even among the backward sections of non-Bengali workers. The Congress Government and the Indian National Trade Union Congress could not create any group of anti-strikers among the non-Bengali workers. In some places on 10th March, 1966 the non-Bengali workers might have lacked initiative but they were in no way anti-movement. In fact the strike of 6th April 1966 was much more wide and complete compared to that of 10th March 1966. It must also be remembered that the bonus movement of workers during the days of preparation for this movement had been of great help contributing to the success of the strike of 10th March 1966. It had also augmented the political consciousness of the working class. This had been the first step towards the proper role of the working class in a democratic struggle.

The totality of the 24-hour strike and hartal is the new feature observed on this occasion. But the people had accepted it voluntarily. Even after 10th March, 1966 the Working class, lower middle class, students, employees and working people among the urban population did not directly oppose the two-three-days long strike and hartal and had voluntarily and with interest observed strike and hartal even on 6th April.

The initiative of the students' community and their fighting role in the frontal rank in this struggle should be specially mentioned. Under the long spell of revisionist politics they had become confined to their own small cell. This was the first time they had been seen to come out of their narrow circles to play

their proper role in democratic movement and had proceeded fast. They had played a crucial role in expanding the movement in many places. In this way democratic forces had been strengthened on the one hand and on the other hand the ruling class had become perplexed.

Though not at par with the workers, students or lower middle-class people in the urban areas of the expected role of peasants in democratic revolution the peasants had advanced to some extent through this struggle. They had joined the strikes everywhere and in some areas they had taken the initiative to organise the strike and actively participated in it.

Large number of stage and cinema artists had supported the mass struggle this time and had come out in public condemnation of the repressive measures of the Congress Government. The letter published by popular artists, including shri Satyajit Ray when the Union Home Minister, Sri G. L. Nanda visited Calcutta, was most significant. It is also a special feature that they attempted to raise funds on 27th March, 1966 for the assistance of those killed under Government repression and those injured or damaged.

### **Role of The Party and Lessons of The Movement**

a) The role of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) during the preparatory state and during the continuation of this glorious popular struggle, can indeed make us proud. The party had in its own initiative launched a systematic attack against the total policy of the Government and had been able to rally the people of the entire State politically and demonstrated the close link between the different demands of the people and the political struggle as against the total policy of the Government. In this way they have combined the struggles of different sections of the people into one and have paved the field for mass struggle through widely-participated rallies of the people during the February-April 1966. In this way, the Party had not only played a principal role but also a fundamental one. The Party had worked as the main force behind the organisation of mass-struggle and its main conductor. The Party had carried out this

major responsibility in a difficult situation when many of its leaders and workers are languishing in jails without trial, when attack from the Government and publicity of slander against our Party and the movement had been toned up, when the Government had tried its utmost to confuse the people and isolate the Communist Party by ultra-nationalistic campaign, when the revisionist Dange group had assisted the Congress Government in various ways in its false publicity and attacks and when different leftist parties had been confused by the ultra-nationalist campaign of the Government.

The capacity and initiative to carry out this responsibility had come to the party from its 7th Party Congress and the Programme adopted by the Party. The 7th Party Congress had rescued the Party from the slush of revisionism and instilled a revolutionary inspiration into it. This Party programme has set before the entire Party the aim of people's democratic revolution and endorsed it with revolutionary outlook.

It has created a new consciousness, new inspiration and new initiative in the Party. It has generated a creative emotion among Party Comrades at all levels. That is why the Party was not unnerved when many leaders of the Party were arrested by the congress Government in a sudden attack. At all levels newer comrades came forward to take responsibility and they have reconstructed the disturbed Party units and countered Government attacks not only through self-defence but have also drawn up plans for political campaigns as a measure for counter-attack. At each stage of mass-struggle, Party leadership had taken bold decisions and implemented them using all their resources.

b) The Party was realising from its experiences during the last few years that in the face of mounting crisis created by the Government and the Government repression it was becoming increasingly difficult to advance the movement for piecemeal demands of the people in an isolated manner. The Party had come to this conclusion that the movements for piecemeal demands of the people must be advanced in the background of

the broad political movement of the people against the entire policy of the Government and statewide mass movements. But this decision could not be put into practice before the Party Congress. At the point of time under discussion, the party had realised its significance and had accordingly drawn up programmes for organising movements.

In reply to the onslaught and slander perpetrated by the Congress Government the party had come out in political campaign and had held meetings and rallies in large numbers. When during the India-Pakistan war (1965) many other parties had allowed themselves to be swayed by the current of ultra-nationalism, our Party had solidly countered ultranationalistic campaign and came out in open political campaign against the overall Government policy. Massive rallies had been held in large numbers on the demands of release of political prisoners, withdrawal of D.I.R. and state of emergency, peaceful settlement of disputes with neighbouring countries, etc. As a result of this, the political consciousness and courage of the people had been augmented and that was the reason why the people could not be confused or panicked by ultra nationalistic campaign or the repressive onslaught of the Government. The huge rally of 15th November 1965 initiated the turning point of the situation. Although the revisionist party came out to the aid of the Government by calling it new food policy as somewhat progressive, our Party had upheld its real harmful character before the people and had joined the fight against this food policy along with other political demands.

Along with the demand for food the demand for withdrawal of D.I.R. and State of Emergency, release of political prisoners, etc. had been combined and thus the depth, rigidity and speed of the mass-movement were enhanced and it had taken the shape of a total movement against the Congress Government. However, some Leftist parties opposed this in an attempt to circumscribe the movement by sheer economism. Our Party had stalled this attempt with firmness.

The Party had decided to hold a biggest ever public gathering on 30th January 1966 in order to prepare the field for an active movement of the people. This unprecedented rally of 5 lakhs of people had joined together the resentments of different sections of the people of West Bengal and had served to instil courage and give firmness, self-confidence and drive in the minds of millions of people in the state. Had not the background of this overall political upheaval been there, the incident of Basirhat might have remained merely an isolated event. There is no doubt that it would never have conflagrated into a gigantic mass-movement as it did.

Judging from this view, it would be seen that although there had been components of spontaneity in the incidents of Basirhat, Krishnanagar, etc., on a total analysis. These were but the outburst of widespread organised movement. Doubtless, however, in the background of the broad movements the people had spontaneously come forward in many places. But even in these places, the Party, by laying its hand as much as possible, tried to give the movements and organised shape and met with success. That is why we must comprehend the importance of political movement against the Government more clearly.

(C) In one side organising campaigns and mass mobilisation and movement at the Party's own initiative and on the other side the united drive of the Left political parties—the State Party leadership had correctly understood the importance of both these sides and had consciously utilised them and combined them. But, for the sake of united movement our Party did not surrender itself before the vasillation and wrong political understanding of the Left Parties and did not make its initiative dependent on the Left Parties united initiative or decision. As our Party could mobilise larger section of the people on its own initiative and bring them in the movement, it helped the Left Parties to realise the situation and perform their joint responsibilities in the United Committee for conducting the movement.

Though mass mobilisation and movements in the Party's own initiative had been of primary importance, the party had never

minimised the necessity and importance of a United Front. This united effort had given the movement a broad-base which again had helped to isolate the Government even more. This is how the Party could keep intact the unity of the Leftist Front in the midst of mass-struggle and at some time helped the movement to be protected from vacillations or wrong steppings by taking decisions well ahead of time and moving forward with firmness at each stage of this struggle. Because of this caution and firmness of the party, the evil attempts of the revisionists to thwart the mass movement had been foiled and on the other leg, the revolutionary pretention of a number of ultra-left parties could be cornered.

The revisionist caucus which had been inside the combined front have made evil attempts to damage the movement at every step and our Party had always to constantly remain alert and fight against it. The malafide efforts of the revisionist caucus were manifested through spreading of calumny against the Communist Party, taking the most leading role in ultra-nationalistic campaign, giving publicity to the food policy of the Government despite criticizing the same, proposing strike-hartals lightly in an unprepared situation and proposing a mass-hunger strike in lieu of hartal when the hour was the most opportune for a strike call. We have been fighting against all these trends and we have done so with success.

The Party had advanced by adopting different tactics at different stages of the movement after assessing the objective situation. The Party was conscious about the trend of lagging behind and adventurism. The Party directed its efforts to rouse the political consciousness and fighting capacity of the people step by step and mobilise larger and wider sections of the people in this movement. On the other side the Party did not encourage any tendency, infantile and dangerous, to think this struggle as a struggle for capturing state power. Without encouraging any adventurism the Party : (i) successfully organised the biggest ever rally in Calcutta on January 30, 1966, (ii) avoided giving a call for General Strike and Hartal in an unprepared stage and when the opportune time came, the call for General Strike and



Hartal was given; (iii) strengthened the struggle of the people for self-defence against the attacks of the Government; (iv) refused to negotiate with the Government when the Government was forced to retreat and wanted to impress upon the people about its goodness in inviting the leaders to a negotiation and thereby helping the people to understand the real situation; and, (v) gave an ultimatum to the Government that if the demands were not settled within a time limit, the call for General Strike and Hartal would be again given to stall the attempt of the Government to kill time — all these tactics were taken. The Party took timely decisions on these matters and placed them before the Left Parties and secured their approval.

The mass-struggle met with big success as a result of the party's own initiative and the correct strategy and direction of the combined front. The Government was compelled to concede political defeat. Some immediate demands had been filed through temporarily. It had advanced the demand for the release of political prisoners on the path of victory. No mood of panic or despair had been created in the minds of the people in spite of tremendous repression. Their hatred and resentment against the Government had been enhanced.

Crisis is escalating. The people will have to encounter a stiffer struggle in future. That is why we must more clearly understand the importance of widespread political campaign, own initiative of the Party, combined efforts and political-ideological struggle against the revisionists.

We have already noticed what unprecedented energy and initiative had been released to this mass-movement by the general strike and consequent active participation of the working class in it. Many times in the past, the working class of West Bengal had taken part in general strikes and other struggles.

But the enthusiasm and initiative with which they had come forward as a class and the manner in which their advanced sections had come up with initiative to inspire certain vacillating sections and had in many places built up resistance barricades against the Government's Police in combination with other

sections of the people which are specially noteworthy and educative.

It can be said without any doubt that our Party made highest contribution to enable the working class to play this role. Where we are strong in the working class movement and where we have tried to make the working class politically conscious - in those places the working class had taken the maximum initiative. Here we should also admit that the working class could not become the leader of this movement even though they participated in the movement. It should also be noted that in many places the students took leading role in resisting the Government's attacks. If the working class has to play its leading role in the democratic revolution — it will have to get more organised and become more conscious and will have to take the leading role in the general democratic movement and the movement of other sections of the people.

Under the influence of revisionism, our work among the working class was submerged in economism. Our Party had taken some efforts to come out of this position after the last Party Congress. Besides organising them on the basis of their own and immediate demands, we have some-how started campaign among them, political, anti-imperialist and anti-feudal in nature explaining to them the significance of peasants' struggle, exposing the nature of the overall policy of the Government. But so long our weaknesses remained. The Party must thoroughly discuss the influence of revisionism and economism and take firm steps to eradicate these weaknesses.

Our special weaknesses are there not only in the matter of organising the working class as the leading political force but even in organising them for ordinary class-movement. Hundreds of thousands of jute-mill workers and coalmine workers are mainly in an unorganised state till now. In many fields our workers' organisations are still weak and this is a great hindrance in rallying them for democratic movements. It is to be noted that in two successive general strikes the workers of Burnpur-Kulti Iron & Steel Works did not participate. Before

this, the proposed general strike of the Engineering workers had been thwarted by the conspiracy of revisionists.

We must think fast for removing these weaknesses in the working class considering the mounting crisis and intensity of mass-struggles in the coming days.

(e) It is true that the mass struggle this time had spread more than before in mofussil areas and the workers had also participated in it. In many places the peasants had stopped their plough and did not work in the field and in many other places, they have actively participated in the movement. But what we have principally to note that on the count of numbers, area and fighting spirit, the participation of peasants was very weak. The weaknesses of democratic movements and specially of our Party among the peasants is terrific. Our Party programme has distinctly highlighted the main fighting role of peasants in democratic movements and the significance of the basis of workers-peasants unity. It is sheer madness to think of making progress towards the aim of democratic revolutions bereft of the widest organised fighting power of the peasants. Advancement in this direction may be made only by making common cause of the general strike of the workers with the resistance movement of the peasant community. Not only in the interest of democratic revolution, but in view of the deepening crisis in public life, the way in which the ruling class is taking recourse to the repressive policies' the active and organised participation of peasants is of utmost necessity for advancing any democratic movement. Because of this, it is a dire necessity to organise the peasants and to raise their movement from the closet of economism to the level of political movement and specially to organise the poor peasants and to unleash their fighting spirit. And herein lies our serious weakness.

It will be dangerous to entertain any complacent attitude that many peasants had participated in the last struggle. It is to be realised that the extent to which the peasants had participated was mainly under the influence of general movement rather than our organised effort. It is a fact that "Krishak Sabha" exists in

West Bengal as a mass organisation and this year more than a lakh of members have enrolled there even in the midst of ruthless repression. It will help us to move forward but it is also to be understood that the existence of this mass organisation is mainly formal.

To ward-off the weakness of the Party in the Peasants Front has come up as our most serious and urgent task. The entire Party must devote itself to this work. It is not an easy task to organise the peasantry and specially the land-labourers and poor peasants among them and to rouse their political consciousness. For this reason, Party leadership must focus its attention and take decision in this matter just at this moment. We must proceed through discussion and experience. But the topmost necessity is to draw the attention of the Party in this direction.

It is specially necessary to note that in this struggle the student community had come out everywhere with great enthusiasm as front ranking fighters and helped to give the movement a drive to expand it. After a long span of time the student community had once again played their important role. Our workers had helped a lot to create the prevalent situation by putting to practice the new political outlook gained by the student activists through their struggle against revisionism which had been enlivened by the party programme.

Students play an important role in different countries by joining the fight for peace, freedom and democracy. Revisionist politics had detached the student community from this struggle and submerged the students' movement in the morass of reformist economism. As a result the Students' Federation, deprived of its fighting tradition of the past, had been reduced to a lifeless, weak and a relief organisation. Our Comrades had to fight with firmness to resurrect students' movement from this degradation. The revisionist group, in spite of being rejected by the ordinary activists of the Students' Federation had tried to keep it under their control by adopting undemocratic methods but they failed. They had created division in the ranks of Students' Federation and had tried to isolate the militant student

movement with the help of bourgeoisie publicity machinery. But all their evil attempts have failed. Our Comrades have launched campaign on the role of students in the struggle for peace, freedom and democracy along with their different demands pertaining to education and have shown the connection between the two and have also inspired the student community to participate in political and economic struggle in an appropriate manner.

Despite hundreds of evil attempts of the revisionist caucus the fighting unity of the students' community has become stronger through this struggle and the Students' Federation has come forward as the principal democratic organisation of the students' community. Not only that the dignity and might of the Students' Federation has increased, and student activists have been created in many new places and potentiality has been created for tremendous expansion of students movements.

Although the main fight was against revisionism, during this period the leadership of the Students' Front had to remain alert about the dangers of infantile divisive, adventurist and ultra-revolutionarism.

In spite of this progress of the students' movement, we must also remain conscious about its weaknesses. Students' organisations are yet to be formed in many Schools and Colleges and have not been able to muster countable strength. Students Unions must, therefore, be expanded and strengthened utilising the new potentialities. The Student leadership will also have to be strengthened at all levels.

Apart from students, different sections of the middle-class community and specially the teachers' community, employees of the Government and non-Government sectors have participated in this struggle in a noteworthy manner and through this participation their democratic conceptions, organising abilities and capacity to fight have been strengthened. The Party must endeavour for greater development of these qualities.

(g) Lenin had said that the Party journals newspapers are both political campaigners as well as organisers, Our Central journal

"The people's Democracy", the Hindi weekly, "Swadhinata" and specially the organ of the West Bengal State Committee viz. the weekly "Deshhitaishi" have established this truth. "Deshhitaishi" has played a very crucial role during the preparatory phase of the last mass-struggle and in the midst of the struggle itself. "Deshhitaishi" has acted as a powerful weapon in educating the Party workers unleashing initiative in the Party, unmasking the Congress Government and the revisionists, inspiring the people to fight and on the top of it in spreading political campaign among the people. It has also helped the Party organisation in the entire State. Through the observance of this role the publicity and popularity of the paper has increased in an unprecedented scale. During the last one and a half year its circulation has almost doubled. In spite of all these contributions the Party organ could not maintain its erstwhile standard and the expected style of news catering while the struggle was continuing.

Considering the importance of the paper, the Party leadership should take an intent view for its further development.

During the last one and a half years, trials and tribulations, political movement culminating in the last mass- struggle, the strength and dignity of the Party and consciousness of the Party workers have been enhanced on the one hand and on the other many new workers have come up from different levels of the people and have become closer to the Party. Many workers had come forward during the different struggles of the past but after the struggle were over we could not retain many of them or induct them into the Party. If we repeat this lapse this time also, it will be extremely harmful. For, if the strenght of the Party has been increased, its responsibility has increased much more. The crisis created by the Government is deepening with an accelarated pace, mass-resentment is mounting and the ruling class is sharpening even more its repressive machinery. Mass struggle is assuming a more intensified form. If the Party has to counter Government's attacks and discharge its responsibility in this situation, then the Party organisation has to be rapidly

strengthened commensurate with the need of the times. Inducting possible new workers into the party and elevating the level of consciousness of the entire party are now extremely essential. Incidents following the Party Congress have proved without any iota of doubt that our Party Programme is the correct Programme of democratic revolution. The Party must be more unified on the basis of this Programme.

Comrades, the Party having come forward through a fiery ordeal, we may have confidence, that we shall also be able to discharge our duties in the oncoming days.

## Reorganize Punjab on Purely Linguistic Basis\*

*Punjab State Committee of the C.P.I. (M) Issue Statement on Boundary Commission Awards*

The Secretariat of the Punjab State Committee, Communist Party of India, has issued the following statement to the Press at Jullundur on June 9:

The much awaited Boundary Commission report has seen the light of the day. It was awaited with suppressed hopes and lurking fears. Hopes for a purely Punjabi-speaking State entertained by progressive parties and people were dashed to the ground and in the climate surcharged with communal poison, communal and narrow considerations have almost won the day.

Subject to fuller comment by the State Committee, we would briefly say that the said report has not laid the foundation for a peaceful atmosphere necessary for the cultural and economic advancement of the Punjabi-speaking and Hariana State. But relying mainly on the census report of 1961 has preserved the basis for communal wranglings between the sister States of Punjab and Hariana. It is extremely unfortunate that the Boundary Commission showed only scant regard for the simple principle of linguistic realities.

The progressive parties and people who criticized the census reports of 1961 as the basis for the Commission's consideration would be shocked to know to their horror and dismay that the same basis has been preserved. We all know that Pandit Nehru held this report as communally conceived and unreliable.

The following quotation about Una Tehsil is clear enough to reveal the line of thinking of the Commission. "The Commission has conceded that this is a Hindi-speaking area having cultural

\* This statement was published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, June 19, 1966.



affinities with the adjoining district of Kangra". The stamp of 1961 census is clear and cultural affinities with the rest of Hoshiarpur district have been declared nonexistent. Anandpur has been kept in the Punjab State because of its importance as a Sikh shrine—not on account of the simple reason of its language. This is clearly on communal consideration having nothing linguistic and secular about it.

After much wrangling about Chandigarh town and Kharar tehsil, the Commission states that "according to 1961 census 52.2% of the population speak Hindi—on these consideration the majority view is that the entire tehsil should go to Haryana". This means Chandigarh town also goes to Haryana. The treatment of Punjabi-speaking tehsils of Una and Kharar at the hands of the Commission is enough to show that the thinking of the Commission is illogical and unscientific, which is bound to happen when linguistic realities are ignored. The very fact that Krishan Lal, MLC, a Jana Sangh leader gleefully advises that "the report of the boundary commission should be accepted as an award and implemented without the change of a comma" is enough to explode any claim that the decision has been made on non-communal or linguistic basis. We hold that the commission's report would not solve this thorny question but would give rise to further suspicions and doubts about the recommendations of the Commission.

We reiterate once more that the progressive opinion shall not be satisfied with this report. A solution based on purely linguistic basis without the least concession to communal ideology is the only scientific solution of the simple problem facing the authorities.

We therefore call upon the Union Government to assert itself, intervene and modify the Commission's recommendations with a view to reorganize the Punjab State on purely and strictly linguistic basis. Otherwise the Government shall be responsible for repeating the same mistake on an amplified scale in the matter of Punjab which it has committed in the past in the matter of taking decisions regarding other States, particularly Maharashtra and Mysore which has proved a running sore and has continually strained the relations between the two States.

## **Election Manifesto Of The Communist Party Of India (Marxist)—1967 Election\***

The Fourth General Elections are approaching in the background of the most unprecedented wave of mass struggles since independence. The crisis created by the anti-national, anti-popular bourgeois-landlord policies of the Congress Government has unleashed a wave of angry mass protests against starvation and suffering.

The mighty Bengal bandhs, the Kerala, Bihar and U.P. bandhs have set the pace for the new movement. Millions have participated in these struggles and braved the firing squads of the police to defend their livelihood and liberties. These have been followed by the mighty wave of student struggles which the Government seeks to put down by sheer terror. There have been big struggles of the working class, salaried employees and, finally, the employees of the Government. And, in November, the struggle spread to Andhra Pradesh where once more people were shot down and lathi-charged because they raised the demand for the industrial advance of their State.

Never before since independence has India witnessed such mighty struggles. Never before since independence has India witnessed such brutal unleashing of police terror on a defenceless people.

The people are called upon to exercise their franchise in the midst of lathi-charges and raining bullets, growing hunger and starvation, mass jailings and detentions.

Will they endorse the policies which impose outright starvation on millions, which destroy the fundamental liberties of the common man and declare the policeman's baton to be the supreme law—that is the question.

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\* Published as a pamphlet in November 1966.

## **Petty Achievements**

In the midst of the growing breakdown of our economy and the rising misery of our people, the Congress party extols its own petty achievements as big triumphs of national reconstruction. Bhilai, Durgapur, Rourkela, Bhakra Nangal—these are paraded before a famished people. The petty rise in production and national income—almost at the lowest rate in the world—is upheld as a great advance before a people who do not get a square meal.

While glorifying their achievements the Congress leaders make desperate efforts to hide ugly truths.

A sizable portion of the huge plan expenditure is permitted to be looted by covetous contractors, corrupt officials and their Congress patrons.

The September session of Parliament uncovered one financial scandal after another revealing the Congress administration to be a cesspool of corruption.

They revealed how crores of rupees of people's money—money taken out of people's toil and sweat, money taken in the name of national defence and planning—was allowed to be plundered by common rogues acting in unison with corrupt officials and their ministerial patrons. They showed that the Congress party could not be trusted with an honest disbursement of people's funds and give a clean honest administration to our people.

The lion's share in the newly-produced national wealth is allowed to be garnered by a handful of speculators, hoarders, profiteers, big capitalists and landlords.

Instead of eliminating British capital and liberating our economy from its fetters, the Congress rulers have imposed on us additional exploitation by the U. S. imperialist.

In the name of the national plans the Congress rulers have incurred huge foreign loans—now amounting to Rs. 4,000 crores, and reduced our nation to utter dependence on the USA for food, for external help for the plan, for equipment for the armed forces.

At the end of twenty years of Congress rule, the country witnesses the grim spectacle of widespread famine, unemployment and starvation, soaring prices, and mounting discontent and unrest.

These are the real achievements of the Congress party which it dares not own before the people.

Not a day, therefore, passes without either a protest demonstration, strike hartal or bandh to ventilate grievances and demand their redressal.

Not a day passes without the Congress Government resorting to mass arrests, lathi-charges, police firings and curfew orders, mass detentions under the Defence of India Rules and the Preventive Detention Act.

The last five years of Congress rule—the five years of the Third Plan—which were supposed to set the country on the road to self-reliance—have been especially oppressive, driving people of one State after another, driving all sections of the population, to miniature revolts.

### **Failure Of The Third Plan**

The utter bankruptcy of the Congress party and its policies is seen in the fact that even the modest targets of the Third Plan could not be realised, notwithstanding an expenditure of more than Rs. 10,000 crores.

The achievements in basic industries, in steel, in machinery-making, cement, in all vital industries are nowhere near the declared targets. They only betoken the ghastly failure of the Congress planners. Coal, cement, fertilizers, jute machinery, paper and sugar machinery, mining machinery—production of all these is far below the target.

And, above all, the Congress planners have dismally failed in reaching the minimum target of 100 million tons for food-grains production. The highest they could reach was 88 million tons in 1964-65, to be followed by 72 million tons in 1956-66.

The result has been a general shortage of every commodity, every necessity of life, imposing hardships and restrictions on the mass of

people. The Plan was to ensure a minimum per capita availability of 17.5 ounces of food-grains in 1965-66, as compared to 16 ounces in 1960-61. All that it could achieve was to reduce per capita availability to 15.4 ounces per day in the most productive year 1964-65; in 1965-66 the per capita availability was only 12.4 ounces.

In a country where three-fourths of the people are scantily clad, the Congress planners could not improve the per capita availability of cloth during the last five years. It more or less remained constant at the 1960-61 level of 16 yards per capita. The declared Third Plan target of 17.2 yards could not be reached. Production of mill-made cloth instead of increasing was below the 1960-61 level in 1965-66.

If the Congress leaders had been deliberately planning for scarcity, for food famine and depriving the people of cloth and necessaries of life, they could not have succeeded better.

### **Colossal Taxation**

What are the other achievements of the Plan ? Unemployment which was seven million by the end of the Second Plan has risen to nearly ten million by the end of the Third Plan, according to official statistics which understate the real state of affairs.

Denying the people the basic necessities of life the Congress planners have inflicted colossal taxation and excruciatingly high prices on the common man in the name of national planning and defence.

Never under any previous regime was the ordinary citizen taxed so much as under the benign rule of the Congress. The Congress has surpassed the unenviable record of all previous rulers including the British who openly looted our people.

Under the Congress regime every necessity of life is heavily taxed. No article consumed by the common man escapes the marauding hands of the Congress tax-gatherer. Governmental taxation forms in many cases more than 30 per cent of the price of articles. The Central Government is closely followed by the State Governments who raise the land tax, irrigation levy and every other conceivable impost to defraud the peasant of his produce.

In the last five years alone the Congress planners have inflicted a burden of Rs. 2,600 crores on the people. The Congress Government's taxes defy all known canons of taxation and justice and have degenerated into an open robbery of the people.

While the masses are ground down, the monopolists including the foreign capitalists are given concessions after concessions. Wealth and other taxes are reduced to a farce. Corporations and companies are given further concessions and facilities for profit-making. And evasion has been allowed to be systematised into a recognised practice enabling the top circles to defraud the treasury of hundreds of crores of rupees.

This is how the Congress Government is removing inequalities in wealth. This is the real face of its chatter about Socialism and classless society.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands an end to this robbery. This colossal taxation of the common man is neither necessary for defence nor for economic development.

The masses are being fleeced only to finance the profiteering of the capitalists and the building of capitalism in the country. Burdens of this anti-people course must be squarely placed on the crowd of exploiters—landlords, capitalists and foreign monopolists. The CPI (Marxist) demands a drastic reduction of all taxes on the common man and complete abolition of all cesses, taxes and imposts on the necessities of life.

## **Prices**

But high and unconscionable taxes are only one of the instruments of inflicting miseries on the people.

The other, equally devastating in its effects, has been the instrument of rising prices through which the Congress Government has been compelling the people to pay for the capitalist path—for building capitalism in the name of national planning.

During the period of the Third Five-Year Plan alone, prices have risen by more than 30 per cent according to official statistics—the rise in the last two years breaking all records. After devaluation

prices of some commodities have risen by more than 50 per cent. This continuous and steep rise is defrauding all toilers, all workers—employees, peasants, agricultural workers—of the legitimate return for their labour, depreciating their wages, forcing down their standard of living, and inflicting starvation on tens of millions of our people.

People in all States, from all sections, from the school teachers and the Government employees to the working class and the agricultural labourer, have started fighting against the effects of taxation and high prices, and unprecedented mass struggle are sweeping the country.

The price-rise is not accidental. It has been manufactured deliberately by a continuous resort to deficit-financing which amounted to Rs. 1,100 crores in the Third Plan. This method of financing the capitalist plan has for its objects continuous penalisation of the masses so that the monopolists, the capitalist and the Government can gather sufficient capital in their hands.

No previous Government, no previous regime had so thoroughly prostituted its political power to use the price mechanism to systematically defraud the masses.

To cheat the people, the Congress party and its administration sometimes make a show of price-control measures which are meant to achieve nothing. Every nominal step of price-control is accompanied by ten steps for raising prices.

With or without price-control measures, the speculators and blackmarketeers continue to loot the people.

The Congress party has no intention of changing these disastrous policies.

The Draft Fourth Five-Year Plan reveals further Congress intentions of fleecing the people in the name of price-control. Deficit-financing is to be given up; but that is no guarantee that prices will be reduced or prevented from rising; on the other hand, they will rise further. All that is guaranteed is that wages and salaries will not be allowed to rise, that there will be delinking of dearness allowance from the cost of living index.

Thus in the name of price-control there will be a general offensive against wages and salaries.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) denounces this policy and demands effective price-control and drastic price-reduction in the interests of the people. It demands immediate reduction of the prices of all necessities of life.

Such price-reduction is possible and can be easily ensured if banks are nationalised leading to control of credit, if profits of traders, businessmen and industrialists are controlled and State taxation on essentials of life is abolished.

This is precisely what the bourgeois-landlord Government of the Congress party refuses to do.

The price mechanism has been systematically used to defraud our peasantry in the interests of landlords, speculators and traders. Without a proper integration of the price mechanism, without fixing the prices of manufactured and other goods needed by the peasant masses, the attempts to fix foodgrain prices hit the interests of the small peasant producer and only help the profiteers. Besides the purchase prices offered by the Government are generally unremunerative for the poor peasant.

In the conditions obtaining in India today, the mass of poor peasants is unable to secure the officially fixed prices at harvest season, as they have to part with their produce at lower prices—the benign Congress Government refusing to intervene to purchase when harvest prices fall below the ceiling prices. After the harvest food prices are raised once again, to placate the big peasant holders who continue to withhold grain. On the basis of this rise in prices, the prices of all the goods needed by the peasants also rise.

The peasant is forced to pay the inflationary prices for his requirements needed for production and for all the necessities of life—including food which he has to buy in the lean months.

This double method of exploitation leading to expropriation is one of the causes of the continuing food crisis which puts the entire country on starvation rations.



The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands a fair price for the small peasant producer—a price which will leave him sufficient incentive for production; it demands guaranteed supply to him of all his requirements at low cost—so that this unjust process of exploitation is stopped.

### **Procurement And Distribution**

The utter cruelty and class selfishness of the Congress party's rule is seen in its total failure to organise equitable distribution of the food produced in the country.

Today millions are facing starvation. Mothers are selling their children for a few paise. Families driven to desperation are committing suicide. And there are starvation deaths by scores. Has it moved the cruel hearts of the Congress rulers to see that there is an equitable distribution of food ?

No, on the other hand, whenever the people demanded such measures, they tried to drown their voice in an orgy of blood and violence. The shooting down of food demonstrators in Bengal, the killing of students in Assam for the crime of demanding effective measures against blackmarketeers, the wild massacre in Banda—these give an insight into the real nature of Congress policy.

At the same time the Congress rulers attempt to cheat the people by making a show of measures for effective distribution. They establish food zones, and abolish or change them according to their convenience, i.e. the convenience of the wholesale traders and blackmarketeers of the region who back the Congress.

The Central and State Governments do not procure the surplus stocks of landlords and other surplus-holders, thus inflicting unnecessary starvation on the people directly under their control; nor do they help the people in extreme distress in other states unless blackmarket prices are secured for the hoarder of the grain.

The Central Government advertises the establishment of a Food Corporation, but at the same time circumscribes its operations in the interests of the landlord-hoarder. And even this Corporation is

unable to function for want of co-operation from the Congress administration dominated by local landlord interests.

The Congress does not take any genuine step to nationalise the foodgrains trade.

The tall talk of compulsory grain procurement, State-trading in foodgrains, zonal system, price-fixation, cheap grainshops—all these have been proved to be a pure and simple hoax.

How can one expect the Congress to procure forcibly from the landlords, hoarders and grain speculators when these are the very people on whom the Congress depends for its election funds and votes to perpetuate bourgeois-landlord rule ?

In the name of procurement, what goes on is the harassment of the small and medium peasant producers to force them to part with their grain. Afraid of touching the hoards of the landlords, big peasants and speculators, the Congress Government callously refuses to accept any responsibility for feeding the people, for the equitable distribution of foodgrains.

They, therefore, resort to such subterfuges as modified rationing, informal rationing; they announce cheap grainshops where grains are not available.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) denounces this mocking at people's woes and sorrows and demands that the Government must accept full responsibility for equitable distribution of food; must nationalise the wholesale foodgrains trade, must compulsorily procure the entire surplus from landlords and big peasants, and offer higher purchase prices to attract the produce of the small peasant.

It must ensure food not only to the city population but also to the agricultural labourers, artisans and other rural poor.

### **Congress Achievement**

In the name of national planning, the Congress party is building capitalism which has been already liquidated in one-third of the world, and which is being determinedly fought in the remaining two-thirds.

Mouthing Socialist phrases, the Congress party is bent on pursuing the capitalist path which has imposed on the country the food crisis and the industrial crisis and is endangering the economic independence of our country.

The Congress leaders advertise that they have done much to industrialise India. What is the reality ?

In spite of the three plans, the proportion of industrial income to agricultural income shows very little change.

Fifteen years of new efforts show only a meagre percentage of our population working as industrial workers in modern factories.

Several of the industries set up through collaboration with the foreign monopolists are still dependent on the imperialists for components and spare parts, and suffer numerous restrictions on production, as well as in the marketing of the produce. Many plants are not in a position to utilise more than 50 to 60 per cent of their installed capacity.

The old established cotton textile industry is dependent upon heavy imports of foreign cotton and machinery and spends more foreign exchange than it earns. A number of cotton textile mills—nearly 40—are already closed when millions have hardly anything to wear.

The three steel mills set up under the public sector do not find an internal market for their produce, even though their full productive capacity is yet to be developed and though the needs of self-reliance demand a much higher production of steel.

In spite of the propagandist talk about self-reliance, the machine-building industry is either absent or just in its initial stage.

The administration of the Congress party has brought the public sector into complete disgrace. Managed and run by official bureaucrats, subservient to Big Business and hostile to the people, the public sector industries have earned notoriety for inefficiency with no promise of minimum profits in the near future.

Not only heavy dependence continues for hardware to equip the armed forces but even the defence industries are dependent for components, materials and technique on Western countries.

The recent Indo-Pak conflict demonstrated how several of our industries were threatened with closure when the Anglo-American imperialists stopped the import of industrial raw materials and their economic 'aid'.

### **Dependence On American Imperialism**

This dependence is the direct result of the Congress policy of building capitalism with aid from imperialist countries—especially aid from the American imperialists.

The valuable help given by the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries has been used not to free our economy, but to bargain for more enslaving loans from the USA.

The Congress party has been falsely telling the people that Government-to-Government loans from the West do not endanger economic progress; that it is getting aid without strings. But now everyone knows that the Government, the economy and our foreign policy are all under continuous American pressure.

While falsely accusing our Party of anti-national policies, the Congress party has been betraying our economic independence to the USA in the selfish interest of building capitalism. To meet the shortage of food created by its own pro-landlord policies the Congress Government has been importing huge quantities of U.S. surplus foodgrains under PL 480 agreements, incurring huge loans and making India precariously dependent on the U.S.

It has been inviting private foreign investments offering them alluring prospects to exploit our people. Thanks to Congress concessions, the rate of profits on British and U.S. investments in India is the highest in the world.

In the name of building an independent India the Congress party and its administration have been encouraging joint collaboration agreements of which there are now more than 2,500. Private foreign investments have grown from Rs. 255 crores in 1948 to nearly Rs. 1,000 crores in 1965-66. U. S. private investments have increased from a mere Rs. 11 crores to Rs. 250 crores including investments of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development in the private sector.

This not only entails heavy exploitation but also enables the foreign monopolists to influence our economic life and interfere with our political sovereignty.

And, finally, the Congress rulers have piled up a huge debt of nearly Rs. 4,000 crores—mostly to the USA and its imperialist partners. Over and above this they seek to borrow another Rs. 4,000 crores for the Fourth Plan, once again mostly from the USA and its allies. Besides this the Congress Government has been annually incurring huge loans to the USA. And it is incurring fresh loans to pay off old loans.

We will have to make foreign payments of nearly Rs. 300 crores every year in pre-devaluation rupees (and Rs. 400 crores in post-devaluation rupees) for the next five years which means that our export trade will be mortgaged to the West. The loans of the coming five years will increase this burden immeasurably and intensify the process of exploitation.

### **Freedom Undermined**

The U.S. imperialists have been demanding greater and greater facilities for private foreign capital and we are being forced to sanction them as in the case of the fertilizer deal.

Step by step they have been demanding greater freedom for the private sector, removal of all controls—and the Government has been surrendering to them one position after another. Under U.S. pressure Indira Gandhi agreed to notorious Indo-U.S. Foundation which is an attempt to influence our educational system and nurse American sycophants in our midst. The process of surrender was recently climaxed when the Congress Government betrayed the people and accepted devaluation of the rupee at the behest of the American creditors.

Devaluation means increasing debt burdens for our people rising prices of food and necessities of life, forcible reduction of people's standard of living—all to pay American debts by selling our goods at lower prices to them and buying their goods at higher prices.

The stark reality the country faces today is growing dependence for people's food, dependence for resources of the plans, dependence again for the servicing of debts, dependence on imports to get the industries going and dependence for military hardware to equip the armed forces.

It is this abject dependence that enables the imperialists and their agencies to dictate to us from the size and pattern of the Fourth Five- Year Plan to the allocations of priorities to different sectors, from what to produce on our land and what to import, how to devalue our rupee and when to do it, what our internal policy should be like and what our foreign policy should not be like. The Government, far from strengthening our economic independence, through imperialist aid and collaboration with foreign capital, has undermined the political independence and a grave threat to our sovereignty has arisen.

This is how the Congress party has been defending our national independence.

Naturally one does not find a word about American penetration and concession to foreign capital in the Congress Manifesto. The Congress party wants to draw a veil of secrecy over its treachery.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) wants everyone to realise that our country is in great danger; that the treachery of the Congress party is undermining our freedom.

The Party demands:

- \* Stoppage of all further aid from the USA and the Western camp and of all repayment obligations till we get out of the crisis;

- \* Nationalisation of all private foreign capital in plantations, mines, oil refineries, trade and industry; and

- \* An end to all foreign monopolist exploitation of our people which is today grinding them into poverty.

The Communist party of India (Marxist) warns that the dangerous influence of the hated Central Intelligence Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigations men from the USA is rapidly growing in our country.

They are planted in different departments and at various levels in the State apparatus under the guise of the numerous American missions that the working in our country.

They are spreading their net over all departments of the State—the police, the civil and military administration and the cultural, educational and academic institutions.

The enslaving technique, practised by the American imperialists over decades with Latin American countries, is actively pressed into service in our country.

Thus the Congress path of dependence on foreign aid and collaboration, instead of putting the nation on the road to independent development, is transforming the country into the hunting ground for U.S. neo-colonialism.

Unless this pernicious path is rejected and the party in power pursuing it is defeated, Indian's independence itself will be imperilled.

### **Hoax Of Land Reform**

The country has been passing through a severe food crisis with tens of millions facing starvation and hunger. Why this food crisis? Why the abject dependence on American imports which endangers our free existence?

The food crisis, the misery following it, the danger to political independence arising out of it are all the direct result of the Congress policy of allying with landlords and defrauding the tiller of the right to land.

Land to the tiller is the key to the solution of our food crisis, the key to the expansion of the rural market to make rapid industrialisation possible.

With land transferred to the tiller, and helped by a democratic Government in the matter of credit facilities, application of scientific methods and co-operative endeavours, the Indian peasant will work miracles of production which will permanently end the crisis.

This has been experience of all countries which have been successful in solving their food problem. This has been the miraculous experience of People's China.

But the Congress party, with its alliance with the landlords, has prevented precisely this solution.

Despite the fabulous compensation of Rs. 600 crores paid to the statutory landlords in the name of abolition of landlordism, very little land has accrued to the agricultural workers and poor peasants. Surplus lands of landlords were made to disappear with fake partition and book adjustments. By influencing official machinery the big landlords have been able to occupy Government fallow and forest lands thus adding to the acreage in their possession. Five per cent of rural households at the top hold as much as 37.5 per cent of the total land under cultivation while at the other end nearly 30 per cent of the rural households hold no land at all. They are the land-hungry labourers who are totally dispossessed. Another 30 per cent of the rural households hold only five per cent of the land under cultivation and constitute a nearly-dispossessed stratum.

The much-talked of Congress agrarian reforms like abolition of intermediaries and land to the tiller constitute a big hoax on the toiling peasantry.

The tenants' protection laws have turned out to be laws for evicting lakhs of peasants from the land.

Agricultural development measures, extension services, package programmes constitute a big hoax on the mass of peasantry. Financial assistance and loans advanced by the Government including those from co-operative credit societies are appropriated mainly by the big landowners. Congress policy has strengthened the hold of this small coterie on the rural economy.

The lower sections of the peasantry have neither the resources to develop their farms nor are they protected from the ravages of the usurer, the grain-profiteer or the landlord. In large areas and in many States, landlords still take away from one-third to three-fourth of the peasants' produce by the way of rent. Rural indebtedness, thanks to Congress policies, stands at Rs. 3,000 crores, and not even to per cent of the loans are provided by the State and agencies controlled by it.

The peasants must be paying not less than Rs. 300 crores by way of interest alone.



Ruin stares the small peasants in the face.

The agricultural labourer, the biggest single section of the peasantry, is the most neglected under Congress raj.

Unemployment and underemployment constantly haunt these pauperised millions. For 180 days in the year they are unemployed.

The minimum wage legislation for agricultural labourers has become a huge fraud. In most of the States the minimum fixed by law is below the existing wage. They are denied education facilities. They live in the most squalid surroundings and Congress Governments do not provide them with minimum facilities regarding medical care or other health measures. They are left a free prey to pestilence and disease.

The Congress Governments do not provide them with land for house-sites and leave them defenceless against the land monopolists.

The Congress Governments could not find time to distribute the 100 million acres of cultivable waste, pasture and permanent fallow land among them; on the other hand, they have been forcibly ejected from these lands wherever they have taken to cultivating them. Their struggle for land has been ruthlessly crushed like all other struggles. Ruination of Indian agriculture, destitution for the rural population, famine and food crisis for the people—these are the logical results of Congress policies.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands that these policies must be rejected and defeated.

It demands immediate distribution of the hundred million acres of cultivable land among the agricultural workers and poor peasants; it also demands taking over of the land of the big landlords and their distribution gratis among agricultural workers and peasants; drastic reduction of rent; abolition of land tax and irrigation and other cesses and surcharges on all uneconomic holdings; free supply of water for irrigation purposes to poor peasants; cancellation of all usurer's debts; and scaling down of other debts owed by agricultural workers, poor peasants and other sections of the rural poor; adequate financial help to them for agricultural production; guarantee of fair price for the small producer. It demands a decent minimum wage for agricultural

workers, and an act guaranteeing it; provision of house-sites, education and medical facilities for them and Government help to construct houses. It further demands the removal of social discrimination—still rampant under Congress rule.

It further demands an end to exploitation of the entire peasantry through the capitalist market by means of price manipulations; the exploitation by foreign monopolists who purchase certain commercial crops in bulk and attempt to enforce lower prices on the Indian producer.

### **Equality - Congress Type**

Fifteen years of Congress planning have led to an enormous concentration of wealth and means of production in the hands of a few people. While the Congress party was declaring that reduction of economic disparity was one of the objectives of its planning, wealth was being amassed by the big capitalists through these very plans.

The total capital assets of the modern Indian capitalist class stood at Rs. 900 crores in 1948. By 1960 they stood at Rs. 3,000 crores.

Just half a dozen Big Business houses have come to possess more than 50 per cent of this total private capital.

Two of these, Tatas and Birlas, have assets worth Rs. 700 crores—nearly 25 per cent of the total private assets.

Some 50 to 60 big establishments have come to monopolise several branches of industry and commerce while five to six banks control the major part of the banking business.

At the other end stands the exploited worker who earns from 50 to 100 all told. This is how disparity is being ended!

This growing concentration of wealth and means of production, leading to monopolistic combines, puts the economic life of the people at the mercy of these financial pirates, intensifies the exploitation of the workers, enables the monopolists to fleece the people through high prices and creates a danger to the democratic rights of the people.

The monopolists breed political reaction, require undermining of democracy to exploit the people, and stand for making further concessions to imperialism.

They together with other big bourgeois elements demand more concessions for the private sector, reduction of the role of the public sector, removal of all controls so that the private capitalists, foreign and Indian, can freely loot the people.

And the Congress Government has been surrendering to their demands, giving new scope to the private sector, and more opportunities to the private capitalists to exploit the workers. This is how Socialism is being built by the Congress.

At the same time the workers and employees are being exploited in the most brutal fashion. Only 40 per cent of the working class has its dearness allowance linked to the cost of living index. The rest are entirely dependent on the mercy of the employers and the Government. Besides, the cost of living index itself has been found to be fraudulent, thus depriving lakhs of their legitimate dearness allowance. In recent years the real wage of the working class has gone down by 14 per cent—and is the same as it was in 1939.

Fifteen years of planning has achieved this result.

Besides, the condition of workers in unorganised industries, as well as those whose dearness allowance is not linked to the cost of living, beggars all description. Teachers, Government employees and other sections of middle-class employees have been denied the right to have their dearness allowance linked to the cost of living. The adhoc increases, given under mass pressure, fall far below the requirements, pushing them below the starvation line.

In spite of all the pay commissions, wage boards and adhoc increases, no section has made any advance so far as real wages are concerned.

The working class is further being attacked by the denial of its legitimate claims to an adequate bonus— which hitherto partially compensated the rapid erosion of his pay-packet. Taking advantage of the provision for minimum bonus in the Bonus Act, the capitalists are refusing to go beyond the minimum thus reducing the Act to a farce. This is a direct attack on the wages of the workers.

Everywhere all legitimate demands for a rise in wages are being resisted.

Over and above this, the employers are imposing increased workload on the workers, making labour unbearable. Lock-outs and retrenchment are increasing; and the workers have also to fight for getting pay for work done; wages are sometimes not paid for months.

Mass retrenchment is also facing employees in the public and private sector. Automation has been introduced by the foreign oil companies leading to unemployment among middle-class employees. The Government refuses to interfere, because it dares not offend the foreign companies.

The Government-owned LIC itself is introducing automation threatening the employees with loss of jobs. The Government has further borrowed a number of computers for the Airlines Corporation.

Registered unemployment in cities has already reached the more than two million mark. The figure of middle-class unemployed is nearly a million. And yet the Government wants to add to this total.

The struggles of the working class and employees against these policies are daily increasing. Strikes, protest action, bandhs—every day witnesses one or the other form of struggle.

The Congress Government uses the Defence of India Rules, Preventive Detention Act and other measures of repression to crush the struggles of the working class, Government employees and other employees. Mass arrests take place. Prohibition of meeting, total suppression of the right to strike, arrest of trade union leaders and police firings and lathi-charges—these are the methods used by the Congress to choke the legitimate movement of the workers. And the employers supplement them by victimisation of trade union leaders, putting up rival unions, encouraging the Congress-sponsored INTUC to break workers' unity and strikes.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands an end to this policy of oppression and exploitation of the working class. It demands: (1) nationalisation of the concerns of monopolists and of such industry as is immediately necessary in the interest of the people, nationalisation of foreign trade; (2) guarantee of living wage to workers and employees; (3) full neutralisation of rise in the cost of living; (4) right to adequate bonus and linking of DA with the cost

of living index for all workers and employees; (5) revision of wagescale of all sections of employees including teachers and Government employees; (6) full guarantee of trade union rights for all including Government employees and immunity from police interference; (7) recognition of trade unions; ( 8) stoppage of all retrenchment and restoration of jobs of those retrenched; and (9) scrapping of automation.

### **The Fourth Five-Year Plan**

Notwithstanding the phrase-mongering in its election manifesto, the Congress party is bent on pursuing these same anti popular policies. This is evident from the draft of the Fourth Plan. The new draft gives up priority for basic industries under American pressure, places them lowest in the order of importance and shows the Congress talk of self-reliance to be pure propaganda. It gives first priority to export industries, i.e., for payment of debt obligations to the USA, thus virtually mortgaging our economic activity to the imperialists. And yet it wants to borrow Rs. 4000 crores, mainly from the USA, to bind us still further to them.

The targets announced are dependent on 'aid' from the USA, and cannot be taken seriously. Besides, experience of the Third Plan shows that Congress planning cannot reach even moderate targets. Therefore, neither the target of 120 million tons of foodgrains, nor of 12 million tons of steel can be taken seriously.

Land will not be transferred to the tiller and the food target will not be reached. And, lastly, under pressure of the American creditors, the Congress planners have openly announced that there would be no rise in the living standards of the people in the next five years. In the name of price-control, they have advocated a policy of forcing the masses to bear the burden of price-increases, delinking of dearness allowance from the cost of living index, and of opposition to rise in wages. This is how the Congress party intends to function in the next five years.

### **Congress Party Disunites India**

No party talks more glibly than the Congress about national integration and unity of India; and yet none has done more to disrupt Indian unity than the Congress party.

Whose policies have driven the Nagaland people to demand independence? Whose policies have driven the Mizos to desperation so that the Congress government is attempting to “pacify” them through the intervention of the army? And who is responsible for a similar unrest among the hills people of Assam?

The bourgeois-landlord Government, accustomed to suppress and exploit the people, is totally incapable of solving the problem of the border people in a democratic way. It only knows the use of bayonets driving them to demand secession.

Has the Congress party succeeded in solving the Kashmir problem and winning over the people of Kashmir? The people of Kashmir still continue to be sullen, yet the Congress government shows no willingness to solve the problem in consultation with the popular parties and people of Kashmir. It believes only in detaining and imprisoning the leaders.

The same class policies are driving the adivasis inside India to turn away from the Congress conception of unity and integration. The Bastar massacre is a standing witness to Congress cruelties and hypocritical talk about integration.

The capitalist path of the Congress party is leading to disintegration in other direction as well. Under it, the beggarly advance that is taking place in industry is getting concentrated in three or four states, while the other states make no progress.

Because of this disparity on the one hand, and the irresistible urge generated in the people for local industrial development on the other, every new industry contemplated by the planners becomes an apple of discord.

This is exactly what comes handy to the rising bourgeois groups of various linguistic states to divide and disrupt the unity of the nationwide workers’ and peasants’ revolutionary movement and along with it the very fabric of the multinational Indian union. The river waters disputes, the boundary demarcation disputes which are exploited by Congress leaders of those states to fan provincial hatred are a portent of the things to come.

The revolutionary unity of the working people of India, and the further progress of the Indian Union, urgently demand the removal of the big bourgeoisie from leading positions in the State and the rejection of their disruptionist capitalist path.

The Congress party is preserving all the moribund forces which hinder national unity. Instead of eradicating casteism it fans and promotes it especially during elections. Its talk of secularism is pure propaganda. The Congress Government pursues a policy which instead of promoting secularism helps religious orthodoxy and bias in public life.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands that the Congress Government must abandon its attempt to use force against the people of the border states and seek a peaceful democratic settlement of the problem.

It demand ruthless punishment of officials involved in the Bastar massacre and full justice to adivasis including establishment of autonomous regions.

It demands that there should be no attempt to annul the special status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and that the problem be settled in consultation with the people and popular parties of the state.

### **Language Policy**

The Congress party did its best to disrupt national unity by its thoughtless attempt to substitute Hindi in place of English instead of conceding equal status to all the languages of the Union. This disruptive move raised a big struggle in Tamilnad which was suppressed with police violence.

The Congress party is not interested in promoting the languages of the people and carrying on the administration of the people in their languages. It is not interested in ensuring education upto the highest level in the mother-tongue of the peoples of various States. The result is English still continues to dominate, while the languages of the people are not made the languages of the administration.

Hindi chauvinism raises anti-Hindi chauvinism and the gainer in the bargain is English.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands the right of people to receive instructions in their mother-tongue in educational institutions; the use of the national language of the particular state as the language of administration in all its public and state institutions, as well as its use as the medium of education in the state upto the highest standard; provision for the use of the language of a minority or region where necessary in addition to the language of the state. Use of Hindi as an all-India language will not be obligatory but will be encouraged as a means of intercourse between the people of different States. Adhere to the principle of replacing English by the regional language. Transition from English to Hindi at the Centre should be simultaneous with the same from English to the regional languages in the states; the preparation for this transition which is being made by the Centre with regard to Hindi should also be made with all necessary central assistance in States in regard to regional languages. At the same time, for the transition period, the duration of which should be decided with the consent of the non-Hindi-speaking regions, English should be given the status of an associate administrative language. Equality of all national languages in Parliament and central administration will be recognised. Members of Parliament will have the right to speak in any national language and simultaneous translation will be provided in all national languages. All acts, Government orders and resolutions will be made available in all national languages. Urdu language and its script will be protected.

### **Undermining Of Democracy**

The Congress Governments at the Centre and in the States are unable to rule the country with the normal process of law. Despite the repeated demands of all sections of the people for the withdrawal of the emergency the Congress Government keeps it in operation to beat down popular struggles. The Defence of India Act continues to exist and new Ordinances are being promulgated by the State Governments to launch wanton attacks on the liberties of the people. The fundamental rights of the people and the Indian Constitution have been reduced to a farce.

The undermining of democracy has gone a long way in our country and the State is rapidly assuming the attributes of a police State.



Detentions without trial of thousands participating in struggles for livelihood; mass shootings and arrests; torture in prison; brutal treatment of men, women and children—these are the methods by which the Congress party is maintaining its rule.

Today no one escapes the indignities and brutalities of the police. The professor, the teacher, the student, the lawyer and doctor, the workers, peasants, agricultural workers and employees—all are tasting the flavour of police raj. Neither workers' quarters, college hostels, professors' residences, nor the seats of learning are free from the invasion of these defenders of law and order. The ruling party also hires goonda gangs to attack the democratic movement.

Congress law and order has assumed the aspect of class terror.

The Congress party has shown the worst contempt for parliamentary democratic principles. Elected Legislatures are summarily dissolved, as in Kerala in 1959 and 1966, and President's rule is foisted on the people whenever the interests of the bourgeois-landlord clique require it.

Elected members of Parliament and State Legislatures belonging to our Party and other democratic Opposition parties are detained arbitrarily under the DIR and PD Act, members fighting for people's demands are physically thrown out of the House of Parliament and Legislatures.

Elected Gram Panchayats, Municipalities and Block Samitis are suspended whenever the Opposition gets a majority in them.

The Congress Government denies real autonomy to the States and Union Territories. By transferring more and more powers to the Centre, the Government is negating the autonomy of constituent units and turning the federal structure of the Indian Union into a unitary one.

The so-called decentralisation of power has led to farcical bodies of Panchyats and Block Samitis where the real power is in the hands of officials and not the people. They in cooperation with the landlord, the money lender and the local Congress boss rule the roost.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) warns the people that Congress rule is a danger to our democracy and the precursor to a

police state. The Party demands withdrawal of emergency, of the DIR and PD Act and other repressive legislations, abolition of President's special powers, full liberties to the people, immunity of MPs and MLAs from arrests, a halt to police firings and lathi-charges, punishment of all guilty officials and direct subordination of the police and the army to people's will and interests.

### **Congress And Minorities**

Under Congress rule the Muslim minority which constitutes five crores of our population is in fact discriminated against, particularly in the matter of education and employment opportunities, despite the constitutional provision against any discrimination. They have benefited very little from the meagre progress with the country has registered and their backwardness continues. It is not good for the country that the members of this community should suffer from a sense of frustration and be under the constant threat of being dubbed as anti-national Pak agents. It is highly derogatory to them as citizens of India. During last year's Indo-Pakistan conflict hundreds of them were arrested on suspicion, their crime being that they were Muslims.

There is a tendency to decry every demand of theirs as communal and stifle their voice. During elections the Congress party often uses threats and intimidation to secure their votes.

Urdu, which is dominantly the language of millions of Muslims in Northern India, is deliberately suppressed by the Governments of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In communal riots their property and lives are not safe ; they become easy victims of Jana Sangh and RSS fanatics; they find Government measures to protect their lives totally inadequate, often leaving them defenceless before their attackers.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands that this discrimination against the Muslim minority must end; Urdu be given its proper place as one of the languages of the Union; it should be recognised as the second regional language in the states of U.P., Bihar and Delhi and other States where there are large Urdu-speaking minorities and it should be protected and facilities given for its development; schools for teaching Urdu be provided in Urdu-speaking areas; all religious and minority rights be guaranteed; and

discrimination in jobs be ended. The social barrier even now existing between Hindus and Muslims must be removed by conscious efforts to safeguard minority rights.

The spirit of Hindu chauvinism encouraged by the Congress leaders in various ways and the glorification of obscurantism create misgivings in the minds of the other religious minorities raising the fear of a Hindu State and helps the forces of disintegration.

### **Scheduled Castes**

The law prohibiting the practice of untouchability adorns the pages of the Indian Constitution. And yet the plight of the 50 million scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other downtrodden communities remains the same.

Funds allotted for their betterment and advance and Government jobs reserved for them do not touch even a fringe of the problem. And yet these funds also remain unspent. One of the main demands of these sections is for land—and it is exactly this the Congress Government denies in the interests of the landlords. By educating a few, and giving them jobs in the administration, the Congress Government only makes a show of improving their conditions. In reality the masses belonging to these sections continue deeper and deeper in the mire of poverty and remain socially ostracized, still subject to unheard of atrocities from others.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands a drastic solution—demands first of all distribution of land to these sections, accompanied by other aids; and rigorous implementation of anti-untouchability laws. It also demands more financial allocations for implementing necessary schemes for their benefit.

### **Foreign Policy**

What is the foreign policy that is being pursued by the Congress Government? Is it an independent one of serving India's national interests and strengthening India's independence?

Such an independent foreign policy can be pursued only in alliance with the camp of peace and Socialism and all the freedom-loving anti-imperialist countries of the world and in opposition to the

aggressive plans of the U.S. and other imperialists. Such a policy can be pursued only in firm opposition to a nuclear war, to all imperialist wars, to colonialism and neo-colonialism and in firm support to peace, national liberation struggles and the principles of peaceful coexistence.

India's espousal of the Bandung principles had been hailed by the Socialist and anti-imperialist forces and its non-alignment policy in the past had earned the praise of freedom-loving forces.

But today India's prestige has fallen low among the anti-imperialist forces and nations; she has, in fact, become, in their eyes, an object of suspicion.

This has happened because the Congress Government, while mouthing phrases about non-alignment, has been slowly taking India away from the anti-imperialist peace-loving camp and towards the U.S. imperialist camp. This treacherous shift is a betrayal of the interests of the nation and is only in the narrow selfish interests of the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes.

The growth of monopolies and Big Business and their growing collaboration with foreign monopolies under government aegis and the abject dependence on the USA for food imports and plan aid have led to this treacherous shift.

The Government's acceptance of U.S. military aid in the name of national defence has only made the country more dependent on the USA, rendered difficult a solution of the dispute with China. The annual defence expenditure of more than Rs. 1,000 crores has, apart from the crushing burdens imposed on the people, led to further dependence on the USA and consequent surrenders to its dictates in quick succession at the cost of our sovereignty. Among these concessions which were reducing non-alignment to a farce were the Voice of America Deal episode, acquiescence in the operations of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and the Anglo-American plan to establish a military base in the Indian Ocean.

What has been even more shameful has been the Government's stand in regard to Vietnam. Instead of a clear-cut stand of all support to Vietnam's freedom struggle and stopping the U.S. imperialist

aggression in Asia which is in India's own vital interests, the Government acquiesces in the U.S. aggression, helps the South Vietnam puppets by sending trucks and steel from the Soviet-built Bhilai plant, praises the peaceful intentions of President Johnson and even peddles the bogus peace proposals of the U.S. imperialists round the world. The Government thus betrays both Vietnam and India in its subservience to the USA.

In place of opposition to U.S. imperialism and neocolonialism, opposition to socialist China has become the main feature of India's foreign policy. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi went to the limit when in the joint communique signed with U.S. President Lyndon Johnson, she agreed to become a partner in the U.S. policy of containing China. Instead of breaking the deadlock over the Colombo proposals and settling the India-China dispute peacefully, the Congress leaders have been dragging India towards the camp of U.S. imperialism, in the name of national defence.

The U.S. imperialists have not been slow in taking advantage of this situation. U.S. military officials swarm all over the country and have unhindered access to the most vital strategic places, they have demanded and won the right to make on-the-spot inspections of our arms during a border conflict. It is India that is being contained by the U.S. imperialist.

Not only in relation to China and Vietnam, the Government of India now welcomes almost every reactionary development anywhere in the world. Foreign Minister Swaran Singh welcomed with unequalled lack of shame the developments in Indonesia following the coup organised by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the massacre of lakhs of Communists and democrats, a coup that threatens Indonesia's existence as an independent nation.

Two decades after independence, the Congress regime continues to keep India in the imperialist British Commonwealth, though repeatedly intimidated and insulted by the former oppressors. What is even more shameful is that India lends support to British imperialist plans like the creation of Malaysia which was meant to checkmate freedom-loving Indonesia, and inside the Commonwealth, India often

takes a treacherous or equivocal position on the question of freedom, specially of African countries. On the question of Rhodesia, when some African countries boycotted the recent Commonwealth Conference and some others took a forthright position to unmask the utterly reactionary and hypocritical policies of the British Labour Government, India's Foreign Minister Swaran Singh did not join his voice with these countries but joined those who were prepared to compromise on the freedom of the Rhodesian people and acted as British go-between to the wavering elements. Free India's Foreign Minister boasted that he had saved the imperialist Commonwealth. Can subservience go any further ?

Under the leadership of the Congress party, India's foreign policy is rapidly losing its independence and becoming sub-servient to the USA. Economic dependence is leading to political dependence.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) warns that this might prove the beginning of the loss of our political independence and calls upon the people to be vigilant and fight this treacherous policy. It demands a foreign policy firmly opposed to all imperialist wars and directed towards the elimination of the danger of nuclear wars; a policy based on opposition to U.S. imperialism and colonialism and support to the freedom-struggles of all peoples; a policy of firm friendship with the Socialist camp and of solidarity with Afro-Asian countries.

It demands that India should quit the Commonwealth.

In the interests of our own freedom and well-being, the Party demands that the Government should take initiative to have direct talks for a peaceful settlement with China. Friendly relations between the two countries are in the interests of the freedom of Asia, only imperialists gain by a conflict.

The Party demands a peaceful settlement of all disputes with Pakistan so that the forces of reaction and imperialism can no longer exploit the disputes to the detriment of the freedom of both countries. The Tashkent Declaration was a step in the interests of both the peoples, a military conflict between the two only plays into the hands of U.S. imperialism. While demanding a peaceful settlement, the

Party also warns the people that once again interested parties are busy creating a tense atmosphere on our borders and that as the elections approach these efforts will be intensified with a view to reaping electoral advantages.

## **Education**

The Congress party and its administration have miserably failed in advancing the cause of education.

In two decades of its rule the Congress Government has made no attempt to effect a basic change in the pattern of education which the foreign rulers had introduced. It has failed to reorientate our education to fulfil the needs of our newly freed people and serve the cause of national uplift and democracy. Under the British, the primary object of education was to turn out clerks and slaves for the foreign overlords. Under the Congress regime its aim is to train the younger generation in the service of the capitalist masters of India.

In 1966, after two decades of Congress rule, only 44 per cent of the age group attended Class V and only 24 per cent attended Class VIII. Our planners want another two decades before elementary education with a seven years' course is made universal.

Secondary education is today available only for 18 per cent of the age group while in all Western countries universal secondary education upto the age of 16 is a common feature.

Progress in the education of girls is still slower. They form only 25 per cent of the total enrolment in middle and 20 per cent in the secondary schools.

The percentage of drop-outs in the primary stage is as high as 60 per cent. The constitutional directive of free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 is as distant a goal as ever.

Education doled out to the poorer classes in villages and municipal schools is of a poor quality, a large percentage of the boys from those sections are often compelled to purchase seats for their children in kindergarten school, grammar and public schools. This of course is beyond the reach of the poorer sections. For seats in medical and

engineering colleges students have sometimes to pay ten to fifteen thousand rupees by way of donation—only the better off being able to afford it.

On the other hand, the teachers, particularly of the elementary and second grade schools, are paid badly and have to resort to countrywide struggles for minimum pay and better conditions.

Parity of conditions and salaries between teachers of Government schools and private schools is not secured. There is no linking of dearness allowance with the cost of living. The salary-scales are farcical and other minimum conditions like housing are not guaranteed.

And, above all, the minimum facilities for the intellectual development of the teachers are not provided for—facilities which must be given to increase the efficiency of the teaching profession as well as its dignity and capacity to influence the generation under its training.

The conditions of University teachers also require a drastic change.

The Government is callously slow in giving a technological and science orientation to the higher education system. Nepotism and favouritism haunt even the research and science institutions. Quite a good percentage of the people who were enlisted under the widely advertised “Scientists’ Pool” after long efforts and persuasion are still unabsorbed in research and other institutions and their names are being deleted from the rolls. In their place third-rate experts from the U.S. and other Western countries are imported and paid high salaries. The drain of scientific talents continues as before.

Less than two per cent of the relevant age-group is able to get university education; and less than 0.44 per cent enrol themselves in science courses.

University higher education is thus a luxury of the few, denied to the overwhelming majority of the young men coming from poorer families.

Yet the Government and its spokesmen always argue as if there is too much of university education and are hatching schemes to restrict it.



Even with the present restricted availability of university education, there are tens of thousands of graduates who do not get employment under the Congress regime. The total number of educated unemployed graduates and under-graduates is nearly a million.

Under the Congress regime the sanctity of the educational institutions is repeatedly violated by the police who invade universities and colleges under the least excuse. Rights and liberties of students are suppressed and their protests drowned in blood. In some places police commissioners are appointed as advisers in the matter of inter-university life outraging the freedom of educational institutions.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands (1) upgrading of primary schools into schools with seven Years' course; (2) compulsory free elementary education with a seven years' course; (3) free secondary education; (4) overcoming the lag between boys' and girls' education; (5) promotion of mother-tongue as the medium of instruction at all stages of education; (6) greater promotion of technical education; (7) raising the quality of education; (8) meeting all the legitimate demands of the teaching profession and removing the present disgraceful pittance called salaries—so that the quality of teaching as well as the dignity of the profession is restored.

Women, this vast section of our people, continue to be plagued by lack of education, of opportunities for free development and are victims of backward obscurantist customs and prejudices.

The Congress Government has hardly done anything to change this situation. Even the meagre advance in education is not equally shared between boys and girls—the educational progress of the latter lagging far behind that of the former. No nation can progress if it allows its women to be enchained to backwardness, ignorance and superstition and does not give them equal treatment as citizens of the country.

Women coming from the working masses are the special victims of the situation—the percentage of literacy among them being the lowest.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) demands special facilities for promoting education among women, especially women from the

toiling masses—without education all talk of equality is pure moonshine.

The Party also demands removal of social disabilities from which women, not only of the toiling masses, suffer. The old unequal laws, sanctified by religious superstition, continue to hamper the cause of women's freedom from feudal customs. The Party demands equal rights for women in such matters as enforcement of marriage laws and divorce, admission to professions and services and equal pay for equal work. It opposes every kinds of discrimination against women.

### **Artisans And Others**

The Congress Governments have inflicted untold miseries on the small artisans, handloom weavers, shop assistants and others who are often scattered over wide areas and are consequently unable to make their strength felt through organisation.

To day lakhs of handloom weavers are placed in a similar position, their labour depreciated, their looms idle, their stocks lying unsold.

Shop assistants and the other artisans, especially the self-employed ones, are left defenceless against rockting prices and are living on the starvation line.

The party demands that this victimisation be stopped and that they be given adequate wages and compensation against the rising prices.

### **Refugees**

The Congress Government has shown brutal callousness towards lakhs of refugees who are undergoing a life of extreme misery and suffering. The question of their livelihood has not been solved; they all are undergoing extreme privations, and many are faced with outright starvation. Instead of taking urgent steps to meet the situation, the Congress Government has decided to close down the rehabilitation department under the false plea that only some residuary problems remain to be solved.

This is nothing but a callous attempt to evade its responsibility towards the refugees.

The Party has consistently fought against this inhuman policy in the past and will continue to do so in future so that full justice is secured to the refugees.

The Party demands that the Government should provide shelter and gainful occupation to all categories of refugees and provide adequate funds for the purpose.

## **Culture**

With the overwhelming mass of workers and peasants deprived of education, culture under Congress rule remains a prisoner of the bourgeois-landlord classes. Institutions like the Sahitya Akadami, Lalit Kala Akadami and Sangeet Natak Akadami are just show-pieces of the Central Government. The Congress leaders, under the garb of protecting and guarding the so-called national traditions and social values, seek to resurrect what is hidebound and reactionary in them discarding everything living and dynamic in the modern world. Only the decadent and dying Western culture which does not even represent the spirit of bourgeois renaissance is accepted as something new. Progressive writers, artists, and men of real culture are put on the black list and sycophants and favourites are promoted

Cinema is a free field for money-bags to exploit and profit. The progressive-minded producers and artists are crushed by the cut-throat competition of big money on the one hand and discouraging imposts of different kinds on the film industry on the other, and eventually have either to leave the field or sell their talents to earn their livelihood. The Censor Boards which are supposed to act as the custodians of social morals and national cultural values, act more as political sensors, and resort to all kinds of ridiculous restrictions on Indian films, while they show utter helplessness in the case of imported films with their orginies of sex, of blood and violence. All India Radio neither educates nor entertains but plays the role of a cheap trumpet for Government propaganda. Nepotism, favouritism and bias against all forward-looking ideas is the norm and rule of its management.

## **Armed Forces And The People**

The Congress party talks a lot about national defence but the policies it has been pursuing have landed the country into abject dependence on Western powers for defence material which endangering our independence.

The growing economic dependence on the USA, the miserable progress in industrial development, the shift in foreign policy—all have led to a situation in which we are more dependent than ever for military hardware and strategic weapons on the imperialists. This dependence prevents us from raising our voice of protest against such manoeuvres of American imperialism as the movement of the Seventh Fleet in the Indian Ocean though they directly menace our defence.

Besides, in the name of securing American help in the India-China conflict, large number of American officers and military missions operate in the country and they know every detail about our defence. There can be no effective defence unless this policy is defeated and the edge of our defence is turned against imperialism.

The Congress party's administration follows British methods of building a mercenary type of army totally divorced from the people and based on the incentive of jobs and careers. Students for officers' schools and academies are recruited mainly from the upper classes, while those coming from the common people have to undergo a rigorous test of police scrutiny. Anyone suspected of the slightest political awakening is rejected on the basis of police reports.

The jawan of the army, coming mostly from the peasantry, is ill-paid and shares the discontent of the ill-paid and downtrodden peasantry. On recruitment he finds a glaring contrast between his scanty pay and the high salaries of the topmost officials.

While he is allowed the right to vote, he is not to be approached by any political party ; nor is he to read any political literature. Servicemen are denied the right to contact even their parliamentary representatives for redress of their grievances.

This, however, does not apply to the Generals and top officials who, in the main, are largely drawn from the bourgeois-landlord

classes and get their education in exclusive institutions. They carry on their politics in their own way behind the curtains.

The powers-that-be are afraid of raising the democratic and patriotic consciousness of the jawan and prefer him to be an obedient tool. The steel wall built between the armed forces and the mass of the people by the former British rulers is perpetuated. Under the specious plea of maintaining law and order, the armed forces are often pitted against the people fighting for their legitimate demands. Narrow class fear haunts the Congress leaders and the higher national and patriotic interests are subordinated to it.

### **Jana Sangh And Swatantra**

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) warns the people against the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party—which, though they thunder against Congress misrule, essentially represent the same class interests as the Congress.

They demand a more naked and avowed pro-American orientation in foreign policy ; a more open and avowed orientation towards capitalists and landlords in the internal sphere and a more repressive policy towards the people. Internationally they support American imperialism more blatantly—as on the question of Vietnam.

Their policies only facilitate further American penetration and further sell out of people's interests to private exploiters. By their criticism they only seek to channelise popular discontent towards themselves, so that the people are cheated once more by the representatives of the same exploiting classes.

Above all, they are deeply anti-Communist and declare their hostility to the Communist Party and the working class movement. They press the Government to attack the Party and ban it. Their anti-Communism reveals their direct connections with the ruling circles of monopolists, big bourgeoisie and landlords. They are thus in open opposition to the progressive forces in the country.

That is why a section of Congress leaders, including some Cabinet members, are in league with them. The RSS, the Hindu semi-fascist communal organisation, is especially favoured by some of them.

## **Dange Revisionists**

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is the party of the working class of India, uniting within itself the best elements from the workers, peasants and the middle classes who uphold the banner of Marxism-Leninism and devote themselves to an uncompromising struggle against the present bourgeois-landlord Government. It carries forward the revolutionary traditions of the Communist movement in the country and unflinchingly serves the cause of the people.

The Dange Group of revisionists split away from the Party to pursue their opportunist line of class-collaboration. If today it carries the name of the old Communist Party and its symbol, it is only because the Election Commission is pleased to give it to them.

Neither ideologically nor organisationally have they the right to call themselves by the old name.

Taking advantage of the bourgeois chauvinism in connection with the India-China conflict, they joined hands with the bourgeois-landlord Government to open the country to American penetration—the dire effects of which we are seeing today.

Taking advantage of their majority in the Central Executive Committee of the Party, they supported the notorious Defence of India Act under which their own partymen were arrested and which was later on used to crush the popular movement; utilising their majority in the AITUC leadership they entered into the treacherous industrial truce agreement which was used by the employers to attack the workers. In the 1963 workers' march to Parliament they refused to put forward the demand for release of detenus. This has been the bitter experience of our Party in connection with the revisionists.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) seeks to fully mobilise the people against the Congress in the coming elections. Without such a mobilisation, without taking every possible step to isolate the Congress and avoid splitting of anti-Congress votes, it will not be possible to give a fitting rebuff to the Congress and defeat it in as many places as possible.

The revisionists are professing their opposition to Congress rule and are stating that they want to defeat the Congress at the polls.

They propagates that they seek an electoral front with us against the Congress and want to oust it from power. Therefore, in spite of our bitter experience with the revisionists and serious differences with them, our Party has expressed its willingness to seek electoral adjustments with them so that the Congress may not benefit by the splitting of opposition votes. Our Party is confident that the people will test the sincerity of each party in the elections and keep strict vigilance on the future activities of all parties which today pledge to isolate the Congress party.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is the only party that stands firmly and consistently for Socialism. Socialisation of means of production under a proletarian State alone will abolish exploitation of man by man and finally solve the problems of poverty and impoverishment.

No fundamental problem of the Indian people can be solved under the present bourgeois-landlord State led by the big bourgeoisie. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) firmly believes that the road to Socialism can be opened only through the establishment of a State of People's Democracy, led by the working class, replacing the present bourgeois-landlord State, led by the big bourgeoisie. This can be achieved only by developing determined mass struggles on the basis of growing unity and consciousness of the people. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) works determinedly for organising people's struggles for livelihood, democracy and power.

In the coming elections the Communist Party of India (Marxist) aims at removing the Congress monopoly of power in as many States as possible, improving and increasing the strength of the democratic opposition and above all of the CPI (Marxist) in all the States and at the Centre.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) calls upon the people to reject Congress policies and vote for the party's policies.

The Party is the only party which has been faithful and true to the people under the most difficult circumstances. Denounced as traitors by the Congress and Dange revisionists, the CPI (Marxist) continued to fight for the cause of the people, fight for the genuine

national interests of the Indian people and had the courage to demand peaceful settlement with China and warn the country against American penetration in the name of defence.

Once again on the question of Indo-Pakistan conflict it is our Party that warned the people against the game of American imperialism while the revisionists openly walked into the trap trailing behind the big bourgeoisie. While advocating proper measures against the infiltrators, our Party alone demanded an end to the conflict and peaceful settlement of the dispute.

Incensed by the steadfast loyalty of the members of the CPI (Marxist) to the masses and genuine national interests, the Congress Government launched its second round of repression against the Party in 1964, arresting more than a thousand leaders and detaining them for 16 months. Yet the Party continued to fight for the cause of the people and led the huge movements of the Bengal and Kerala bandhs and won a historic victory in the Kerala election in 1965 despite the treacherous role of the Dange revisionists.

Since the release of Party leaders this year, the Party has been in the forefront of mass struggles—once more facing repression and jails. Once again the Government has started a slander campaign—only showing it is nervous of the growing influence of our Party.

The Party with its militant and revolutionary tradition calls upon the people to rout the Congress and endorse the Party's electoral programme which alone shows a way out of the present critical situation.

Against the injustice and brutalities of the Congress regime, the Communist Party seeks to unite all opposition parties who express a desire to stand by the masses and fight Congress policies.

Knowing that division of the democratic opposition plays in the hands of the Congress and deprives the people of their legitimate victory, the party is doing its best to get all other Left parties together and face the Congress with a broad electoral front.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) calls upon all people to support the candidates of the Party and its allies and give a smashing defeat to the Congress in all States.



The Communist Party of India (Marxist) stands for the following :

1. The sovereignty of the people. The supreme power in the State must be entirely in the people's representatives. Special powers of the President be annulled. Proportional representation to end Congress rule on the basis of minority vote and express the genuine will of the people.

Emergency to end forthwith. D.I.R., P.D. Act and all repressive legislations must be withdrawn. Complete restoration of the fundamental rights of the people; no detention without trial; unhampered freedom of conscience, religious belief, worship, speech, press, assembly, strike and combination, freedom of movement and occupation.

2. Immediate dismissal of all anti-people police officials guilty of atrocities against the people; police department to be reorganised and made responsible to popular will. Legal provision for judicial inquiry in all cases of police firing and complaints about atrocities.

3. Equal rights of all citizens irrespective of religion, caste, sex, etc.; equal pay for equal work. Rights of Muslim minorities—cultural, religious, linguistic, services—to be specially protected in view of constant attacks on them. Abolition of all social oppression of one caste by another and of all social disabilities. Untouchability to be effectively punished. Special measures to promote the development of adivasis and backward communities.

4. Effective guarantee of the secular character of the State.

5. Tribal areas to have regional autonomy with regional Government in the State concerned; or be constituted as full autonomous States where necessary; widest autonomy for the various State comprising the Indian Federation; post of State Governors to be abolished; for local administration directly elected local bodies with real powers and responsibility.

6. Equality of all languages as explained. Urdu to be given the status of a second regional language in the States of U.P., Bihar, Delhi and in States with sizeble Urdu-speaking populations.

7. Free and compulsory education up to the secondary stage; promotion of girls' education; teachers' salaries and conditions to be improved.

8. Cultural media to be operated in the interest of promotion of people's culture and not as media of bourgeois-landlord culture.

9. Protecting the unity of India by promoting co-operation between constituent units, financial assistance to backward regions, study of different languages and above all by the promotion of common class struggle of the toilers against the bourgeois-landlord regime.

10. Taking over of landlords' lands and their distribution among agricultural labourers and poor peasants gratis; cancellation of debts owed by peasants, agricultural workers, small artisans to money-lenders and landlords; scaling down of other debts; ensure cheap credit for peasants and artisans to improve methods of farming by the use of improved facilities. Ensure adequate wages, house-sites, and living conditions—educational and health facilities—for agricultural labourers. Encourage cooperatives of small peasants and artisans for agricultural services.

11. Government to accept full responsibility for equitable distribution of food to the people of urban and rural areas; entire surplus of landlords and rich peasants to be compulsorily procured; State trading in foodgrains, small producers to be given attractive prices to part with their produce to government agencies.

12. Effective price-control through nationalisation of banks, state trading in foodgrains, etc. Prices of all necessities of life to be drastically reduced. Protecting the people against effect of devaluation.

13. Drastic reduction in taxation. Taxation on all necessities of life to be abolished. Reduction in defence expenditure. Abolition of land tax, irrigation cess and other cesses and surcharges on uneconomic holdings.

Higher taxation on the richer sections in urban and rural areas, ceiling on urban income.

14. Moratorium on all foreign payments. Stoppage of all further American aid. Nationalisation of foreign trade, and all foreign capital in plantations, mining, oil, refineries, industry, shipping and trade.

15. Nationalisation of banks, monopoly concerns and other big industry wherever immediately necessary. A people's economic plan of development and self-reliance. Development of public sector with the utmost rapidity to overcome economic dependence. Control of private sector and profits in private sector. Balanced economic development of different regions.

16. Radical improvement of the living standards and working conditions of workers, employees, teachers and Government employees by fixing a living wage, adequate pay-scales, full compensation against rise in cost of living by linking dearness allowance to cost of living index; social insurance at the expense of the State and capitalists for every kind of disability and unemployment; provision of decent housing; recognition of trade unions and their right of collective bargaining as well as right to strike for all workers including Government employees; withdrawal of all anti-working-class legislation; stoppage of all retrenchment and scrapping of automation schemes. Provision of DA for pensioners.

17. An independent foreign policy based on opposition to imperialism, especially American imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism and support to all freedom struggles; a policy based on opposition to nuclear war and imperialist wars and supporting peace and peaceful coexistence; a policy of firm friendship with all peace-loving countries, of firm solidarity with Afro-Asian peoples. Break with British Commonwealth.

Peaceful settlement of dispute with Socialist China and friendship between free India and Socialist China in the interest of Asian freedom. India-China understanding to be made the basis of a broad front against U.S. imperialism.

Peaceful settlement of dispute with Pakistan in the interests of strengthening the freedom and independence of both countries.

Firm and unqualified support to the people of Vietnam in their glorious struggle and forthright condemnation of American aggression. Firm steps to defeat American attempts to spread the war in Asia.

18. Replacement of the present bourgeois-landlord State led by the big bourgeoisie by a People's Democratic State led by the working class.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) looks upon the elections as a part of the great struggle that our people are waging against the Congress rule. These historic struggles stretching from Bengal to Kerala and Andhra to Punjab are transforming the situation and isolating the power-hungry Congress. The fate of the country, our freedom and independence, is being shaped in these mighty battles heroically fought by our people in the teeth of firings, lathi-charges and police terror. Only the people's might can rebuff American imperialism. Only the people's struggles will defeat the anti-popular policies of the Congress and clear the road to democracy and prosperity. The Party pays its homage to the innumerable martyrs who fell in the battle against Congress tyranny. It assures everybody that the Party will not rest till the people are victorious.

## Election Objectives of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)\*

*M. Basavapunniah answered questions submitted by 'The Statesman', published from Calcutta and New Delhi, on 1967 Elections.*

[At the end of October last *The Statesman* submitted some questions to our Party regarding the elections. On behalf of the Party, M. Basavapunniah had answered the questions. *The Statesman* has used these answers in its election features. Our readers have been asking us for the text of the answers and we are publishing it here. The rough figures which Basavapunniah gave at the end regarding the number of seats our Party will be fighting have been brought up-to-date.—*Editor of people's Democracy.*]

*1. What, according to you, are the most important points in your Election Manifesto?*

*How do you think India should initiate talks with the Chinese on the border issue, I mean, the method?*

The Election Manifesto of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in short, is the concrete application of the party's programme adopted at its Seventh Congress, to the actual conditions obtaining in the country at the present juncture of the ensuing general elections in the country. It seeks to highlight the following important issues. First, it wants to draw the serious attention of our people to the growing threat of U.S. Imperialism to our national independence and sovereignty.

Secondly, it sharply points out that the danger of losing national independence and succumbing before the onslaught of

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, January 8, 1967. The Note appearing at the outset was given by the Editor of 'People's Democracy' when it was published there on 8.1.1967.

neo-colonialism arises from the very path of the so-called independent capitalist path of development embarked upon by the Congress rulers—the dangerous path of development in alliance with big landlordism and collaboration with foreign monopoly capital. Thirdly, it clearly opines that the continued unsettled disputes with the neighbouring countries of people's Republic of China and Pakistan and the consequent military confrontation with both would surely lead to increasing military burdens, to further deepening of the economic crisis and to still greater dependence on U.S. Imperialism for economic and military aid and hence the urgency of settling these disputes. Fourthly, the manifesto invites the attention of our people to the growing menace to the life and liberty of the people and to the democratic institutions and democracy in the country at the hands of the bourgeois-landlord rulers of the Congress. Finally, it seeks to mobilize in a big way different democratic parties, groups and individuals in order to conduct this election struggle as the biggest people's political battle to reverse the present reactionary policies and to the adoption of the genuine national and people's policies.

Coming to the proposal for Indian initiative for opening direct talks with China, there can be ever so many methods to do it. As President Radhakrishnan aptly puts it: "China and India will, sooner or later, learn to live in peace and co-operation. A just settlement of the questions dividing us is not impossible."

"Nothing should be avoided because it is thought impossible. The only relevant question is, 'does it require to be done?' Then we must try to do it."

In fact, there are several preliminary steps to be taken if the Government is seriously intent upon initiating such talks. The stoppage of the present mutual exchange of acrimonious notes of protest and denunciation, the appointment of first-rate ambassadors by both, the abandonment of support to the so-called 'containment of China' policy and a host of similar things do certainly go a long way in creating the proper climate to begin

direct talks. It is not the dearth of methods that is standing in the way of opening a direct dialogue with China but a particular outlook and policy of the Government that is blocking such a course. The increasing economic dependence on U.S. is no small factor in hindering that course, and it really requires a decisive rejection of the present policies of the Government and bold adoption of alternative policies to take to the path of direct talks and negotiations to peacefully settle the India-China border dispute, a settlement consistent with the honour, dignity and interests of both the countries.

*2. What are the broad objective you are striving to achieve through the elections? Will you agree if it is suggested that broadly the Left CPI's strategy is to (a) defeat the Congress, (b) defeat the rival party, or (c) to establish itself as the major Communist force in India? What are the positive aspects in this approach?*

The broad objectives our Party is striving to achieve in these elections are made abundantly clear in the resolution of our June Central Committee meeting and in a number of articles and speeches of our leader printed in our weekly, *People's Democracy*, We aim at defeating the Congress party in as many States and seats as possible and strengthen the united democratic opposition in all State legislatures and Parliament ; we do also strive to set up alternative non-Congress democratic Governments where such possibilities exist.

It is mischievous in the extreme to suggest that our Party has the object of defeating the rival party as one of its principal aims. Our ideological-political struggles with the revisionist party, however sharp, fundamental and bitter, is at this state, subordinated to the main struggle, namely the struggle to isolate and defeat the bourgeois-landlord Congress party in these elections. This line of ours was amply demonstrated during 1965 mid-term elections in Kerala, and through our present efforts in Kerala and all others States. The rightist party which lost its mass base heavily because of its opportunists and class collaborationist policies and practice, and which refuses to

reckon with the realities, is putting forth fantastic claims for seats in several States and indulging in malicious propaganda that our Party's principal aim is to defeat the revisionist party, instead of Congress. There is every reason to believe that the people are not swallowing this propaganda and are willing to pronounce their judgment in this elections.

No political party, and all the more so the Communist party, will not be able to establish itself as the major force by a miracle in the elections. Elections only record its mass strength which is accumulated over years of its sustained work and service among the people. Our Party already has been undoubtedly the major force in the once united Communist movement in India, it is precisely because of this our Party has earned the irreconcilable enmity and hatred of the Congress Government and all other reactionaries in the country while coming to be looked upon by the fighting people and the democratic parties with respect and regard. The election results, I believe, would only go to vindicate this position and further enhance it.

The strategy and tactics that our Party has decided to pursue in these elections are completely consistent with the broad objectives laid down in our Party programme and hence it is a correct and positive approach. To try to single out some positive aspects of this approach can come only from a totally negative understanding of our general political line and the concrete election strategy. There can be nothing negative in it from the viewpoint of either the popular democratic movement in the country or our Party.

*3. Do you think your party can emerge as the largest Opposition group in (a) Parliament, (b) any of the States? What are your estimates for Kerala and West Bengal?*

I think it requires no more additional proof to prove the fact our Party, however small when compared to the size of our country and the needs of the democratic movement, is by now the single biggest and effective democratic opposition party in the country amongst the people. Then coming to the reflection



of this actual popular strength of our Party in several State legislatures and Parliament a number of factors comes into consideration. The present electoral system which denies the principle of proportional representation, the necessity of poll adjustments and alliances between democratic opposition parties, the correct or otherwise attitude taken by these parties in this regard and the conduct of the elections in a free and fair manner by the ruling party etc. would go to determine the actual strength of seats that can be won. It is too premature to correctly and concretely forecast. But one thing can be safely asserted, and that is the strength of democratic opposition inside Parliament as well as in most of the States is sure to be very much increased, reducing the overwhelming brute majority the ruling Congress party had been enjoying as a result of the last three general elections. Our Party, as one of the principal components of the democratic opposition, also certainly improves over its present position in the Lok Sabha, and most of the States in the Indian Union. In States like Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra and Tripura where our Party has got big mass base, there is very possibility for our Party to emerge as the single biggest democratic opposition, provided free and fair elections are assured, and the prospects of establishing alternative non-Congress democratic Governments in Kerala, Bengal and Tripura, with our participation in them as the major force, are there for everybody to see, though several difficulties, still face us to overcome. In States like Madras and the Punjab the unseating of the Congress Government and setting up non-Congress Government, the main composition of them being DMK and Akali Party respectively, cannot be ruled out.

In the States where our Party and the other democratic parties are weak, particularly in the States like U.P., M.P., Rajasthan, Orissa and the like and where extreme right parties such as Swatantra and Jana Sangh are trying to utilize the mounting mass discontent of the people, there arise opportunities also for these parties to increase their strength in the respective legislatures as to challenge and pressurize the Congress Government from an avowedly right extreme position.

But, on the whole, the prospects of making a big dent on the continued Congress monopoly of power, and the emergence of more effective and far stronger democratic opposition inside as well as outside the legislatures, are brighter than ever in the post-independence era. These elections and the results flowing from them are bound to exercise profound influence on the mass following and the democratic-minded individual Congressmen, and thus open up greater and greater opportunities for wider and united mass struggles in the days ahead. The phenomena of the deepening economic crisis developing into a political crisis, and the ensuing electoral battle of the people getting dovetailed into a qualitatively higher political struggle for alternative policies and a really democratic alternative government cannot be lost sight of by any politician worth the grain. The elections and the struggle between different class forces ranged against each other in it is, in fact, only a beginning of this new period rather than deciding anything in one way or the other of our country's future for years ahead. In this respect the fourth general elections mark a distinct character than the three such previous ones.

*4. What are the different alignments of Opposition parties you visualize in the different States? How far these can be achieved? If there is failure, who will be responsible?*

As far as the visualization of the alignment of opposition parties in the different States, it is clearly stated by our Party that, barring the extreme right parties like Swatantra and Jana Sangh, which are nothing but fragments of the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes, we are prepared to unite, adjust and form electoral alliances against the Congress party. In Kerala the poll alliances have proceeded, more or less, on the lines visualized by us. But in Bengal the right Communists are attempting to form a separate poll front together with the Bangla Congress and Forward Bloc. And yet our struggle to thwart such attempts and forge a single anti-Congress front is on. It is premature to say how things actually shape in the coming two months. If the responsibility for the disruption of such a front is to be placed

on any party or group, the people will be the best judges to do it because these questions are freely and frankly debated before the public, and the standpoint of different parties is made abundantly clear.

*5. How many seats are you going to contest State-wise (a) for the Lok Sabha, and (b) for State Assemblies?*

Our Party has tentatively decided to contest 522 Assembly and 70 Lok Sabha seats in different States. Its break-up roughly is as following:

The point to be noted here is that our Party is not contesting in all the constituencies where it has got its mass base but only concentrating on the seats with a fairly reasonable chance of success, and where its position is stronger compared to other democratic opposition parties. Secondly, as is by now evident to many, our Party not only claimed a single seat where any other party or group in electoral front is more stronger than us, but in many cases agreed to allot them to other parties so that a united and effective electoral struggle is organized against the Congress party.

**Total Seats Party Is Contesting All Over India: 1967 Election—**

| States           | Assembly | Parliament |
|------------------|----------|------------|
| Andhra           | 70       | 10         |
| Bengal           | 119      | 15         |
| Tamilnad         | 30       | 10         |
| Kerala           | 61       | 9          |
| Punjab           | 25       | 3          |
| Haryana          | 10       |            |
| Himachal Pradesh | 5        |            |
| Uttar Pradesh    | 60       | 6          |
| Bihar            | 25       | 5          |

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|                          |    |   |
|--------------------------|----|---|
| Rajasthan                | 25 | 3 |
| Karnataka                | 20 | 2 |
| Orissa                   | 12 | 2 |
| Assam                    | 16 | 2 |
| Gujarat (on MGJP ticket) | 12 |   |
| Maharashtra              | 15 | 2 |
| Madhya Pradesh           | 10 |   |
| Tripura                  | 13 | 2 |
| Jammu & Kashmir— DNC     | 14 | 1 |

## **Day of Rejoicing Hail Kerala, West Bengal\***

**“PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY” Greeted the People of India  
For Defeating Congress in Eight States in 1967 General  
Elections.**

People’s Democracy extends its warmest greetings to the people of India for the crushing blow they have inflicted on the ruling Congress party for all its misdeeds in the last two decades, for all its crimes against the Indian people and India’s national interests.

Defeating the Congress and reducing it to a minority in eight States—Kerala, Madras, West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Punjab—and slashing its majority in the Lok Sabha, the Indian electorate has created a situation unprecedented in the post-Independence history of the country.

Our greetings are specially to the people of Kerala and West-Bengal where they have enabled the Communist Party (Marxist) and the Left and democratic forces to form alternate Governments in place of the rejected Congress regime.

Our greetings are also to the people of Tamilnad who have not only reduced the Congress to a small minority but given more than enough seats to the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam to form its own alternate Government in that State.

Our Party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has special reason to rejoice at what has happened.

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\*Published in “PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY”, Calcutta, March 5, 1967

Our Party has been the first and only Party which has been again and again warning about the grave threat to India's independence and sovereignty from the U.S. imperialists. The last few months which have seen shameless surrenders one after another by the Indian ruling classes to the Washington rulers have shown that the India's Congress rulers, far from defending our sovereignty, have been selling it in their narrow class interests. While the U.S. rulers are shedding their tears for the defeat of their proteges like Sadoba Patil and Famine Minister C. Subramaniam, the defeat of the Congress strengthens the people's fight against the Congress sell-out of our freedom and national honour.

Our Party has been the first and only Party which has consistently held that the Congress rulers are perpetuating India's disputes with neighbouring countries like China and Pakistan, not because these disputes cannot be settled, but because they find it a handy weapon to impose more burdens on the people in the name of defence, curtail their civil liberties, democratic rights and mass struggles in the name of security, and, above all, screen their growing dependence on the USA in the name of "aid" to build up the country's defence preparedness. The Congress used the China and Pakistan bogey in its election campaign but our people have showed enough maturity to reject it. The defeat of the Congress will strengthen the campaign for a settlement of the disputes with China and Pakistan so that India's resources can be used for development from backwardness and misery instead of being frittered away.

Our Party has been the Party which has consistently said that the increasing tax burdens, price rises, scarcity and famine are not inevitable but the direct result of the bourgeois-landlord class policies pursued by the Congress rulers, that the path which the Congress rulers have chosen is not one of building an independent economy but the bankrupt one of building capitalism in collaboration with foreign imperialism and

compromise with feudal landlordism resulting in unbearable miseries for the people, that the only path of genuine advance for India is the path of people's Democracy and Socialism. The crushing defeat inflicted on the Congress will strengthen the people's struggle for the alternate path.

Above all, we rejoice because the people have rejected anti Communism which the Congress and other Right and communal forces had tried to rouse.

It is all this that makes this a day of rejoicing for us as part of the Indian people.

### **Not An Ordinary Defeat**

The defeat inflicted on the Congress is not just an ordinary one. Its President Kamaraj has been rejected by the electorate in his home constituency of Virudhanagar in Madras.

S.K.Patil, the architect of the enslaving PL 480 U.S. aid to India, who bragged that he was behind none in the matter of qualifications for the Prime Ministership of the country, has been rejected by the electorate of South Bombay marking the beginning of the end of Patil's bossdom over Bombay City.

Food Minister C. Subramaniam to whom self-respect was something which could be easily sacrificed for begging for food from the U.S. imperialists, who wanted people to satisfy their hunger with the unreliable statistics doled out by him and his predictions of food self sufficiency this year, next year or latest by the end of the Fourth Plan, has been rejected by the people. He fled this time from his constituency of Pollachi to Gobichettipalayam which his multi-millionaire Congress patron, R. Mahalingam, had assured him was a "safe" seat. But that did not save Subramaniam from the wrath of the people who had been made victims of Congress-made scarcity and famine. Nor did his multi-millionaire patron Mahalingam fare any better in

the Coimbatore Lok Sabha constituency where Communist (Marxist) trade union leader K. Ramani trounced him.

Atulya Ghosh, the notorious gangster boss of the West Bengal Congress, the Treasurer of the All-India Congress Committee, member of the all-powerful king-making "Syndicate" who was dreaming of the role he was again to play in choosing the next Prime Minister, has been ordered by the electorate to remain home.

Biju Patnaik, the object of universal hatred of the Orissa people, whom the Congress High Command had again and again sought to save from popular wrath as one of its blue-eyed boys, has met his nemesis in Orissa.

Gone are Sachin Choudhury, the Devaluation Minister, Manubhai Shah, Commerce Minister, D. Sanjeevayya, Industries Minister, T.N.Singh, Minister of State for Iron and Steel.

Not a single Central Minister who contested from Tamilnad nor the State's Chief Minister M. Bhaktavatsalam could get elected. Apart from C. Subramaniam, they were Petroleum and Chemicals Minister O.V. Alagesan, Minister of State C.R. Pattabhiraman, Deputy Ministers Soundaram Ramachandran and Maragatham Chandrasekhar. Along with the State's Chief Minister went Food Minister Ramiah, and other prominent Ministers like Kakkan as also President of the Pradesh Congress committee Krishnaswamy Naidu. State Industries Minister R. Venkataraman who was contesting a Lok Sabha seat to become a Minister at the Centre has also fallen.

West Bengal's Chief Minister P.C. Sen who all these years had arrogantly rejected the demands of the people and ordered police firing on every occasion when people went into action has been rejected by the people along with a number of senior members of his Cabinet.



Bihar Chief Minister K.B. Sahay, perhaps the trigger-happiest of all the Congress Chief Ministers who contested from two constituencies was defeated from both. He had filed nominations from fourteen other constituencies but withdrew from them depriving the people of the chance of defeating him in all 16 constituencies.

The Government employees who sent him a packet of groundnuts were only expressing popular rejoicing at the downfall of this tyrant who had advised them, when they demanded higher salaries to meet the price-rise, to supplement their incomes by selling groundnut.

Gone are also the Chief Minister of Punjab, Gurumukh Singh Musaffir, and other Ministers like Yash and Talib.

Nearly a hundred members of the Central and State Councils of Ministers have become casualties along with hundreds of others who were aspirants to these posts. What a rout for the congress! What a glorious victory for the people!

While the people have thus given a sound thrash to the Congress, it is not everywhere that the Left and democratic forces have come on top.

In Orissa and Rajasthan the Swatantra Party and the Jana Sangh in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi and other States, have been able to cash in on the growing anti-Congress feelings of the people. The people were determined to give their verdict against the Congress and in the absence of effective Left and democratic movements, they voted for parties like the Swatantra and Jana Sangh which came before them as anti-Congress parties but represent essentially the same interests as the congress. The Left and democratic movement will certainly draw the necessary lessons from this development.

In contrast stand the two States of Kerala and West Bengal and the State of Madras.

In Kerala, it was a united front of seven Left and other Opposition parties which challenged the Congress and reduced it to an insignificant minority in the Assembly. It is a popular verdict against the Congress which has denied democracy to the people of this State by dismissing elected Ministries, dissolving Legislatures and imposing President's rule.

The United Front has been returned with an overwhelming majority, in a position to provide the State with a clean and stable administration, devoid of corruption and able to give some immediate relief to the people.

Leaders of the parties have already met the Governor and informed him that E.M.S. Namboodiripad will head the United Front Ministry which is scheduled to be sworn in on March 6.

In West Bengal, immediately it became known that the Congress had been reduced to a minority and if the Left and democratic forces combined they would be able to honour the verdict of the people for an alternate Government, the Secretariat of the State Committee of the Communist Party (Marxist) met along with the Party's General Secretary P. Sundarayya and declared that the Party would do its all to enable the formation of an alternate Government.

The newly elected members belonging to all these parties met on February 28, and a letter signed by 146 members has been forwarded to the Governor.

The United Front parties have also adopted a programme for the Government which it is forming and is to be sworn in shortly.

The Left and democratic forces while forming these Governments are fully aware of the severe limitations of such Governments, circumscribed as they are by the provision of the Constitution framed to safeguard the vested interests and the concentration of power in the hands of the Congress rulers at the Centre.

But they rightly hold that the formation of such Governments will not only be able to give immediate relief to our suffering people but also give further powerful impetus to the popular movement. What is needed most is the vigilance of the people and the building of powerful mass movements and organisations.

## **Programme Of The United Front Government Of West Bengal\***

### **Preamble :**

The people of West Bengal have given their verdict against Congress misrule and have enjoined on their accredited representatives to set up an honest, clean and efficient administration under Ministers of ability and integrity enjoying public confidence. The United Front has been constituted to carry out this mandate and accepts this responsibility with all humility. The U.F. is fully conscious of the gravity of the situation caused through inefficient and corrupt handling of affairs by the Congress over a long period, non-utilization and draining off of the resources of the State through wrong and often unholy channels and failure to meet even the minimum basic needs of the masses. The U.F. is also aware of the handicaps under which the State Government has to function, the limitations imposed by the constitution, stagnation of resources and ungenerous treatment of West Bengal by the Centre denying her legitimate share in development programmes and even in food supply from the Central pool. Even so, the U.F. is emboldened to shoulder the responsibility on the strength of the confidence reposed on it by the people and assures sincere and determined efforts to ameliorate the distressing condition in which the people have been thrown during the Congress regime. With the help and co-operation of the people the U.F. is confident of overcoming all obstacles in the path of people's advance.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY" Calcutta, March 5, 1967. This relates to first United Front Government formed in West Bengal in 1967.

## **Policies**

1. The Government of U.F. will strive to meet the primary needs of the people in respect of food, clothing, housing, education, health services and will ensure efficiency, economy and impartiality in the administration.

2. The Government of U.F. will relentlessly fight corruption and nepotism in official spheres, profiteering, hoarding and blackmarketing, adulteration of food and medicine, amassing of ill-gotten wealth and all anti-social acts fostered under Congress rule and will liberate the forces of freedom and progress.

3. The Government will not rely on restrictive or merely administrative steps for relieving the acute distress due to inadequate supply and high prices of essentials but will take adequate measures for promoting production, specially of food. With this in view, the Government will undertake progressive land reforms, provide to the cultivators due incentives through proper irrigation and drainage facilities, supply of fertilizers, seeds, improved and scientific methods, improved livestock and agricultural credit and ensure rational price support. Particular attention will be given to the acute problems faced by poor peasants, agricultural labourers and all sections of distressed tillers.

4. The present food crisis that has been aggravated by the policy of the Congress Government will be tackled on an emergent basis. Distribution of essential commodities will be strictly regulated to ensure fair and equitable supply at reasonable prices and every effort will be made to set up suitable, effective and incorruptible machinery for the purpose. Wholesale trade in paddy and rice will be undertaken by the State and the margin between procurement and distribution prices will be rationalized, wastage and corruption eliminated.

5. Special emphasis will be placed on fighting unemployment and on utilizing the man-power resources, specially the youth, in:

economic development and social services, thereby creating new employment opportunities. In this context as also for strengthening the economy of West Bengal efforts will be made to foster and promote various categories of industries specially cottage, small and medium industries, and commerce calculated to serve the people honestly and efficiently.

6. The Government will take determined steps to improve the number and quality of primary and secondary schools, reform educational administration, remove the chaotic condition in the field of education at all stages, build up an integrated system of education and promote literature, sports, physical education and cultural activities calculated to build up a better future generation. The cause of the teachers and non-teaching staff and their just claims will be duly attended to. The problems of students will also receive due consideration.

7. The displaced persons from East Pakistan demand particular attention and the U.F. will take best efforts to rehabilitate them so as to enable them to take their rightful place as fullfledged citizens of India with ample opportunities for housing, education and employment. Squatters' colonies will be regularized and agriculturists will be given special assistance.

8. The cause of labour and workers on whom production and economic development primarily depend will be given adequate support and working conditions in the field and in factories will be substantially improved. The feasibility of ensuring minimum or living wages for all categories of workers-industrial, agricultural- will also be duly attended to.

9. The U.F. recognizes the rights of the minority communities to follow their faith, preserve their special culture, language, and noble traditions and will provide them with due protection against distrust, disability and handicaps—social, economic and educational as guaranteed in the constitution of India. The Government will not tolerate any propaganda or action that may lead to communal hatred

and tension or foster the evils threatening national integrity such as provincialism, casteism and linguistic fanaticism.

10. The Government will pay special attention to and improve the conditions of scheduled castes and tribes and backward sections of the people.

11. The special problems of women will receive due consideration.

12. The problems of Calcutta, the nerve-centre of Eastern India as also of under-developed regions, e.g. Purulia, the sunderbans and parts of North Bengal, will receive special attention and the speedy and proper implementation of Farakka and Haldia projects will be pressed for.

13. The Government will take early steps to implement the resolutions adopted unanimously by the West Bengal State Assembly to make Bengali the official language of this State and Nepali the regional language of Darjeeling hill areas.

14. The U.F. Government will recognize the rights of workers, peasants, teachers and employees of all categories to form unions or associations with a view to voice their just demands and grievances and will not suppress the democratic and legitimate struggles of the people. It will reorient the executive and the police in a way consistent with the democratic aspirations of the people. It will respect and defend fundamental civil rights and the Government of India will be urged to lift the state of emergency that empowers recourse to D.I. Act and Rules. The repeal of all anti-democratic and repressive laws like the P.D. Act also be pressed for.

15. The Government is aware of the severe limitations imposed on the State Government and its precarious dependence upon the Centre. The U.F. will strive to acquire more powers and rights for the State Governments and in particular press the Centre for meeting the legitimate share of West Bengal to larger allocations from Central revenue.

16. The question of Berubari will be taken up with the Union Government.

17. The Government will do everything for the preservation and strengthening the sovereignty of the country.

18. The Government will not rely merely on administrative machinery to implement the above policies but will seek active co-operation and association of the people in all matters and at various levels. The local self-governing institutions and panchayets will be democratized and vitalized to truly represent the people and will be made more effective institutions free from corruption and nepotism.

Finally, the U.F. informs the people that the measures required to implement the above basic policies will be determined after careful consideration and announced in due course.



## **C.P.I.(M) Polit Bureau Statement On 1967 General Election Results\***

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India congratulates the people of India on the big successes achieved by them in the electoral battles against Congress misrule. The people have expressed in the clearest possible manner their lack of confidence in the economic and other policies pursued by the Congress Government.

The congress party has been smashed in Kerala by the power of the United Front. With all its resources the Congress party could not secure more than nine seats in the Legislature. The Polit Bureau is proud of the role played by our Party and its members in achieving this victory against the Congress. It congratulates the alliance of seven parties on this great victory, offers its warm greetings to the people of Kerala and assures them that the party will do everything to strengthen the United front in Kerala and see that the Ministry fulfils the election programme of the seven parties.

A significant feature of the Kerala victory is the total failure of religious and communal organizations to sway the vote in favour of the Congress. It is no secret that some of the bishops of the church openly intervened on behalf of the congress, nor is it a secret that the leaders of certain caste organizations worked hectically for the Congress, but the people of Kerala rejected their reactionary call and upheld the banner of democratic unity.

The electoral arrangement between the DMK, our party and other parties has enabled the people of Tamilnad to inflict a crushing defeat on the Congress party, and rout one stalwart after another.

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*\*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY" Calcutta, March 12, 1967 The Polit Bureau of the C.P.I. (M) met in Thiruvantapuram from February 26 to March 1, 1967 and issued this statement on 1967 General Election Results.*

The Left forces in West Bengal have reduced the Congress to a minority party and made yet another breach in its monopoly of power. The Congress would have faced the same fate in West Bengal as in Kerala had not the Dange revisionist formed the rival electoral front and split the anti-Congress vote facilitating the success of a number of Congress candidates. The figures of voting clearly show that but for this division of votes which weighted the scales against our candidates the Congress would have lost a large number of seats and the United Front would have secured an overwhelming victory against it. In spite of this our party has secured the largest number of seats amongst the opposition parties and has once more emerged as the leading force among the Left parties. Our Party cadres, members and sympathizers, who had to face hostile attacks from all sides, proved their mettle and deserve our warmest congratulations. The Congress has further lost its majority in Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Punjab. Over this wide part of India, the electorate once more registered its firm disapproval of its policies.

Pre-election forecasts had held the Congress position in the Lok Sabha to be impregnable and anticipated a firm and comfortable Congress majority at the Centre. The angry people have upset these calculations also and the Congress has to be content with a narrow majority in the Lok Sabha which may be shaken any day.

The Communist Party of India shares the jubilation of the people over the defeat and discomfiture of the Congress. The people have addressed the sharpest rebuke to the Congress and rebuffed its attempts to secure a clear mandate from them.

At the same time the Communist party wants to underline the fact that the defeat of the Congress in Orissa, Rajasthan and to a great extent in Uttar Pradesh is not brought about by the democratic and Left parties but reactionary parties. The emergence of the Jana Sangh and Swatantra as leading parties in some of the States is a warning that the discontent against the tyrannical rule is being exploited by reactionary parties who represent the same vested interests as the Congress does. These parties openly advocate reactionary measures

in the interest of capitalists and landlords and some of them resort to crude appeals to communalism, using issues like cow protection as vote catching devices.

The Congress policies have encouraged them to come forward and pose as champions of the people. Wherever the democratic parties have failed to unite to lead the mass battles for better livelihood and against Congress misrule, wherever the democratic movement is weak, these reactionary parties have successfully exploited the people's discontent to their own advantage. If this warning is not heeded the Indian people will be exchanging one type of anti-people misrule for another. It is a warning that imposes on all democratic parties a responsibility to combine and protect the people against the machinations of these alternative parties of the vested interests.

The election results constitute a clear repudiation of the anti-people policies of the congress. They are the people's verdict against the capitalist planning of the congress, against the growing economic crisis leading to rising unemployment, high prices and high taxation; it is a verdict against the growing dependence of our economy on foreign countries, rising food shortage, and allround starvation, against the Congress regime of lathi-charges and police massacres and its designs to prepare for a police State in India.

During the elections our Party led the battle against Congress surrender to American economic pressure which is endangering the freedom of our foreign policy and the very independence and sovereignty of our country. Our party made this one of the main issues in our campaign and several Left parties took it up. Four years ago none except our Party warned the people against this danger. The ruling classes, their parties and the revisionists deliberately screened from the people this danger by raising anti-china hysteria at that time. The election results show that the people are becoming aware of the real danger to our sovereignty arising from the growing pressure of American imperialism.

Our Party campaigned for peaceful settlement of our disputes with People's China and Pakistan. Ours was the only party that squarely

told the people that peaceful settlement with China was necessary for strengthening our own independence increasingly threatened by American imperialism. The successes achieved by us constitute clear proof that large sections of our countrymen are realizing the necessity of a peaceful settlement with China and Pakistan and are understanding the grave implications of the policy pursued by the congress government.

As early as June 1966—immediately after the release of our leaders from jail, our Central Committee issued a call to all democratic parties to come together in the elections to defeat the Congress and to form alternative Ministries wherever possible. We knew that our people suffering under all the evils of Congress rule were ready to rebuff the Congress during the elections. Our expectations have been realized and the people have rejected the Congress at the polls. If the victory is not complete it is because of the weakness of democratic parties including ourselves and the disruption created by some parties and not because of lack of popular resentment against the Congress.

Our party has emerged as the leading force in Kerala and West Bengal. In other States like Andhra and Tripura we have suffered a set-back. In Punjab, also, our expectations were not realized. In the Lok Sabha also, though we have advanced our position, the results are below our expectations considering the great mass discontent against the Congress. The Party will analyse the results and find out the reasons for these set-backs. A preliminary survey reveals that in many cases our failure was brought about by the revisionist party which deliberately divided the oppositional vote even where they had no chance of victory and who sometimes voted directly for the Congress to defeat us.

The election results show that in the traditional strongholds of Communist influence our Party had complete preponderance over the Dange revisionists. The overwhelming superiority of our Party is quite evident in Kerala and West Bengal.

In Andhra also, in the 60 seats which our party originally proposed to fight, and the Right Communists factionally challenged our claims, the results reveal that our Party won overwhelmingly larger votes than the revisionists in as many as 60 seats while the revisionists lost their deposits in 30 of them.

Our Party has already pledged itself to support all alternative Ministries formed by democratic parties. In West Bengal it has already expressed its readiness to participate in the non-congress Ministry headed by Sri Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee. In Kerala it is leading the Ministry of the United Front, in Tamilnad it has already declared its support to the DMK Ministry. We consider the people's verdict to be sacred and are prepared to support all non-congress Ministries that hold out genuine promise of justice to the people.

Finally, our party appeals to the people not to rest on their oars. The electoral successes will not automatically solve the basic problems of the people. The Congress party holds the string of power at the Centre and unless its basic policies are defeated there will be greater starvation and hunger, the economic crisis is bound to deepen and jobs of thousands might be soon in danger. The American pressure on our sovereignty is going to increase and the emergence of the Jana Sangh and Swatantra in some of the States will only accelerate this process. The Congress party will attempt to try a way out of this situation by launching further attacks on the people's liberties, by making further concessions to the capitalists and offering further concessions to the American balckmailers.

At the same time, refusing to accept the verdict of the people, it will try to create difficulties for popular democratic Ministries by withholding food supplies and creating other obstacles.

The popular masses and the democratic forces will have to exercise constant vigilance against Congress machinations to discredit the democratic Ministries. They will have to offer continuous resistance to defeat the basic anti-people policies of the Congress and take forward the democratic gains already achieved.

## Carry Forward The Electoral Victory

### B.T. Ranadive \*

The popular discontent and anger against Congress misrule—against organised starvation and organised slaughter—has found expression in the electoral reverses of the Congress. The Congress got a quit mandate from the electorate in not less than eight States. In others its majority was reduced, in some of them it has only a precarious majority. In the Lok Sabha itself, it has lost nearly a hundred seats, having to depend on a narrow majority of forty-three only. Defection in its own ranks itself might send it out of office and remove it from the Centre.

The arrogant, corrupt, anti-people and treacherous regime has had a rough treatment at the hands of the people. If it escaped a rout and defeat at the Centre, it was mainly because neither the people nor the parties leading them thought that it was possible.

Naturally there is widespread jubilation over the Congress reverses. People are feeling a sense of triumph and victory, are elated to find that they could prevail against this incubus riding Indian society for the last two decades.

The trusting masses, in their innocence, believe that they have scored an all-round massive decisive victory against the hated rule and all the evils that it represented; they believe that now the way is open towards a new deal and a new order; that the wheels of Government will not move quickly in the required direction and all that they have to do is to watch and cheer their

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, March 12, 1967. This article is on the electoral victories of C.P.I. (M) and other Left Parties in 1967 General Elections in India and formation of United Front Governments in West Bengal and Kerala.

Ministries. The illusion that a mere electoral victory can bring about basic changes or at least substantial changes is at the bottom of this elemental jubilation. Our Party which bases itself on Marxism—Leninism must assess the post-election situation properly—all the more so because we will be among the leading forces in the two democratic coalition Ministries of Kerala and West Bengal.

### **Post-Election Reality**

The post-election reality is that though the Congress party received a battering, the capitalist-landlord combine, the vested interests that are represented by the Congress party, are hardly affected. The Constitution, the laws, the economic structure, the economy, the concentration of all financial and other powers in the Centre—all are there in the service of the monopolists and landlords without attacking whose interests no substantial relief can be given to the people. Any Ministry which comes forward to serve the cause of the people will have to struggle against this second line of defence before it could think of granting substantial relief to the people, before it could come anywhere near fulfilling at least partially the expectations of the people.

In spite of the increased strength of the Left forces in the Lok Sabha the resistance of the vested interests is going to increase. For, though the Congress has been weakened, the Swatantra and Jan Sangh occupy the first and second positions respectively in the Opposition. They are parties which serve the same vested interests as the Congress. It is not for nothing that G.D. Birla who foresaw a reduced majority for the Congress found no reason for anxiety.

In his inaugural speech at the 24th Annual Session of the Engineering Association held on January 2, he said, "Then this election is very crucial. You all know—and I hope—I am still

wedded to Congress people—that the Congress will come back to power, at least in the Centre, but with a highly reduced majority. And if they come with a reduced majority, then they will have to be alert” (alert, of course, to what G.D. Birla has to say and dictate).

Birla further says, “Now leading from that argument, I believe there will be a stronger Cabinet. Some of our Ministers who are talking in slogans, have not yet realised that it is 1967 and not 1952. The world is talking in different slogans now. These slogans have become out-of-date and therefore I personally believe from the way in which elections are going that we can reasonably expect a better Cabinet, programmatic and practical and interested in increasing production.”

The truth is that though the Congress party has been weakened at the Centre, the grip of the vested interests over the Government has not weakened. A humbled Congress, pressed by the Swatantra, will serve today as a more pliant instrument in the hands of Birla & Co., notwithstanding the dent made by the advance of the Left democratic forces.

This truth is not realised by the people. But it means continuation of the struggle between the democratic forces and the vested interests at the ministerial level— not a peaceful accommodation of the two after the electoral battle.

### **Congress Still A Force**

Besides, there are other features of the post-election situation. In the first place, the election results reveal that in spite of the reverses suffered by the Congress, in spite of the elemental anger of vast sections against its rule, the Congress has secured a large percentage of the popular vote. In Kerala, where it was routed and could get only nine seats, it has secured 35 per cent of the total votes cast. In West Bengal, where in



spite of its mass shootings, it has emerged as the biggest single party and it has secured 41 per cent of the total votes cast. The innumerable mass struggles against Congress policies of starvation and oppression have no doubt undermined the base of Congress influence; yet it has not done it sufficiently to render the Congress innocuous as a force for opposition and mischiefmaking, for conspiracies against the people in the interests of the monopolists and landlords.

Secondly, it should be noted that the defeat of the Congress in some of the States is not brought about by the democratic forces but by the Right forces— alternative parties of the vested interests. In Orissa and Rajasthan, it is the Swatantra party that has secured a virtual majority; in Delhi it is the Jan Sangh that has routed the Congress; in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh it is again the Jan Sangh that has emerged as the strongest party among the Opposition parties. And in the Lok Sabha it is the Swatantra and Jan Sangh that occupy first and second positions among Opposition parties.

### **Limit of Opportunism**

Formation of Ministries in some States by these parties does not constitute a democratic victory. It does not save the masses from the oppression of the vested interests. If their mask is not torn off in time it will only lead to frustration among the people of these States, undermining the faith in all parties of the Opposition. Besides, these Ministries will act as a check on the democratic Ministries by their refusal to endorse and initiate a programme of democratic advance.

To be active in helping them to form their Ministries, to participate in Ministries headed by them is to cheat the masses and entrap them in the snares of the alternative bourgeois parties. An yet the revisionist party is playing this unscrupulous game.

A few months ago they concentrated their fire on the Swatantra and the Jan Sangh as the parties of Right reaction which must be fought at all costs. They were then not willing to fight the Congress Government.

Today they are leading deputations to the President for a Swatantra- Jan Sangh Government in Rajasthan. Opportunism and unscrupulousness cannot go further. They must side with one or the other Right bourgeois party.

Thirdly, the election triumph of the people comes in the background of the deepening of the economic crisis ripening into a political crisis; the cracking of our economy and its increased dependence for food on the USA which is blackmailing the Congress Government more and more to surrender India's sovereignty. The big bourgeoisie is now in a hurry to launch its offensive against the working class.

The Congress Government, having been forced to cut down its plan, is withdrawing orders from engineering concerns and these are throwing thousands out of employment. Other industrialists will soon follow suit. The democratic Ministries will be asked to handle the mess created by the Congress and will be pressured to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the people. They will be pressurised to acquiesce in surrender to American blackmail in the name of feeding the people.

Thus instead of improving the conditions of the people there will be constant pressure to attack them in the name of stabilising our economy—euphemism for protecting the interests of the monopolists. Basic provisions of the Constitution, existing laws and rules, judicial judgements and executive prerogatives, and finally considerations of law and order—all will be invoked to bamboozle the Ministries.

## **No Wavering, No Vacillation**

If there are waverings in the coalition partners, any vacillation regarding our loyalty to the people who voted the coalition to power, then the democratic forces will discredit themselves. The people have high faith in the coalitions; their expectations may be exaggerated. Yet they have every right to get their minimum expectations realised and for the rest to be convinced that the democratic parties could not proceed further without a complete overhauling of the present structure and levers of economic power.

It should be realised, therefore, that elections were a mere pause in the great struggle which the people were waging for their livelihood and democracy. That struggle will have to be resumed with the help and aid of the Ministries. The latter must decisively start with initial measures through executive actions if necessary to protect the people. The bona fides of the Ministries have to be tendered to the people, its earnestness to move into action in defence of their interests must be made manifest to them.

Stoppage of eviction of peasants, of retrenchment of workers, lowering of land rents and equitable distribution of food— these are some of the measures which the Ministry must embark upon to assure the people. Withdrawal of repressive laws and extension of democratic rights for the people must be ensured.

To think only in terms of long-term plans when the opponents have started brandishing their weapons will be suicidal. To ask the people to wait upon the cumbrous machinery of the legislative process which in West Bengal can be easily sabotaged by the reactionary Upper House is to invite their disappointment and frustration and help the Congress in digging the Ministries' grave.

The Ministry must assure the poor peasants and agricultural workers that it is earnest about redistribution of land and set a date for it in advance. These initial measures in the defence of the working class, the peasantry and the middle-class must be the starting point of ministerial activity.

### **Mass Movement And Struggles**

Nothing, however, is possible if our party or our allies think that now the role of the mass movement and struggles is finished; that the Assembly and Ministries can replace the masses; that the battle has to be fought only within the four walls of the Assembly.

In the background of the economic crisis, of the grip of the vested interests over the Central Government, every measure of mass amelioration and relief to the people is going to be an arena of class struggle and class conflict. The class interests of the capitalist-landlord combine and the Congress demand that all ministerial initiatives should be sabotaged. Their resistance can be overcome only with the vigilance and action of the masses.

The Congress and the vested interests will do everything in their power to topple the Ministries and rob the people of their election victory. But they can be defeated only if the pre-election upsurge of the masses is revived and directed against Congress sabotage and Central machinations. The hypocritical talk of the Congress that it will play the role of constructive Opposition; Indira Gandhi's assurance that the Central Government will cooperate with the democratic Ministries cannot be taken seriously.

The moment the Ministries begin to defend the interests of the masses and cross the *Lakshman rekha* drawn by the Congress, hell will be let loose. Without mass initiative and action to

support the ministerial measures, to protest against and fight the machinations and economic sabotage of the vested interests the Ministry cannot discharge its responsibility.

It is, therefore, of utmost importance that all parties unitedly encourage the mass organisations to build their strength, that vigilance committee of the masses are organised and are consulted by the Ministry. For instance, the task of procuring rice from rich producers and hoarders can never be fulfilled through the bureaucratic machinery, only the ten thousand eyes of the people can keep an effective watch on all hoarders and dehoard the grain. Without this special arm of popular vigilance the Ministry will be a blind Ministry and forced to act on reports supplied by bureaucrats some of whom are in the pay of the vested interests

### **Win Over Mass Behind Congress**

An absolutely essential part of this mass initiative is to wage a struggle for the mass behind the Congress. The forty one per cent vote of the Congress represents a big chunk of the people—cross-section of the entire people. To allow the Congress to have absolute sway over it is to aid its capacity for sabotage. The Congress would like to freeze the situation and perpetuate the division so that that mass can anyday be turned against the other mass and the Ministry.

To win over the downtrodden sections, to isolate the Congress from them is to bury the Congress influence once and for all. Every effort must be made by our mass, our Party and the Ministry to wean away the Congress mass and break down the walls between the two sections.

A decisive policy in the interest of the common man will be the main instrument to break down the walls of prejudice and win over the Congress mass.

A grim battle is ahead. The coming few months will be months of hardship and suffering for our people— hardship and suffering imposed by Congress policies. Only by keeping and strengthening the unity of the people in these circumstances will we come out triumphant.

It is, therefore, essential that our Party gives up all complacency and is once more in the streets to counteract Congress propaganda and enlighten the people on the happenings of the day; that it undertakes the work of building mass organisations and strengthen them; that it enlists the hundreds who have been active in recent struggles and the election for the Party and train them in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.

Let us not be guilty of thinking that an electoral victory gives us respite from the task of organising the masses and that we can rest on our oars. As Marxist-Leninists, we know that we look upon Parliament and Ministries as instruments of bringing greater enlightenment to the people and not of creating illusions about an easy, painless way to a new social order.

While utilising all the opportunities of giving relief to the people via the Ministry, we consider our task fulfilled if the people come to realise that a radical overhaul of the Constitution and social structure is necessary if their basic demands are to be satisfied. To accelerate this awakening is our task as Parliamentarians.

### **Remember Lenin's Words**

We can never forget the words of Lenin "Take the bourgeois Parliament. Can it be that the learned Kautsky has never heard that the more highly democracy is developed, the more the bourgeois Parliaments are subjected by the stock exchange and the bankers? This does not mean that we must not make use of

bourgeois parliaments (the Bolsheviks made better use of them than any other party in the world, for in 1912-14 we won the entire workers' curia in the Fourth Duma). But it does mean that only a liberal can forget the historical limitations and conventional nature of bourgeois parliamentarism as Kautsky does. Even in the most democratic bourgeois State, the oppressed masses at every step encounter the crying contradiction between the formal equality proclaimed by the 'democracy' of the capitalists and the thousands of real limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into wage slaves. It is precisely this contradiction that is opening the eyes of the masses to the rottenness, mendacity and hypocrisy of capitalism. It is this contradiction that the agitators and propagators of Socialism are constantly exposing to the masses, in order to prepare them for revolution" (Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky).

## **Kerala Rejoices Again: On Formation of United Front Government in 1967\***

*It reminded one of a similar scene just ten years ago—when Ministers of the Communist Party paid homage to the martyrs of the struggle at Punnapra-Vayalar before being sworn in as members of the first Communist led Government in Kerala on April 6, 1957.*

This time, on March 6, eight Minister-designates led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad—four of the Communist Party, two Right Communists, one of the RSP and one of the KSP—again stood with bowed heads before the sacred memory of the martyrs. Hundreds had been shot down here by an autocratic Dewanshahi to suppress the struggle of the people demanding responsible Government in the then state of Travancore.

Here, also, is the place where P. Krishan Pillai, the respected leader of the Communist Party in Kerala who died while he was being hunted by the police in 1948, was laid to rest. No Communist in Kerala can think of the new situation in the State without remembering the great contribution the departed leader had made to the Communist movement in the State.

As one drove back to Trivandrum along the coastal road it was in total silence—every mind was busy remembering these and the many other martyrs who had sacrificed thier lives to advance the movement which today was taking a new step forward with the assumption of office by a United Front of the non-Congress parties.

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The Durbar Hall where the Travancore Maharajas used to hold their Durbars had a different appearance on the day. Huge crowds of people had gathered all along the roads leading to the hall and in front of the hall and as the leaders arrived, there were tremendous cheers.

Inside the Durbar Hall were leaders of political parties, newly-elected members of the Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha. E. M. S. Namboodiripad was the first to take the oath and was followed by K.R. Gowri, E. K. Imbichi Bawa and M.K. Krishnan of the Communist Party, M.N.Govindan Nair and T.V. Thomas of the Right Communist Party, P.R. Kurup and P. K. Kunju of the SSP, C.H. Mohammed Koya and M.P. Ahmed Kurikkal of the Muslim League, T.K. Diwakaran of the RSP, B. Wellington of the KTP and Mathai Manjooran of the KSP.

In a policy statement issued soon after taking charge E.M.S. Namboodiripad declared that the State Government would not only reject the Centre's proposal for enhancement of the price of rationed rice in Kerala but wanted to see that rice was available to the poorer sections of the people at cheaper rates than at present. He said that the Government would take steps to regularize the issue of rations which had been in utter confusion for the last few weeks.

Listing other immediate problems to which the new Government would devote attention, the Chief Minister said that the NGOs' demand for Central rates of dearness allowance was just. Details and practical questions in conceding the demand would have to be discussed with representatives of NGOs' organizations.

Various kinds of action taken against the NGOs after the strike in January last would be examined and necessary solution found to the problems. Cases pending in connection with the Kerala Bandh were to be reviewed and necessary redress given to those concerned.

Existing arrangement for fighting corruption in the services would be reviewed to remove defects and deficiencies and to make these arrangements more efficient.

Steps would be taken for the immediate implementation of the Santanam Committee's recommendations to enquire into and take suitable steps in regard to allegations of corruption against Ministers. Arrangements would also be made for a declaration of their assets by Ministers, Legislators and other representatives of the people who came into contact with officials and these declarations would be closely examined.

The Chief Minister said that the proposals the Government would bring forward for fighting corruption would be placed before the Assembly and the public for their comment and criticism.

As for the food problem apart from the immediate steps, there were other permanent and fundamental requirements for a solution to the problem. These were that production should increase, necessary technical and financial help should be given for that purpose to ryots, especially to the poor ryots, land reforms which would increase the income of tenants and agricultural workers should be implemented, foodgrain stocks with the Government should be increased by stringent procurement of paddy from rich agriculturists and landlords.

The policy statement said that changes have to be introduced in the present levy procurement of paddy, in the price fixed for paddy procured so as to help the poor peasants and that the Centre should be forced to take necessary steps for the prompt supply of rice to Kerala from surplus States.

The Chief Minister said that the circumstances that obtained now and ten years ago when he assumed office as Chief Minister were different in several important respects. In 1957, the Kerala Ministry was the only non-Congress Ministry in the country. But today non-Congress Governments had already been formed or were to be formed in some other States also.

In 1957, there was a large section of people who put their faith in the Congress party's declaration of Socialism as its aim and the policies and programmes adopted by the Congress Government. But

today the policies and programmes of the Congress party and its Government had proved a failure.

E.M.S. said that in 1957-59 the Ministry had tried to implement the policies officially accepted by the Congress but which it had not cared to implement. For instance, the then Government led by the Communist Party had enacted an agrarian relations law. But the Congress Government which succeeded it had changed that law to the detriment of the peasants.

Now it had become a national necessity to implement new policies and programmes as those of the Congress Government had failed, It was clear that the country could not progress unless policies different from those followed by the Congress were adopted in respect of planning, foreign aid, land tenure relation, food production and distribution, language, etc.

Later in the evening at a public meeting organised in honour of the new Chief Minister and his Cabinet, E.M.S. referred to the proposal to increase the price of rationed rice and said that it was nothing short of an affront to the entire people to ask them to bear the extra cost (following the withdrawal of the central subsidy) of 11 to 12 paise per kilogram.

He asked : are we to submit ourselves to this affront? Or should you and we join together and do something else to meet it?

It was not as if Kerala was asking for any charity, he said. The Kerala people earned precious money through their pepper and other crops which was pocketed by the Centre. If the Centre cannot give us rice, let them give us the money that our people have earned and we shall buy rice from anywhere, the Chief Minister said.

This was not a problem affecting just 13 Ministers or seven parties but it was an attack on the entire people of Kerala and E.M.S. appealed to also those parties now in the Opposition—the Congress and the Kerala Congress—to cooperate with the Government in its demand to the Centre.

## **Popular Ministry Takes Over Amidst Rejoicing in West Bengal**

### **Formation of First United Front Government in West Bengal in 1967 \***

*A jubilant people have joyously welcomed the swearing in of the first ever non-Congress Ministry in West Bengal and are watching with keen interest the steps that are being taken by the popular Ministry to give them immediate relief from the misery heaped on them by twenty years of Congress rule.*

Nobody who has been on the Monument Maidan in Calcutta in the evening of March 1 would have been in any doubt about the popular mood. It was agianst rally that was being held there.

With just two days' notice, without any organised preparation except for the erection of the dias which rose high over the ground with flags of the parties of the United Front fluttering above, the mass participation was truly an indication of the new mood of the people.

Demonstrations had spontaneously begun from different areas, and with bands, music and slogans they had marched to the Maidan. The rally was scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. and even by that time it was difficult to get entry into the Maidan with people surging on the broad roads surrounding the Maidan and more people arriving at every moment. People had come from districts far away also, and sections of Calcutta citizenry which perhaps had never attended a political rally had sallied out on this occasion.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY" Calcutta, March 12, 1967.

To quote the Calcutta dailies, the *Hindusthan Standard* wrote: “Processions and processions from all directions and of all classes of men and women cramped into the vast Maidan which looked all to small for this everybody’s meeting, Banners, band music and slogans, fire-works and above all, a milling crowd made it a memorable public meeting.”

Wrote the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*: “Wednesday evening’s titanic rally on the Calcutta Maidan will go down in history as a miracle in action. Anything like this was beyond dream even a week ago. In vastness and enthusiasm of the crowd it eclipsed many historic gatherings of the distant and near past.....People’s joyous reaction to the Opposition parties’ capture of power from the Congress after twenty years found spontaneous expression in this memorable demonstration.”

Even the *Statesman* had to write: “Never had Calcutta seen such a big Leftist meeting as the one held on Calcutta Maidan under the auspices of the United Front on Wednesday.”

Ajoy Mukherjee, who was to be sworn in next day as Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, leader of the Communist Party, Somnath Lahiri, Right Communist leader, Dr P. C. Ghosh, Hemanta Basu of the Forward Bloc, who were all to be sworn in the next day along with Ajoy Mukherjee, and leaders of other constituent parties of the United Front addressed the gathering.

Communist Party leader Hare Krishna Konar presented to the vast audience the Basic Policies of the United Front Government in West Bengal (published in *People’s Democracy* last week).

Next morning when the six members of the cabinet—Ajoy Mukherjee, Jyoti Basu, P.C. Ghosh, Somnath Lahiri, Hemanta Basu and Jahangir Kabir—came out of the Raj Bhavan, after being sworn in, to visit the martyrs’ columns in various centres of the City, a huge crowd was waiting for them outside the gates of the Raj Bhavan. The people lustily cheered the new Ministers as they

walked with them for a few yards, then got into their cars and drove to Subodh Mullick Square.

Each of the Ministers placed a garland on the Martyrs' column there erected after the 1959 food movement when the Congress Government shot down four scores of people in the streets of Calcutta.

From there the Ministers went to College Square which was already packed with students wanting to have glimpse of the new Ministers and there they garlanded the statue of Surya Sen—Masterda of the Chittagong Armoury Raid.

The Ministers next paid homage at Azad Hind Bagh and returned to the Secretariat—and it was a sight to see Writers' Buildings then. Many Pressmen compared it to the jubilant scenes witnessed there on August 15, 1947, the dawn of freedom.

The corridors of the Writers' Buildings were packed with Government employees and many of them were waiting at the gates to lead the Ministers to the Chief Minister's room. All through the hour-and-a-half the Ministers stayed in the building that day, the corridors continued to be jampacked by the employees.

As the Ministers were holding discussions inside the Chief Minister's room as to the immediate steps to be taken by the Cabinet, Government employees gathered in front of the room wanting to know from the Ministers what they proposed to do about retrenched Government employees.

Jyoti Basu came out and standing on a chair addressed them, He assured that the question was being given every attention and Cabinet would meet the employees in two days' time. The Chief Minister also came out later and gave the same assurance.

Ten member of the Cabinet were sworn in on March 5. They were Hare Krishna Konar and Niranjana Sen of the Communist Party, Biswanath Mukherjee of the Right Communist Party, Sushil Kumar

Dhara of the Bangla Congress, Amar Prasad Chakrabarty of the Forward Bloc, Nani Bhattacharya of the RSP, Bibhuti Bhusan Das Gupta of the Lok Sevak Sangh, Jyoti Bhattacharjee of the Workers' Party, Subodh Banerjee of the Socialist Unity Centre, Deo Prakash Rai of the Gorkha League.

The Samyukta Socialist Party and the Praja Socialist Party have named one nominee each for the Cabinet.

Immediately after the swearing in of the first six members of the Cabinet, the Ministry is reported to have asked for the files regarding cases of detentions without trial under the Preventive Detention Act and Defence of India Act, retrenched Government employees, etc. The Cabinet also decided to examine the cases of Calcutta bus transportmen who had been victimized after their strike in December last.

Since then, the Calcutta State Transport Corporation authorities have dropped the disciplinary proceedings which had been started against 600 employees.

A spokesman of the Corporation who announced this decision to the Press also said that those workers whose wages for September 22 and 23 (Bengal Bandh), October 14 (token strike) and 14 (general strike of the Transport Corporation workers) were deducted for being absent from work might be given back their wages for those days. The authorities, he said, were considering the question.

Meanwhile, according to a senior officer of the Corporation, the employees of the Corporation are reported to be working with great interest since the formation of the new Government. The income of the Corporation had already gone up, according to the officer.

Joyti Basu who, in addition to Finance also holds the Transport portfolio, told Pressmen that the new Government will soon re-examine the entire transport policy of the Congress Government.

He said the Congress Government had sought to scuttle the Calcutta State Transport Corporation by introducing private buses.

The Cabinet has already withdrawn the almost permanent ban order under Section 144 in the area near the Assembly House. The Government Press Note said that the Government “notes with satisfaction the keen desire of the people to greet the opening session of the newly-elected State Legislative Assembly. In response to this desire, it has been decided to lift the ban under Section 144 Cr. P.C. from the area near the Assmebly House.”

While Chief Minister Ajoy Mukherjee is continuing to stay with his nephew even after being sworn in, Jyoti Basu is staying in his house in Hindustan Park. None of the Ministers are using the luxury cars which the earlier Congress Ministers were using and they have decided to use only small cars manufactured in India.



## **E.M.S. Namboodiripad Enunciates Policy of United Front Government of Kerala : 1967\***

*After failing to supply rice ration regularly every week, if the Central Government now also insists that the price of rice should be increased that situation has to be changed and the immediate task is not only to supply the ration regularly and reject the Centre's suggestion to increase the price of rice, but also to make rice available to the poorer sections at still cheaper rates—this was the declaration made by E.M.S. Namboodiripad immediately after he and his Cabinet colleagues had been sworn in Kerala on March 6.*

Following is the text of the policy statement made by the Chief Minister immediately after he assumed office :

Along with twelve Cabinet colleagues I have today been sworn in and taken charge of the administration of Kerala. Ten years ago, in April 1957, I had similarly taken charge of office in the State. The situation then and the one that prevails today differ in many vital respects. Then it was only in Kerala that a non-Congress Ministry had been formed. Today, in some other States also such non-Congress Ministries have already been formed or are on the way to being formed.

The Ministry that took shape in Kerala then was a Ministry of the Communist Party and Independents who were prepared to cooperate with the Party. Attempts made then to form a united front with other Left parties before the elections and to form a coalition Government with the PSP after the elections had failed. None of the other non-Congress parties was behind the then Government. Today it is seven parties together who are forming the Government.

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*\*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, March 19, 1967 Immediately after assuming the office of the Chief Minister of Kerala, E.M.S. Namboodiripad made this policy statement*

Any student of history can notice that behind these two vital differences (in the situation then and now), there are some very important political realities. In 1957, there was large section of people all over the country who put their faith in the declarations made by the Congress party and the policies adopted by that party. Rapid industrialization with heavy industry as its base, the importance of cooperation with the Socialist countries and development of the public sector for this industrialization, land reforms in favour of the peasants, etc.—all these declarations had enthused lakhs of people in the country. Progressives in the country desired the implementation of these policies.

Today, all impartial people have come to realize that the policies of the Congress party and its Government are totally bankrupt. Whether in the case of food, or industrialization, or land reforms, or foreign aid, the Congress Government's schemes have all been miserable failures. From the point of the administration, Congress rule has become synonymous with corruption, suppression of the people, etc. As the declaration of the seven Opposition parties of Kerala adopted at their meeting on September 16 and 17 last stated.

“Most of the problems that existed at the time of the attainment of freedom still remain unsolved; many problems which did not exist then have since arisen. The Congress Government has totally failed in finding solutions to these problems. Abnormal increase in price of daily necessities, black-market, food scarcity, unemployment, tax-increases, many other economic difficulties, fast-growing corruption, red-tape in the administration, totalitarian tendencies of the State—all point out to this failure, this an inevitable consequence of the political-economic policies pursued by the Government. Against people who raise their voice against all this, the Government unleashes repression and resorts to Black Laws and thus seeks to suppress civil liberties.”

“One of the grave failures of the Congress Government is seen in the disabilities of the religious minorities, tribal people and the backward communities and in the fact that problems like language get

intensified and become national problems. Instead of finding just solutions to these problems, and really unifying the Indian people, what the congress Ministers and rulers are doing are to make meaningless speeches on 'national integration'. Congress rule thus stands in the way of the legitimate rights of backward communities and religious and linguistic minorities as well as of Indian unity."

Because of these changes in the situation, the tasks facing the Government which has taken office to day are basically different from those which has taken office today are basically different from those which faced the Government ten years ago.

As I had made clear on many occasions in 1957-59, the Government then had attempted to "Implement those policies which the Congress had officially accepted but was refusing to implement". The best example of this was the Agrarian Reforms Law which that Government prepared and which the Assembly had adopted. Yet, it was against this law that Congressmen in the State unleashed their campaign. And it was the same law which the Congress Government which followed amended against the interests of the peasants. The Congress leadership was afraid that similar laws and administrative steps would be continued and took the initiative to dismiss that Government.

Today, the policies of the Congress Government have all been proved to be bankrupt, it has become a national necessity to formulate new policies in their place. Without formulating and implementing a policy totally different from that of the Congress on all important questions like planning, foreign aid, land relations, food production and distribution, language, etc., the country cannot progress even by an inch.

It is this realization that has helped to bring together a number of Opposition parties. Though in different forms in different States, many Opposition parties have begun to work unitedly against the Congress Government and its policies. The hatred which some of these Opposition parties have for others in the Opposition is being gradually

removed and it has become possible to hammer out joint programmes to enable them to cooperate with each other. This is what has given shape to the United Front Government in Kerala, West Bengal and some other States.

Undoubtedly, the United Front in Kerala has developed more than such fronts in other States. It is a front which came on the scene with a joint programme long before the elections. That policy statement was a document which dealt in detail with the important problems of Kerala, the solutions that had to be found to each one of these problems, the obstacles that would be faced in finding these solutions, how these obstacles were to be removed, etc. The constituent parties of the United Front had also declared that they would take all the necessary steps to bring into existence a coalition Government ready to and capable of implementing this policy statement and to ensure such a Government's existence for five years.

I would like to take this opportunity to make clear that it is this policy statement that would be the basis of the activities of the Kerala Government that has assumed office today. I will not, on this occasion, try to repeat each and every item of that statement or to go into the details of how they would be implemented. But it would be wrong if I do not say a few things about some of the problems demanding immediate attention.

Food is a problem which takes prime place in the lives of the people, it is also a problem which gives the biggest headache to the Government. During the last few weeks, food distribution in the State has been in a terrible crisis.

Not only has it not been possible to give the weekly ration regularly, the Central Government is also insisting that the price of the rice should be increased. To change this situation, it must be immediately possible to regularize ration distribution, and not only reject the recommendation to increase the price of rice but also make rice available to the poorer sections at prices cheaper than today's.

It needs no saying that this is a difficult task. Nor are we, my colleagues and myself, conceited enough to imagine that we have the means to fulfil this task satisfactorily. We are ready to accept any helpful suggestion and advice and I appeal to the people to bless us by giving us such advice and suggestions.

What is stated above relates only to what has to be done immediately to face the food problem. In addition, there are some permanent and basic measures to be taken. Increasing production and towards this end, giving technical and material help to the peasants, specially the poor peasants; implementing land reforms so as to increase the incomes of tenants and agricultural workers; enforcing strict procurement from rich peasants and landlords to increase the stock in the hands of the Government; changing the present anti-people levy and price system to help the poor peasants; getting the Centre to take measures to collect paddy from surplus States and to reach it to Kerala in time for distribution—all this has to be done, and I appeal to the people for help and cooperation in these tasks.

Next in importance of the food problem is the problem of the relations between the Government and Government employees. As stated in the joint statement (of the Opposition parties,) only if there are service conditons which do not create dissatisfaction among Government employees, a democratic administration can be efficiently run.

Unfortunately, today, Government employees are extremely dissatisfied. The January strike of NGOs was the outward expression of this dissatisfaction. It will be our endeavour to remove the dissatisfaction which led to that strike and other agitations. Though there are difficulties in spelling out now the details of how this will be done, I have no hesitation in declaring that the demand raised by the NGOs that they must get dearness allowance at Central rates is a just demand. We think that the practical problems and details about conceding this demand have to be discussed and decided with

representatives of NGOs organizations. The Government will also try to solve all other problems concerning relations between the Government and employees similarly through mutual discussions. Following the NGO's strike, action had been taken against many. It will be one of the immediate tasks of the Government to examine all these actions and give the necessary remedies.

Many actions have also been taken after the Kerala Bandh and similar agitations. Many cases are still pending in this connection. All of them will be reviewed and legitimate remedies given.

As in all other State's, a problem which demands immediate attention in Kerala also is the problem of corruption in the administration. Though many speeches and official statements have been made about eradication of corruption, everyone knows that corruption is even more rampant today. In regard to corruption among Ministers, MLAs and other people's representatives, even the recommendations of the Santanam Committee have so far not been implemented. In this situation, even as a modest beginning, some steps have to be urgently taken. They are :

(a) Review of the present provisions to detect corruption among officials and punish them so as to make the necessary changes and implement them more effectively.

(b) Take practical steps to implement immediately the recommendations of the Santanam Committee for enquiring into and taking action in charges of corruption raised against Ministers.

(c) Effective provisions for Ministers, MLAs and other people's representatives who come into contact with officials and the administration to declare their assets and for scrutinizing these declarations.

The recommendations which the Government makes regarding all this will be placed before the Legislative Assembly and the people and will be liable to their criticism and suggestions. I appeal to all friends

to give us these criticisms and suggestions and make our effort successful.

There is another related problem. And that is a code of conduct which clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of Ministers, MLAs and mass organizations. It is a fact that many wrong notions about this prevail among us.

Some consider that democracy means unrestricted right for those elected as people's representatives to interfere at all levels of the administration to any extent they like. Some others hold that elected representatives should only be concerned with policy declarations and legislations and the day-to-day administration should be left entirely to the wishes of the officials. While the former argue that the bureaucratic attitude of officials is responsible for corruption, the latter hold that the source of corruption is interference by people's representatives.

Both these are half-truths and hence will have to go a little deeper into it to solve this problem. Such an examination of the problem and on its basis, the regularization of relations between officials and people's representatives have become an urgent task of the Government.

As pointed out earlier, I have not attempted here to go into all the problems facing the State and dealt with in the Opposition parties' joint statement. Obviously, it will need some days before detailed decisions can be taken about each one of them. This statement has only dealt with the most important problems concerning the day-to-day life of the people like food, administration, etc. As in these problems, in regard to other problems also, I appeal to all without differences of caste, religion and party, to help us to find correct solutions and implement them.

Before concluding, I appeal for cooperation from the people and mass organizations in regard to one matter. Not only in this State, but in other States also, a good portion of the time of Ministers is spent in inaugurations and such other functions. The result is that both the time of the Ministers and money from the exchequer are wasted. I wish this would be ended.

## Declaration of the Polit Bureau of the C.P.I.(M) on the United Front Government and Our Tasks.\*

*The Communist Party of India congratulates the people of Bengal on their success in ousting the Congress from power and establishing a coalition Ministry in which our Party is playing a prominent role. Among the coalition parties it is the largest single party and has secured votes which far exceed the votes claimed by any political party in the coalition. The Polit Bureau thanks the electorate for demonstrating their faith in our Party which single-handedly or in coalition with other progressive parties has carried on the banner of people's struggle unflinchingly and unwaveringly.*

The line of united front pursued by our Party correctly represented the desire of the masses eager to throw off the Congress. It led to the complete rout of the Congress party in Kerala and formation of a coalition Ministry headed by us. It led to the defeat of the Congress in West Bengal and formation of present Ministry. The Congress was reduced to a minority in seven other States—the keen desire of the masses to get rid of the Congress party administering a gigantic shake-up to the bourgeois landlord party.

At the Centre also the Congress could return only with a thin majority and a weak and uncertain Government.

Such are the successes of our people, the mighty blows dealt by our suffering people to the Congress party.

Our Party is now engaged in consolidating and carrying forward the electoral victory of the people wherever the democratic forces have registered an advance. In Kerala and West Bengal, we are playing a prominent part in running the coalition-Ministries, in shaping its policies and making them serve the interests of the common man.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, April 16, 1967.



In other States our Party has refrained from joining the Ministries, taking into consideration the class character and strength of the various parties. Our people must know that though the Congress has been defeated in a number of States, it is not always the democratic parties that have secured the victory. In Orissa, the new Ministry is formed by the Swatantra Party—the party headed by feudal princes which also represent the interests of big private capital. In Rajasthan, again it is the Swatantra that is the strongest. In Uttar Pradesh, the strongest party is the Jana Sangh and in Bihar also parties of the vested interests have considerable strength.

We, Marxist-Leninists, can not but feel concerned that in some States the people in their anti-Congress hatred have voted for alternate parties of the same vested interests. Even in these States, we are supporting these non-Congress Governments, so as to prevent Congress Governments being formed and to give these sections a chance to carry out their promises to the people, but have refused to join their Governments.

The Party has taken a stand of general support to the DMK in Tamilnad, so long as it pursues the immediate aims and objects which a non-Congress democratic Ministry is expected to pursue. Everywhere the Party supported the formation of coalition Ministries so that the people should come face to face with the reality and understand who is who.

In Kerala and West Bengal, the Party is accepting ministerial responsibility in coalition with other democratic parties on the basis of a minimum programme accepted by all without exception. The Party is pledged to the people to carry this programme. And because of its strength and influence the Party is confident that this programme can be implemented.

At the same time our Party wishes to tell the people that the carrying out of the pledges for relief and justice to the people is not an easy task to be achieved without the mobilization, vigilance and struggle of the people. After all, it is a Ministry under the Indian Constitution which safeguards the rights of the bourgeoisie and landlords. Besides, it is a

State Ministry functioning under this Constitution under which they have very little power to adopt basic polices in the interests of the vast masses of our people.

The fact that the Congress has been reduced to a minority in the States of West Bengal and Kerala does not remove the basic reality that the levers of economic power are in the hands of the big capitalists and landlords and the entire weight of the law, constitution, bureaucracy, administration supports the maintenance of these interests. What a howl has been raised over the simple fact that in West Bengal and Kerala our Ministers have refused to use the police to crush the workers and people fighting a just battle for their jobs and livelihood.

Friends, all this shows the correctness of what our Party has been telling you—that the struggle against Congress rule is a bitter class-struggle, it is a struggle against the rule of the exploiting classes and it cannot end till the economic and political power of these classes is vanquished.

The formation of Ministries where we have a prominent position has made the vested interests concentrate all their energies on attacking us. It is the task of the people and our Party to see that in this struggle our position is consolidated, the Ministry is strengthened, so that we move forward in defending the interests of the people. Our class opponents will utilize every opportunity to blow up our Ministries. In this struggle no movement forward for the Ministry is possible without the active cooperation, mobiliaztion and intervention of the people.

There cannot be procurement of surplus food stocks without the cooperation and intervention of the people; there cannot be unhoarding of concealed stocks without the cooperation of the poorer sections of the villages; there cannot be any check on sabotage of ministerial orders by the officials without the people ; and there cannot be a stoppage of industrial sabotage by the big capitalists without disciplined resistance and vigilance by the workers.

Fulfilment of every pledge depends on the active intervention of the people and the elimination of resistance by popular unity. Let there

be no doubt. Every issue from tramfare to people's food and worker's livelihood will be an arena of class-struggle and unless the people and parties of the United Front recognize this truth we will not succeed in defeating the offensive of the vested interests.

As is well known, the industrialists have already opened their offensive against the working class. Everyday hundreds are retrenched or laid-off; at the same time they are shamelessly protesting against the resistance of the working class and demanding police assistance. They demand the right to attack the livelihood of the workers, to force him and his family into starvation and at the same time demand that he should have no right to protest, to fight and if he does that the police must use their bullets. We have entered the Ministry not to facilitate their offensive but to halt it.

All this ought to show that relief, justice, etc., are not just round the corner. They have to be fought for by the people at every step. The Ministry must serve them as their weapon and not as a resting place.

This also means that in whatever they do the people must act in a disciplined and organised manner, under the direction of the parties. Every effort will be made to provoke them, utilizing their grievances, to bring them into clash with the police and thus create disruption in popular ranks. People's Committees must function everywhere to give a united expression to popular demands and struggles.

While the people have secured big electoral victories against the Congress, the power of the big capitalists to shape the policies and Government of the country continues unabated, Big Business is taking an open hand in deciding the choice of Prime Minister, the composition of the Cabinet and the selection of the person for occupying the position of Rashtrapati.

That is why the people and the country face a serious situation. The monopolists are preparing for unleashing a merciless economic offensive against the working class and the people.

The economic crisis, born out of the bankrupt capitalist path, is now spreading like wild fire, threatening the closure of one important industry after another.

The crisis is tremendously accentuated by the monstrous defence expenditure which has piled huge taxation burden on the Indian people—an expenditure which can be dispensed with by pursuing a policy of peaceful settlement with China and Pakistan.

The food crisis born out of the pro-landlord policies is sowing general starvation all round the country. The big bourgeois-landlord Governments plan is one of expropriation of this smaller peasants, and out-right starvation of agricultural workers. Under the price mechanism, while the toilers in urban areas get food at high prices, while the landlords and big traders thrive on these prices, the poor peasant is expropriated because he hardly gets a fair price when he sells.

And the abject dependence of our economy on American help, evidenced in loans for imports and devaluation, is taking the country deeper and deeper into the mire of subservience to American imperialism. It is already forced to surrender its sovereignty to trade with all countries and has decided to boycott trade with North Vietnam and Cuba under pressure of the U.S.A. The dependence on American food imports, on American loans and surrender to American pressure are issued connected with our foreign policy—are spelling a big offensive against people's livelihood and freedom of the country. If the big bourgeoisie and their partners are permitted to continue in power this is how they intend to solve the crisis created by India's economic dependence on the USA.

This all round economic and political offensive against the people which if not firmly resisted and defeated will only end in compromising our freedom and independence. The big bourgeois-landlord Government will try to use every means of repression and is likely to attack every democratic right of the people. The battle is being slowly joined between the contending classes—the people led by the working class party and the bourgeois-landlord combine.

Our Party pledges to the people that we and our Ministers, will be with the people in all their privations, sufferings and struggles against

the vested interests, and will discharge our responsibility to further developing our democratic people's movement, and in building broader unity of the people's forces, and will march forward, towards the goal of People's Democracy, and for a New Society and New Life for our People.

Polit Bureau,  
Central Committee,  
Communist Party of India  
April 9, 1967

## **The New Situation And Partys Tasks\***

### *INTRODUCTION*

*We are circulating here the report "ON THE NEW SITUATION AND THE NEW TASKS CONFRONTING OUR PARTY" adopted by the Central Committee at its session in Calcutta from April 10 to 16, 1967.*

*There is only one word of explanation we have to give the readers. The Party has still not discussed the ideological questions in the international Communist movement and come to its own conclusions on these questions. The Calcutta session of the C.C. has decided that the C.C. should finalise the draft or drafts for discussion on these questions at a special meeting in August after which the draft or drafts would be released to the entire Party for discussion.*

*Till such time as the Party concludes these discussions, the P.B. and C.C. cannot make any comments on these questions and we have avoided such comments in this report going only to the extent of the understanding embodied in our Party Programme and other documents adopted by the C.C. This naturally affects to a certain extent the type of report we are presenting here but that becomes unavoidable in the circumstances.*

*POLIT BUREAU*

## The New Situation And The New Tasks Confronting Our Party

It is by now full thirty months since we held our Seventh Party Congress. We correctly characterised it as a Congress which registered a decisive break with Right reformism and revisionism inside the Indian Communist movement. The Congress, besides adopting the new Party Programme, also worked out a *Resolution on Tasks* which was intended to guide our activities in the prevailing political situation. It was mainly in accordance with the lines indicated in that resolution that our Party has been working out its day-to-day tactics on a number of issues that came up before it from time to time.

In the period that has elapsed since then, big developments, profoundly influencing the course of events, have taken place in the national and international spheres, particularly in the national arena. It is imperative that our Party reassess these developments and review its work so that it might address itself to working out the tasks for the current period, *i.e.*, the new phase that is opened up with the post-general elections situation in our country.

The economic crisis in the country, during these thirty months, has very much deepened. Millions of people in different walks of life who are affected by it are drawn into widespread mass struggle, and their deep discontent and anger against Congress misrule found sharp expression in the fourth general elections. This is neither a mere ordinary 'recession' nor a temporary phenomenon due to certain 'stress and strain' of the so-called independent economic development as described by Government spokesmen. It is, as correctly formulated in our Party Programme, a crisis of the very capitalist path of development that the Congress rulers have embarked upon. Its causes are much more deep and fundamental and precisely because of this, the economic crisis shows no signs of abatement and is getting rapidly intensified with every passing day. It is any wonder then that many more class and mass struggles are in the offing in defence of people's livelihood and liberties?

The electorate has delivered disastrous blows to the ruling Congress party, dislodged it from office in several states with a majority of the country's population, and thus seriously undermined the monopoly sway it had held for full two decades over the destinies of the country. The big breach affected in the monopoly power of the Congress party is undoubtedly a significant gain for the people and democratic forces. It inspires new confidence in our people and opens better prospects for their struggle in defence of democracy, national independence and all-round progress.

The coming into existence of non-Congress Governments in eight states, the central place our Party has come to occupy in the two state Governments of Kerala and West Bengal, the precarious majority to which the strife-ridden Congress party has been reduced in the Lok Sabha and the high tide of the anti-Congress mood that has come to prevail among the vast masses of our countrymen – all these put together have brought about a new situation which is marked by great political instability and uncertainty for the class policies of the bourgeois-landlord Government and its very class rule.

The heavy defeats inflicted on the Congress party and its Government and the popular victories scored by the opposition and democratic parties in these elections go on record as the first biggest rebuff to the ruling classes in their drive towards establishing a regular police state. Such a drive was clearly discernible for quite some time in the pre-election years and it was aimed at suppressing the democratic rights and liberties of the people with a view to mercilessly passing on the burdens of the economic crisis on to the shoulders of the people. The anti-Communist frenzy that was sought to be worked up by the reactionary forces as a prelude to further attacks on all the democratic forces was foiled, and in its place the popular hatred against the bourgeois-landlord rule, in the form of anti-Congressism, came to prevail. The Congress Government failed in its nefarious attempts at isolating and smashing the Communist Party, and in turn found itself in splendid isolation and badly battered.



The maturing economic crisis, as the post-election political scene evidently demonstrates, has passed into the political sphere, ushering in a political crisis. The ruling classes are finding it increasingly difficult to rule in the old way and the people, on the other, are more and more unable to put up with the misrule of the big bourgeois-landlord classes and are being compelled to resist and fight back. The political parties and groups of the ruling classes find themselves in utter disarray fighting against each other, while their premier class party, the Congress, which has been built over several decades in the past, is disintegrating with a vengeance. The Left and democratic parties and groups, under the impact of the growing struggles and the mounting anti-Congress mood of the people, are increasingly realising the necessity and urgency of unity among themselves so that they might head the developing mass movement, run the non-Congress alternative Governments in states, and consolidated the popular electoral victories and forge ahead.

It is in the background that the slogan of National Coalition Government advanced by Swatantra and Jana Sangh leaders, followed by threats of forcing a midterm election on the ruling Congress party, and the discussion and debate between these different parties and also within each of the parties of the bourgeois-landlord classes around this issue, will have to be understood and their significance assessed. The realities are such that the ruling class parties neither find it easy to unite and confront the people and the opposition democratic forces nor can they afford the luxury of continuing their quarrels and strifes, merrily without any end. The crisis has forced to the forefront the battle of policies and programmes, which battle, of course, is sure to bring about a new realignment of class forces and new polarisation of political forces.

The political crisis, that has set in today, is patently manifest in what is euphemistically characterised these days as the crisis of centre-state relations. There is not a single political party or group, a single daily or weekly newspaper in the country which today does not participate in the big debate on the issue of centre-state relations and its crisis. What is the essence of the whole problem? As already stated,

the economic crisis has extended to the political sphere, the crisis of the capitalist path of development, chartered out by the bourgeois-landlord leadership, is manifesting itself in the political superstructure, namely the Indian Union and its working, the centre-state relations crisis, in short, is a crisis of all the internal and external policies of the Congress Government, and a crisis of its economic and political policies. All the non-Congress Governments in states are willy-nilly catapulted into the position of objective opposition to the Congress-led centre and all its policies. The present-day Union the manner in which its Constitution is drawn up and the way it is functioning under the Congress Government, is an ideal political superstructure to suit the big bourgeois-landlord social order; it negates the democratic right of the people to shatter the shackles on the productive forces and free the country from the morass of economic and political crisis. The fourth general elections and its result have brought this crucial issue to the surface, demanding a correct and urgent solution to the problem.

Lastly, our assessment of the economic and political crisis in the country cannot be complete and correct if we treat the entire phenomenon as something unrelated to and unconnected with the crisis of world capitalism. The crisis we are facing in our country is, in fact, an inseparable part of the crisis of international capitalism. The growing economic pressure and political blackmailing by the U. S. imperialists on our country and the consequent threat posed to our national independence and sovereignty are serious factors interwoven in the situation. If the policies of compromise and collaboration pursued by the big bourgeois leadership of the state are not resisted and decisively rejected in time, the danger of neo-colonialism stares us in the face.

Such in brief are the new threats posed to the country and the new opportunities opened up to avert the dangers and to advance the democratic movement. These, in short, are the topics we propose to deal with in the present report.

The new situation, thus arisen, is compelling every political party to reappraise and reorientate its policies to the new developments. Our Party, as the Marxist-Leninist party of the Indian working class, can

ill-afford to be oblivious to this changed situation if it is to play its vanguard role in shaping the events and leading the struggle.

We shall begin with the developments in the international arena.

### **International situation and its direct and immediate bearing on our country**

The world capitalist crisis, despite all the ingenious methods the international imperialists have been inventing and practising for the last two postwar decades to avert it, has immensely deepened. Gone are the days when the spokesmen of the major capitalist powers were indulging in the boastful talk of postwar industrial boom in their countries. Also gone are times when the hencemen and apologists of imperialism in the dependent and backward countries were singing shameless panegyrics to the foreign aid of the monopolists, as one aimed at assisting the building of an independent national economy, as one of benevolence to the underdeveloped states and as one extended with a view to defending democracy and national independence of the countries in question. The tightening of the screw on aid, the economic pressurising and political blackmailing by the imperialists, notably the U. S. are on the increase, and the cry of 'have-nations' versus 'have-not nations' has come to be raised in a big way at every international gathering by the representatives of the 'have-not nations'. The attack on the working people and their real wages is steadily mounting in all the major capitalist states.

All the leading capitalist states of the world, despite the postwar revival of their capitalist economies and the introduction of new techniques of production, are coming up against periodical recessions at short intervals of two or three years and are facing acute problems of failing industrial production, paucity of markets for export, deficit balance of payments and even depleting gold reserves as in the case of the USA. The distorted growth of the economies of the big capitalist states because of the allocation of 30 to 40 per cent of their production to defence industries, the spending of 25 to 30 per cent of the national

income on the defence budget, the continuation of the cold war and the colossal sums of money expended in building and maintaining aggressive military blocs like NATO, SEATO and CENTO, the building and maintaining of thousands of military bases all over the globe, and the small or big war gambles carried on by different imperialist states since the close of the second world war – all this, in no small way, has sapped the strength of international capitalism, leading to the further aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism.

Even U.S. imperialism, which for a time assumed the role of the all-powerful and mighty defender and guardian angel of the decaying world capitalist order, is now faced with the acute problem of rapidly falling gold reserves and adverse balance of payments position. The dastardly war of aggression against the people of Vietnam, which is devised as one of the measures to tide over the internal economic crisis, is, in its turn, intensifying the crisis at home, leading to the sharpening of conflicts between the monopolists of the war industries and the rest on the one hand and the entire people and the U.S. Government on the other. Is it not simply staggering to note that U.S. military spending has jumped from 14,300 million dollars a year in 1947 to the colossal amount of 60,000 million dollars by 1966?

Where else does it lead to except to a calamitous crisis when three-quarters of the annual U.S. federal budget is spent for military purposes, directly or indirectly? The U.S. monopolists, thus faced with the deepening crisis, are busily engaged in devising means and methods of shifting the burdens of the crisis on to the shoulders of the weaker states, particularly the dependent and economically backward states of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It is against this background that one has to assess U.S. measures like its dictation to India to devalue the rupee, the tightening of the terms for food loans and other foreign aid, the demand for free entry of foreign private capital into the fertilizer industry, the open dictation, that India should not have trade relations with Cuba, and North Vietnam, and that our Government sign on the dotted line on the so-called treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

However, our understanding of the economic crisis of world capitalism can neither be complete nor correct if we ignore the fact that international capitalism landed itself in a general crisis decades ago, and is now passing through its third stage. Is it any wonder, then, that all the fundamental contradictions of the present epoch – the epoch in which the socialist and democratic forces are on the ascendant and capitalism in decline – are sharpened and accentuated with every passing day? Is it also any surprise that all these contradictions, in the two post-second world war decades, get sharpened and become acute with greater speed and tempo compared to the earlier period? No Communist can entertain doubts regarding this reality and the entire course of international developments demonstrates its truth.

Inter-imperialist contradictions are getting extremely accentuated. The major capitalist states like Britain, France, West Germany, Japan and Italy, which were reduced to the status of U.S. adjuncts immediately following the second world war, have revived their industrial production and recovered from their war-ravaged economies. These countries, as correctly foreseen by Stalin as early as in 1952-53, one after another, are 'endeavouring to tear loose from American bondage' and are compelled 'to break from the embrace of the USA and entire into conflicts with it in order to secure an independent position and, of course, high profits'. The huge dollar reserves some of these states have accumulated and the constant threat they hold out against the U. S. of converting them into gold, the anti-Americanism that has come to prevail in several of these states, the growth of Degaulism in France and its undermining effect on the NATO military alliance, and the apathy of many of these capitalists states, and even open opposition by some, to the U.S. war in Vietnam reflect these growing inter-imperialist contradictions. The setting up of the European Common Market, the prolonged struggle between France and Britain centering round the issue of this Common Market, the repeated demands of Britain on West Germany to foot the bill for its occupation forces, the demand of West Germany for the possession of nuclear arms and the mutual conflict developing around this issue, the outright purchases of several big industrial concerns in Europe by U. S. monopolists and

the increasing resentment witnessed in these countries and a host of similar developments unmistakably speak of these contradictions.

In short, U. S. economic and military supremacy established over postwar central Europe is facing a serious challenge. The political military alliances and blocks of aggression, such as NATO, SEATO and CENTO, assiduously forged for years in the postwar period are virtually cracking. Is it fortuitous that the U. S. imperialists who, with a whip in hand, could order the march of armies belonging to different big capitalists states into the Korean war of intervention during 1950-52 under the banner of UNO, find themselves today fighting the dastardly war against Vietnam all alone with only a few stooges such as South Korea, Thailand, Australia and New Zealand sending only their token armies?

Then coming to the contradictions between the colonial dependent and backward countries on the one hand and the imperialists headed by the U.S. on the other, they are extremely aggravated and are consequently leading to a series of small and big wars between the imperialists and the national liberation movements of the world. Postwar history is replete with any number of such wars in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The imperialists were either suppressing them outright by resorting to the use of their military force or retreating after a compromise was effected with the bourgeois leaders of the national liberation movements. Where these national liberation struggles were headed by the Communists, the imperialists fought their wars of aggression to a finish, resulting either in their rout and the triumph of the national liberation forces or cruel suppression of the movements and massacre of the Communist who were in the van. The fact to be noted in this connection is that the imperialists are not reconciled to the defeats forced on them and are bent upon destroying the victories scored by the national liberation struggles. This can be seen from the examples of China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Cuba and the like where attempts continue to undermine these revolutions, threats of invasion and even invasion not excluded. In the case of those former colonial countries, to which political independence was

conceded after effecting some sort of compromise with the bourgeois leaders of the national liberation movements concerned, new conflicts are erupting since the existence of economic domination, political strings and the deployment of military bases on or around these states continue. Economic pressure, political blackmail and military subversion are the weapons freely used by the imperialists to perpetuate their colonial and neo-colonial hold on these states. A glance at the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America would convince anybody how powerful national liberation struggles, partisan wars and even regular wars have become a pronounced feature of our time. Postwar world saw armed struggles in Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia, Burma and Vietnam, Algeria and Congo and other countries in Africa, of Cuba, Venezuela, Dominica and Guatemala, of the people of Greece in Europe. The imperialists have tried to suppress these people's struggles and had also launched wars of aggression against Egypt, Korea and Cuba and they are today fighting a fascist war in Vietnam. Such in short is the manner in which the contradiction between imperialism and the national liberation movements is extremely sharpened and accentuated.

The old capitalist states like Britain, France and the Netherlands still have huge amounts of their capital invested in a number of former colonial and dependent countries and millions in profits are annually pumped out of them. The U. S. imperialists who have perfected the art of neocolonialism are not only holding fast to the economic and political position they had acquired in the past but are feverishly engaged in penetrating and extending to ever new areas and states. It is estimated that total private U. S. investments in Latin America, Today stand at the record figure of ten billion dollars. The debts incurred by the Afro-Asian countries, according to World Bank's statistic, have gone up from 5,000 million dollars in 1950 to 20,000 million dollars by 1964 . The annual debt-servicing charges alone of the Afro-Asian states come to more than 2,500 million U. S. dollars. The U. S. and other imperialists states, as facts reveal, are plundering annually to the extent of 10,000 million U. S. dollars as profits, interest and through unequal exchange from the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin American. Is it not evident

that the so-called imperialist aid to the underdeveloped states of the world simply pales into insignificance compared to this loot of these backward countries?

Imperialist economic aid, which is dangled before the ruling bourgeois circles of the economically dependent and underdeveloped countries of the world as disinterested aid to assist in the building up of their independent national economies, is being more and more clearly revealed as the dangerous weapon of neo-colonialism to undermine their national independence and to perpetuate the plunder of these states. All illusions about an independent capitalists path of development for the newly liberated countries in collaboration with foreign capital, which are deliberately fostered by the big bourgeois circles and their hangers-on in these countries, are getting shattered under the impact of life and realities. The intensification of the contradiction between the backward and dependent states of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the imperialist powers is rapidly growing into increased attacks by imperialism headed by the USA on the one hand and new and sharp class division and alignments in each of these states and in the world as a whole, on the other.

Similarly, the contradictions between capital and labour in the capitalist states, and between different monopoly groups are also sharpening.

### **The Focal Point of All Contradiction**

For a Marxist-Leninist it is not enough to take serious note of all these world contradictions and their sharpening at the present stage. Besides studying these contradictions and mastering the dialectical laws of their operation, one should be able to determine the focal point of all the contradictions in the given stage of development and in the given situation. Then alone will one be able to correctly locate the disposition of the enemy forces and the main direction of his attack on the revolutionary movement; then alone can the revolutionary forces meet the enemy's offensive, concentrate the maximum forces at the



particular point and resist, beat back and rout the enemy. Otherwise it would be a blind fight against the class enemy. neither knowing from where the attack is directed nor knowing where to resist and counter-attack.

The issue before us to be clinched is as to which of the fundamental contradictions obtaining in the international situation is accentuated to the extreme, crying for a immediate solution, and as to which is the focal point where all the contradictions of our time are gathered in a single knot?

A concentrate study of international development of the past one decade and more would clearly reveal that the contradictions between the handful of imperialist states headed by the U. S. and the colonial dependent and backward peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America has assumed a particular acute and sharp character. It can be seen how the peoples of the colonial and economically dependent countries are struggling for their complete liberation and consolidation of their newly gained independence, and how the imperialists, notably the U. S. through their economic, political and military interventions and invasions, are attempting to suppress, disrupt and defeat these struggles with a view to perpetuating colonialism and imposing neo-colonialism. This is as clear as daylight and no amount of sophistry can hide this truth.

The international gathering of Communist and Workers' Parties in 1960 correctly observed that "the breakdown of the system of colonial slavery under the impact of the national liberation movement is a development ranking *second in* historic importance only to the formation of the world socialist system" (Emphasis ours). Is it any wonder, then, that the international imperialist camp concentrates its main fire on the national liberation movement, making it its immediate target of attack, in order to thwart such a historically important development? Does it not show that the contradiction between the national liberation movement and imperialism is the focus of all contradictions at the present time?

The next part of the question is to locate the focal point where all the contradictions are gathered into a single knot in the current international situation. We have every reason to come to the conclusion that at the present stage of international developments, Vietnam has become such a focal point of all world contradiction. Failure to understand this tantamount to failure to understand the real issues that are involved in the heroic liberation war of the Vietnamese people, and its historic import and significance for entire humanity, struggling for national independence, peace, democracy and socialism. The U. S. imperialists had started their war of aggression against Vietnam years ago, first by illegally landing and stationing their troops in South Vietnam, next involving themselves in the war against the forces of the National Liberation Front then making it a completely American war against the Vietnamese people, and finally ending up in extending the war to the Socialist Republic of North Vietnam. This aggression on Vietnam by the U.S. imperialists completely corroborates the characterisation made about U. S. imperialism by the 1960 Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties. It stated that "the United States is the mainstay of colonialism today", and "has become the biggest international exploiter" and sharply summed up "that U. S. imperialism is the chief bulwark of world reaction and an international gendarme that has become an enemy of the peoples of the whole world." The fascist war against Vietnam and the heinous crimes that the U. S. imperialists are committing there confirm every syllable of this characterisation of U. S. imperialism and its role.

A fuller appreciation of the issue under our discussion i.e. regarding the focal point of all the contradictions, can be had provided we take note of the phenomenon that, at the present stage of world developments, the central theatre where all the fundamental contradictions and conflicts are sharply focussed has now shifted from Europe where they were concentrated in the first postwar decade to Asia today. In the initial postwar years, it was in Europe that the world imperialists, headed by the U. S. had their direct and main confrontation with the Soviet Union and the East European People's Democratic States. During the course of the anti-fascist war and after, a number of

countries in eastern Europe had fallen away from the orbit of capitalism, thus effecting the second breach in the world front of capitalism after the October Soviet Socialist Revolution. In France and Italy, the Communist who stood in the forefront of the anti-fascist resistance movement had come to share power with other anti-fascist forces in the Governments that were formed and they posed a serious challenge to the rule of capital. The breaking away of East Germany and the formation of the German Democratic Republic and the eruption of a regular civil war in Greece also added to the panic of the imperialists. All these developments posed a serious threat to the capitalists order in Europe and the U. S. imperialists had rushed to its rescue and thereby to the rescue of the world capitalist system itself.

The battle-cry of the U.S. monopolists, in those days, was the containment of the Soviet Union and the rescuing of 'European civilization' from the alleged threat of Soviet Communist expansion. The Marshall Plan, the building up of the NATO military alliance, the conspiracies for organising subversion and revolts in the East European People's Democracies, the exclusion of Communities from the antifascist united front Governments in France and Italy, the huge export of American private capital, the arming of the West German revanchist, the massive manufacturing and huge stockpiling of atomic and hydrogen bombs, and the policy of cold war, threatening at any moment to break into a third world war – these were the policies that were being actively pursued by the U. S. imperialists.

But in course of time the economic, political and military realities in the world underwent big changes. The mighty victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, the big beating the U. S. and its aggressive allies got in the Korean war in 1950-52, the fiasco suffered by the Dutch and French imperialists in Indonesia and Vietnam by 1954-55, the surging national liberation movements in a series of countries in Southeast Asia and the Middle East – all this threatened the undermining of the imperialist system in a big way. The popular victories scored in a series of countries in Asia and the Middle East against the imperialists had become a cause of panic for the U. S. imperialists who began raising the pernicious slogan of 'power vacuum' in this part of the world and

they began busying themselves to fill this so-called power vacuum. In Europe, the Soviet Union had rebuilt its war-ravaged economy rapidly, broke the U. S. nuclear monopoly, outstripped the U. S. in the scientific and technological field, manufactured atomic, and hydrogen weapons including the ICBM and the anti-missile-missiles and proved itself to be more than a match to the U. S. in the defence and military sphere. The East European People's Democracies had succeeded in consolidating their revolutionary victories and had put their states firmly on the road to socialism and Communism. U. S. imperialism also found that its aggressive NATO military alliance was effectively countered by the Warsaw Defence Pact under the Soviet leadership. At the same time it was being faced with the mounting tide of the national liberation forces that was threatening to further undermine the imperialists system, particularly in Asia. The U. S. imperialists then shifted their main centre of aggressive activities and sphere of expansion from Europe to Asia. In other words, this change is reflected in what is commonly known as some sort of *detente* in Europe while stepping up U. S. aggression in Asia and the escalation of the war in Vietnam.

The illegal armed intervention in South Vietnam, in utter violation of the 1954 Geneva agreement, and the regular escalation of the war there and its extension to the Democratic Republic of North Vietnam which is an inseparable part of the world socialist camp is the first diabolical experiment of the amended global strategy and tactics of U. S. imperialism for its aggressive and expansionist aims in Asia. Let alone the rest of the world.

The U. S. imperialists are now locked in a mortal conflict not only with the forces of South Vietnam's National Liberation Front which are today fighting the vanguard battles of all the national liberation movements of Asia and the world, but they have also directly involved themselves in a war against the socialist camp through their aggression and attack on North Vietnam. To put it sharply, the U. S. has virtually embarked on a regular war, both against the national liberation struggles in Asia and the world socialist camp itself. True, it is emboldened to embark on this course because of the serious differences and disunity

that have come to prevail in the international Communist movement . But it cannot be denied that this is evidently a gamble on its part to try to cash on these differences and disunity. Either the U. S. armies of aggression and war are defeated and forced to retreat from Vietnam to it might end up in expanding the war, culminating in the breaking out of a regular third world war. Such are the alternatives posed, such is the danger inherent in the situation. American statesmen do not hide this truth, they openly state that "Vietnam, in fact has become the hinge on which the American Asian presence turns, and a U. S. failure there could have far-reaching results ". Does it not follow from this that Vietnam has become for all progressive mankind the hinge on which turns the question whether to allow the U. S. to impose colonialism and neo-colonialism in Asia or whether the Asian countries would rise as one man and route the U. S., defend their freedom, democracy and national independence. Such is the meaning and significance of the formulation that Vietnam has now become the focal point of all world contradictions.

The U. S. aggressive war in Vietnam is only a prelude to still greater and furious assaults on the countries of Asia, in order to clamp down colonialism and neo-colonialism on them. Obviously this dangerous development has a direct and immediate bearing on our country. It poses a serious threat to our national independence and sovereignty, nay to the entire democratic movement and its future in India. The big bourgeois-landlord leaders of the Indian Government have by now contracted as big a foreign debt as Rs. 6,500 crores, the greater part of which comes from foreign monopolists, particularly the U. S. imperialists, and thus virtually mortgaged the nation. With the growing dependence on the U. S. for food, for defence and for the capital required for the five-year plans, thanks to the policies of the Congress Government, do we not see the menace of mounting dictates from them? It would be the height of folly on the part of any patriot and democrat in our country not to realise this growing menace. It is equally a crime not to wake up to the reality as to how the mad drive of the U.S. imperialists for colonial and neo-colonial expansion has brought the world to the brink of a precipice, threatening the outbreak of a

third world war, endangering, in the first instance, the Asian continent which will become the major theatre of such a holocaust. The recent pronouncements of American leaders that they would not hesitate to use atomic weapons against Vietnam, if necessary, have an ominous meaning for all those interested in peace, freedom and the progress of humanity.

The drive of the U. S. expansionists in Asia and the ferocity with which it is being pursued can be gauged when we take a bird's eye-view of the deployment of their military forces. It is well known that they have greatly stepped up their military spending from 14,300 million dollars (10,725 crore rupees) a year in 1947 to the phenomenon figure of 60,000 million dollars (45,000 crore rupees) in 1966. Official U. S. figures admit that in the Vietnam war alone, America is spending more than 12 thousand crore rupees a year. The total U. S. armed forces which stood at 1.58 million men in 1947 have increased to three millions by 1966. And remember that as much as 34 per cent of the total U. S. ground forces are deployed in Asia and Africa. Out of a total 938 vessels of the U.S. Navy, as many as 500 have been assigned to the Pacific fleet. It is openly boasted that the Pacific has been converted into an American lake. If the U. S. has kept around 3,000 war planes in Europe, Africa, Middle East and the Atlantic, it has stationed 5,000 planes in Asia and the Pacific. These figures speak eloquently as to how devilish the U. S. designs in Asia are.

What according to the U. S. strategists, stands as the biggest stumbling block to their Asian expansionism and domination? Just as they considered the Soviet Union as the chief opponent and main obstacle to their plans of European domination and plunder in the first postwar decade, they now treat the People's Republic of China as the chief force standing against their expansionist aims in Asia. The cry for the 'containment of Chinese Communism' and the bellicose anti-China policy of the U.S. spring precisely from this. The setting up of innumerable military bases around People's China, both on land and sea, the constant hurling of threats of an atomic attack against it, the occupation of Taiwan and setting up of puppet regimes in the

neighbouring countries, and a regular war against Vietnam situated on its borders, are some aspects of this policy so glaring that none can miss them. But in order to shield this blatant aggression and expansion in Asia, they, like the 'thief calling thief', go about loudly shouting against a non-existent 'Chinese expansionism'; while actually devouring the national independence and sovereignty of several Asian states, one after another, they pretend to be defenders of Asian freedom and democracy.

The interesting point to note here is that the U.S. imperialists, quite in line with the shifting of the centre of their aggressive and war like activities from Europe to Asia, have also changed their tactical-political slogans. In the place of 'containment of Soviet Communism' the slogan of 'containment of Chinese Communism' is substituted; the slogan of "defending and saving Central Europe and its civilization" from Soviet Union is now relegated to secondary importance, and the cry of "defence of freedom and independence of the Asian countries from the impending menace of Chinese Communist expansion" is pushed to the forefront; if in the former days it was the chosen method of international anti-Communism to spearhead its ideological political attack on the Soviet Union and Soviet Communism, now it is against People's China and Chinese Communism that all the foul attacks are spearheaded; the anti-Communist pundits and propagandists now pretend equanimity and tolerance to Soviet Communism and breath contempt for Chinese Communism; and one often listens these days to dissertations from several bourgeois politicians about how Soviet Communism is mellowed with is mellowed with age and experience whereas Chinese Communism is still in its boisterous infancy!

Why is it that world reaction and the U.S., at the present time, are singling out Communist China as their main target of attack? It is not difficult to understand the reasons. It is because they see Communist China as the biggest stumbling block to their new expansionist drive in Asia : they intend to drive a wedge between the Chinese People's Republic and the national liberation movements and thus undermine a united assault against U.S. imperialism ; they want to tarnish the image

of China among the mass of the Asian peoples and thus cloud the growing anti-imperialist and national revolutionary consciousness among them; and they fondly believe that by effecting a division among the Asian nations—some for and some against China—they can succeed in their slogan of ‘Asians fight Asians’.

These tactics of the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen should not be allowed to succeed. Any failure on our part to see this game of reaction and in that background understand the Chinese People’s struggle at the present time would land us into its trap. No patriot, no democrat and it, goes without saying, no Communist should allow himself or herself to get confused and confounded with the totally distorted reports, cooked up and fed by the bourgeois Press, day in and day out. The vicious tactic of the reactionaries is first, to defame and discredit Chinese Communism and, then to damn every Marxist-Leninist as a ‘Peking agent’! This game should be exposed and defeated. The cause of Communism, the cause of anti-imperialism and proletarian internationalism must be cherished by the Communists as their precious possession and defended against every foul assault, from whatever quarters it may emanate. Special responsibility devolves on the shoulders of the Indian Communists in this regard, because in the final upshot the success of our struggle against U.S. imperialism in defence of our national independence, democracy and progress does in no small way depend upon the unity of the 500 million Indian people and 700 million Chinese people in Asia. This should be borne in mind by every Communist and all revolutionaries. No matter what reservations one has and what opinions one holds on the individual steps and actions of the Chinese People’s Republic, it would be the greatest folly to join the chorus of the U.S. imperialists in their vile song of isolating China from the rest of the anti-imperialist contingents of the world, particularly of Asia and Africa.

Viewed in the background of the frenzied U.S. expansionist drive in Asia and its economic pressurising and political blackmailing that have been growing against the Indian Government. it is not difficult to find out as to what is happening to the so-called foreign policy of non-alignment of our Government. It is now widely ridiculed by the press



in India saying the "Government's policy is not to have any foreign policy." But it is not as simple as that. In fact every positive aspect of foreign policy has been surrendered step by step, paving the way for a speedy surrender to the U.S. imperialists. Our Congress rulers are not tired of asserting that the non-alignment foreign policy is a policy for peace, for independence and against colonialism, and that the Government is adhering to it. Is there a greater lie than this ?

We are tempted to ask as to what sort of peace it stands for if it has not the courage to condemn in unequivocal terms the blatant U.S. aggression and war against Vietnam, killing thousands of people, maiming tens of thousands of women, men and children, and systematically destroying the labour and wealth of the Vietnamese people, and even threatening them with nuclear bombing ?

May we ask what sort of independence the Government is defending when it shamelessly accepts the U.S. dictate not to trade with Cuba and North Vietnam, and on top of it tells our people that "after all we have no such trade with both "?

Is it not ridiculous in the extreme to say that the Government's foreign policy is anti-colonial, when such a colossal world colonial and neo-colonial power as the U.S., with its ceaseless wars, big and small, against the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America, with its 2,000 military bases established all over the world, and with its millions and billions of capital investments in several countries, is not even named as a colonial power ? On the other hand, the USA is applauded as a great friend of our country and as a defender and saviour of democracy and the independence of nations !

Is it not strange to see that, day in and day out, our Government goes begging to the U.S. for food to feed our people, for grants, aids and loans for our five-year plans, for meeting the foreign exchange needed for the maintenance imports, for the supply of defence imports, for the supply of defence equipment, and above all for a nuclear umbrella for protection from some anticipated danger, and yet it brags that we are defending the independence and sovereignty of the country?

Timid protests against the U.S. for supplying lethal arms and spares to Pakistan and loud lamentations that it is fostering an arms race which undermines the economies of the two countries do not take us anywhere near the solution. It is the deliberate policy of the U.S. imperialists to involve nations in the arms race and happily trade on it. It is the policy of the U.S. colonialists to make Asians fight Asians, and they make no bones about it but openly declare their aim. It is a policy of the U.S. expansionists that our disputes with our neighbouring countries of Pakistan and China should be perpetuated and we depend on them more and more for everything, including the defence of our 'independence' -- God knows what will remain of it if the present process is not reversed. To pretend ignorance of all this is to invite peril to our national independence and sovereignty. Unless these policies of the Congress Government are totally defeated, the country is in for neo-colonialist domination by the USA.

### **The Economic Crisis in India and its Real Import**

The economic crisis in our country is now an acknowledged fact and every political party, including the ruling Congress party, admits its reality. Gone are the days when the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie were trying to deceive the people by depicting it as only some 'stresses and strains' in the rapidly developing economy or certain 'imbalances' which had crept into the economy in the course of implementation of their so-called policy of planned development of an independent national economy. Life and realities demonstrate that the causes behind the crisis are deeper and chronic, that drastic and radical remedies are urgently needed to overcome it. The pet palliatives of the bourgeoisie do not work and most of them are already exhausted.

In fact the capitalist path of development embarked upon by the Indian bourgeoisie, a path that was acclaimed by them as the only path to liquidate the legacies of the colonial order and take the country forward, had begun crumbling as early as in 1958-59. Since then every new device invented to overcome the crisis and every palliative administered to cure it has, in its turn, only gone to further deepening and intensifying it. Neither the huge amounts of 'aid' from the U.S.,

and other foreign monopolists nor the generous assistance of Soviet and other socialist states could work as real remedies for the crisis. Thousands of collaboration agreements with foreign capitalists, permitting big inflow of foreign private capital did not produce the beneficial results which the bourgeoisie was constantly telling the people would be forthcoming. Even the devaluation of the rupee which the bourgeoisie prescribed as the panacea for all evils has, far from getting the country out of the crisis, landed it in a still deeper crisis. And after admitting that the devaluation measure has not brought in the desired results, the policies that have now been spelt out are such as will only intensify the crisis even further. It cannot be otherwise because the bourgeoisie has been planning and working for an increase in national production without shattering the fetters on the productive forces and unleashing them fully ?

The food crisis has been permanent one ; there has been hardly any year during the last two decades when "aid" in the form of food imports could be avoided. Steadily and gradually the crisis has been extending from one branch of the country's economy to another as time passes, and it has now reached a stage when the entire economy is enveloped in a deep crisis. The chronic food crisis, the foreign exchange crisis, the crisis of the price mechanism, the resources crisis, the export and import crisis, the repayment of foreign debts crisis, the crisis of the Indian rupee, industries in crisis, the employment crisis, the very plan and planned development in crisis -- such is the formidable list of crisis that we are confronted with today ! These in turn are reflected in the growing crisis of centre-states relations in the Indian Union and in a way, put to a severe test the country's written Constitution and whatever democratic provisions it contains.

The economic crisis that we are now experiencing in our country is not a temporary and passing phenomenon as used to be the case with the free capitalist societies of the 19th century, in the pre-monopoly stage of capitalism, the pre-imperialist stage, when periodic cyclic crisis did burst out, but the bourgeoisie of those states in that period were able to restore their economy to some sort of normalcy, after a while,

by adopting certain means and methods then available to them. Our capitalism and the capitalist class are living in such an era, when they neither possess such inherent strength, nor are the same means and methods any more open to our capitalists in the epoch we are passing through.

So also, for the crisis that our economy is involved in, Keynesian discoveries and remedies are of no avail, since capitalism in our country has not attained that strength, stability and maturity as could enable these Keynesian remedies to be practised with some measure of success, though only for a period, as in the case of the advanced capitalist and imperialist states.

The crisis, as very correctly stated in our Party Programme, is a crisis of the capitalist path of development, a path historically outmoded and ruled out in present-day conditions and is no more open in the present epoch. The present crisis is nothing but an inevitable outcome of the existence and perpetuation of the long-standing and intense contradiction between the forces of production and the outmoded relations of production in our country. The pitiful reforms the bourgeoisie has effected, beyond the confines of which it dares not go, have not touched even the fringe of the problem ; certain new opportunities, opened up in the post-second world war period and the room they had acquired for some amount of manoeuvring to advance their class positions, are getting fast exhausted ; the social contradictions long accumulated and sharpened, have come to the explosive point, seriously challenging the bourgeois landlord order ; and, consequently, the entire internal and external policies of the Congress Government, nay, the very rule of the bourgeois-landlord classes, finds itself at the crossroads. Such is the picture that the crisis puts clearly before us.

In this connection we cannot but mention the problems of the Indo-Pak dispute over the issue of Kashmir and the India-China border dispute, because in their name the ruling classes have imposed heavy burdens of defence expenditure on the country. The twenty years of continued and unresolved disputes between Indian and Pakistan, the two rounds war over the issue of Kashmir during 1947-48 and 1965,

and the big amounts of money swallowed over the years for both civil and military expenditure had in no small way adversely affected our economy. While this was already there as a standing sore, the Congress Government failed to secure a peaceful and negotiated settlement of the India-China border dispute, and even got involved in a war, all of which led to unbearably heavy military spending, whose share in the annual national budget has now reached more than 30 per cent. The reactionary classes and sections in the country may be happy that these continuing disputes with the two big neighbouring states come handy for them to rouse chauvinism and for diverting the attention of the masses whenever it suits them. But the devastating effects on the economy of such massive defence spending have had a big effect in accelerating the present crisis, and the continued spending of such a large share of the national budget is fraught with disastrous consequences for our economy, and, in the final analysis, it endangers our democracy and our national independence.

However, our understanding of the economic crisis in the country is bound to remain partial and highly defective if we do not see it as a phenomenon inseparably linked with the depending world capitalist crisis and as an integral part of this crisis. The U.S. monopolists who, today, occupy the foremost place in the capitalist states have exported huge amounts of their capital to countries throughout the length and breadth of the globe, and are themselves getting involved in war gambles to solve the problems of the crisis that they are facing. They have become terribly ambitious and extremely aggressive. It is futile on the part of our big bourgeoisie to look towards them for help to overcome the economic crisis while they themselves are involved in a crisis and are embarking on all sorts of military adventures to grab every country and plunder its wealth. The U.S. attack on the Indian rupee and the drastic devaluation it secured from us, the open dictation of terms for the credits it dangles before our bourgeoisie, the conspicuous and persisting pressure to get the Government to relax the last vestige of restrictions in the way of the flowing in of private foreign capital, the tightening of terms for food aid and several other steps of theirs go to

demonstrate the nature of the drive and offensive that is in the offing against our economy and political life. The so-called foreign aid from the monopolists, viewed in retrospect, has only added to the aggravation of the crisis, not to alleviate it. It cannot be otherwise because the operation of the cruel laws of monopoly capital has its own logic.

Thus a country with a crisis-ridden economy, with a huge population of 500 million, possessing immense sources of raw materials, strategically situated in Asia, a major target of U.S. expansionism and neo-colonialism, stands as a luring object for the American monopolists.

How does the final picture of our economic crisis stand before us? It is not a passing phenomenon in the nature of cyclical crisis of the traditional capitalist societies of the pre-monopolist era. Its genesis and growth spring from deeper and more fundamental causes, namely the fully mature fundamental contradiction between the productive forces and the outmoded relations of production whose solution has been long delayed. In other words, the democratic revolution delayed, sabotaged and suppressed by the big bourgeoisie and its class allies, is bursting before our eyes with a vengeance. It is a crisis of the capitalist path of development, a path that is historically outmoded and coming into head-on conflict with the entire objective laws of development of the society ; it amply demonstrates the total bankruptcy of this path, together with the whole economic-political philosophy built around it and in defence of it by the big bourgeoisie and its hired penpushers.

The crisis can neither be resolved by the bourgeois leadership of the state nor is it possible to do it within the framework of bourgeois-landlord class relations. The deepening crisis and its devastating results, in the ultimate analysis, place before the people only two alternative : either all the anti-imperialist and democratic forces are speedily organised and united to lead an assault on the big bourgeois-landlord combine and go forward to carrying out the democratic transformation or allow the big bourgeoisie to surrender out national independence and sovereignty to the U.S. and other imperialists, step by step, and to mount brutal attacks on the people's livelihood and liberties, perpetuating their naked class rule and ruthless class exploitation.

Such are the sharp alternatives that the present stage of developments in our country and the world, place before our people.

### **Our Party's Political Line in Retrospect**

The results of the fourth general elections and the political developments that follow completely confirm the correctness of the class analysis made in our Party Programme at the Seventh Congress. The entire economic developments in the country since then corroborate to the last detail the description given there on the path of capitalist development in India and the crisis that it inherently carries with it.

The election results and the entire course of developments following them vindicate fully the political-tactical line our Party as laid down in the *Resolution on Tasks* adopted at the Seventh Congress and further elaborated and concretised in different documents of the Central Committee and Polit Bureau, in the subsequent period.

Similarly the theoretical-ideological positions our Party had espoused, the determined struggle it has waged against revisionism inside the Communist Movement in our country, and the political results that have accrued confirm the correctness of the political-organisational stand, adopted and endorsed at the Seventh Congress.

To reiterate them in this report is not to rest on our laurels, but only to draw added strength and conviction from our Programme and political line, and in that background, to examine self-critically whether there have been shortcomings and errors in applying the political line to the concrete situation and developments as they were arising, and then proceed to elaborate and concretise it further to meet the new developments.

Let us go back a little into the pre-election period that is now left behind. What was the political game of the reactionaries and the Congress Government? With its economic policies exposed more and more as bankrupt, the Congress Government began concentrating its main fire against our Party with a view to politically isolating it and smashing it. There had been systematic repressive attacks on it, using the Defence of India Rules for the purpose, and serious and repeated

attempts were made even to outlaw it. In this nefarious game the ruling classes did not only mobilise all the avowed anti-Communist and reactionary forces in the country but also relied round them the dominant leadership of the United Communist Party which now heads the right Communist Party. The open attacks and detention of all our leaders in 1962-63 and 1964-66 for 26 to 28 months in all, and repeated attempts to unleash repression on us, even during the few months in between our releases and the general elections, go to illustrate the same. The Central Committee of our Party took serious note of this from time to time and in its Resolution On Mass Struggles (October, 1966) stated thus :

“Our Party, which stands in the forefront of these rising mass struggles, which alone consistently exposes the bankrupt path of capitalist development and advocates the alternative path of People’s Democracy, is singled out by the Government and made the main target of attack. The anti-Communist hysteria that the reactionary forces are trying to fan in the country, the systematic slander campaign unleashed by the Government, maligning our Party as anti-national and pro-Peking, and the constant efforts of the ruling classes to hold our Party responsible for every unrest and thus attack it by arrests and detentions of its leaders and workers is not fortuitous, it is a deliberate attempt to isolate and smash our Party, to behead the rapidly growing mass democratic movement of leadership”.

Determined to foil this vicious attack and attempt of the ruling party, the Central Committee resolution further observed :

“The Central Committee notes with satisfaction that this nefarious game of the ruling classes is being understood by the people and other democratic parties in the country and their awareness is tremendously growing. Drawing the lessons of the period left behind us, our Party should so strive to forge still stronger links with other democratic parties and forces in the country as to draw them into united mass struggle and to isolate the Government and beat back its offensive.”

What do the entire course of developments preceding the general election and its results show ? They prove beyond a shadow of doubt



that the anti-Communist strategy and tactic of the reactionary ruling classes to isolate our Party and defeat its political line has met with a fiasco ; the political line our Party had enunciated, advocated and practised has triumphed. This, of course, is not to minimise or underrate the damage inflicted on our Party and the revolutionary movement by the sustained, foul political-ideological attack and the police repression let loose by the Government on our Party. Notwithstanding the considerable harm done to it and the democratic mass movements it was heading, the political line our Party firmly stood and fought for, has won its first round of resounding victory. This has become possible because the political-organisational line on which our Party is based rests on the correct analysis of the class forces in the country and its concrete application to the obtaining situation.

It is the ruling Congress party that stood in absolute isolation and became the principal target of attack by all opposition parties and groups, without exception, whether they were Left democratic or Right reactionary in their basic class character, and not our Party as all anti-Communists and the reactionary ruling classes very much conspired and worked for. Anti-Communism could not be thrust to the forefront, and it was anti-Congressism that came to dominate the field during the electoral battle. We should note this phenomenon while, of course, entertaining neither any undue illusions about it nor allowing ourselves to become complacent about the potential dangers of anti-Communism in our country. To underestimate this danger in our country is nothing short of courting peril for the revolutionary movement.

The Revisionist party, with all the backing and support it could muster nationally and internationally, doggedly advocated a political line of characterising the ruling Congress party as *essentially* a party of democratic forces headed by the anti-imperialist-oriented national bourgeoisie, pursuing in the *main* progressive policies, home as well as foreign. *New Age, Blitz, Link, Patriot, Mainstream*, all the publicity organs of the revisionists and their friends, also began to argue that the major forces of Right reaction in the country are concentrated in parties like the Swatantra, Jan Sangh, DMK, Muslim League, Akali Party and

the like, and that they were posing an imminent threat to the so-called progressive policies of the Congress as well as to revolutionary democratic advance. In pursuance of this totally erroneous analysis they fought for a sort of united front with the Congress —not a general united front as they, of course, assert! — against all the reactionary parties they had listed and against the big bourgeois-landlord forces whose bulk according to the revisionists remained with these parties and some reactionaries that were still entrenched in the Congress.

Do we not see that life and realities have smashed this revisionist political line to smithereens, in practice forcing a totally different course on them on the eve of the fourth general elections and following it? Is it not amusing to find the revisionists transforming themselves overnight into vociferous champions of an anti-Congress united front? Is it not also equally surprising that they have now accepted, surreptitiously of course, that the Congress party and its Government is headed by the big bourgeois-landlord classes and stand as enemy number one of the democratic forces?

The Right Communists had held their Party Congress in Bombay towards the end of 1964, and worked out their party programme and corresponding political line. They boasted that it was all a piece of creative Marxism and enjoyed the blessings and support of several international Communist parties. Within hardly three months after their Congress, the entire political line and the programmatic understanding behind it had met its Waterloo in the midterm elections of Kerala. They dared not repeat it in the 1967 general elections and had to put their entire Bombay programme and political line in cold storage and were forced to resort to a Left opportunist manoeuvre to extricate themselves from the mire. What their Hyderabad National Council had done in the middle of 1966 was just this. The volte face was noted by all those conversant with the subject, and there were wide public comments and criticisms over it. And yet they continued asserting that they had not moved an inch from their Bombay Programme and their Hyderabad line was in conformity with it! We do agree with them and hence we characterise their Hyderabad line as a Left opportunist manoeuvre on their part and that they have not abandoned their Right reformist and revisionist line of the Bombay Programme.

Take another aspect of the same problem. A dogmatic, sectarian and wrong attitude towards political parties like the DMK, Akalis, Muslim League persisted in the once united Communist Party. The revisionists, for long, doggedly persisted in it, doggedly opposing even any sort of electoral agreements and adjustments with these parties, leave alone joining hands with them for forging united fronts against the Congress. An attitude of 'touch me not' and keeping them at arm's length was considered to be a revolutionary virtue. These parties had come to be looked upon as embodiments of nothing but rank communalism, casteism and disruption. The democratic aspirations of the mass-following of these parties and their expression, though sometimes distorted, by these parties were totally discounted. They were left to be freely exploited by the bourgeois-landlord Congress and its Government as and when needed by it and suited it. Our Party correctly and courageously took the lead in discarding this erroneous attitude and boldly fought for electoral agreements, adjustments, united fronts and finally, even for participation in united front Governments with such parties on an agreed governmental programme. It is true, that in this process and also under the impact of developing realities, the attitude of these parties, on a number of questions, also underwent big changes. The DMK has given up its separatist slogan of independent Dravidanad ; the major Akali Party under Sant's leadership had to sharply demarcate from the slogan of independent Sikh homeland ; the Muslim League had to give up its 'no truck with Communists' line; and all of them have come to agree to fight the Congress party, shoulder to shoulder, and even form and function non-Congress Governments along with our Party wherever it is a force to be reckoned with.

Is it wrong that our Party is legitimately proud of these developments and strive to accelerate this entire process, a process which in no small way contributed to isolating the Congress party and paving the way for forging powerful anti-Congress united fronts in the country ? The electoral struggle during the fourth general elections bears this out, and the post-election developments, of course still more so. It is worth recalling how the Muslim League in Kerala was extremely hesitant in

1965 to unite and form a Government with us while our Party, too, had its serious reservations ; the SSP and RSP for a long time resisted the idea of a joint programme and their final decision to participate in the united front Governments along with us came only after the election results were out. These developments are, undoubtedly, welcome. They defeated the Congress game of dividing the opposition and installing itself in monopoly power with a minority vote in the elections ; they came as a slap in the face of all those who were slandering and maligning our Party as 'pro-China' and 'anti-national' on the one hand and frightening, on the other, other democratic opposition parties with the sin of betraying nationalism and patriotism if they united with us ; the barricades and wall of hatred sought to be built between our Party and the rest of the democratic parties and their mass following proved to be sufficiently vulnerable and we could demolish it ; a fairly good beginning for united actions -- parliamentary and extra parliamentary -- by different democratic parties has been made. The future alone can show how far our Party, as a genuine Marxist-Leninist party, correctly and skilfully carries forward this unity, maintains its independence, applies the formula of 'unity-struggle-unity' and assists the democratic parties and their mass following to shed many of their petty-bourgeois prejudices and illusions, and goes forward to forge wider mass and class unity on a still higher plane.

Our Party fought for this line of development in the political life of our country in opposition to the revisionists, the ruling Congress party and several other anti-Communist forces and has scored initial victories. There is no reason why we should feel shy of this development. Fully aware of all the possible vicissitudes, pitfalls, stresses and strains and even temporary setbacks that might likely await us, our Party should boldly and unreservedly face this task. Such struggle for unity of different democratic parties and groups for the fight against the bourgeois-landlord policies of the Congress Government, if correctly conducted by our Party, is sure to benefit all the parties involved in it and the entire people of our country. Above all it serves as the biggest political schooling for the masses, and tremendously awakens and sharpens their class consciousness.

Here again we observe the volte face of our revisionist friends. On this issue of uniting with several other democratic parties and groups in the fight against the Congress party and its Government, the Right Communists really lost the battle in the Kerala mid-term election of 1965. Lacking all political honesty they continued their rear-guard actions in pursuance of their bankrupt political line even during the 1967 general elections, wherever they could organise them. But, curiously enough, after the results of the elections were out and when the Congress was trounced in several states, they began racing to the forefront to join any and every non-Congress coalition Government, including those in which the Swatantra and Jana Sangh formed the important components. True the high-faultin' phrases and so-called principles of revolutionary purity by which they were swearing have been thrown to the winds by the Rightists. Of course, they dare not admit that they were wrong and that today they are committing still graver blunders by joining every kind of non-Congress coalition Government in the name of correcting their former mistakes.

The panegyrics sung for years for the five-year plans of the bourgeois-landlord Government, the state sector in industry it has organised and the independent capitalist development they are supposed to promote are no more sung by the revisionists. It is good that they have beaten a retreat, though without any admission of their mistakes and after doing a lot of mischief and damage.

The slogan of uniting with the congress in order to fight the alleged and imminent threat arising out of the extreme Right reaction, primarily organised in non-Congress parties like the Swatantra and Jana Sangh, is given up, and in its place the slogan of the threat of national surrender and betrayal by the Congress Government is substituted. This also is not bad, though belated and has emerged only in the election year !

The thesis that the Congress party and its Government are led by the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal national bourgeoisie, in the main, and its only crime is that it "compromises with landlords and admits them in the ministries especially at the state levels", and that on its Government "the big bourgeoisie wields considerable influence", is

now strictly confined to the conveniently forgotten pages of the Bombay Programme. In the new, election-eve policy statements and thereafter the Congress party and Government are denounced as the party and Government of the big monopolists and landlords. This again is a salutary change -- if only they will stick to it honestly !

The number of such volte faces by our Right Communists can be multiplied. Though one is intrigued to watch this swift and remarkable adaptability and adjustability to things, our Party has no reason not to welcome many of these changes, changes in the correct direction. But the pity is that they flatly deny that they have made any changes !

During the entire period of nearly ten months, during and prior to the election, the Right Communists were the only political party in the country which systematically and persistently carried on a vile and virulent campaign against our Party slandering it as a party founded on Chinese dictates and hence of 'Peking agents'. No other political party, whether it is the Congress, Swatantra or Jana Sangh, may be for their own reasons, carried on such a propaganda with such persistence and tenacity, in that period. More than this, the contemptible manner in which revisionist spokesmen and their press were accusing our Party for its alleged joining hands with this or that Congress leader was really amazing. On top of it, they, on the one hand, deliberately disrupted electoral unity with our Party in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Madras and several other places, and on the other, indulged in scurrilous propaganda that our Party was responsible for disrupting electoral unity.

The election results clearly reveal that, but for the Right Communist disruption of electoral agreements and splitting of votes, our Party could have defeated the Congress in as many as 50 to 60 more Assembly seats and 10 to 15 Lok Sabha seats. The revisionists, too, could have gained some 15 to 20 Assembly and 4 to 5 more Lok Sabha seats. While they badly failed to prove their superior mass-hold over our Party in any one of the traditional Communist strongholds such as Kerala, Bengal, Andhra, Madras etc., we admit, they have proved their still-existing influence to disrupt the electoral agreements, to divide the votes and defeat our Party's candidates.

Before we close our observations on this aspect of our report, it should be clearly asserted that had there not been the revisionist disruption of the once united Communist movement in India, it would have scored spectacular successes and the post-election political situation in our country would have been radically different and more promising than it is now. It was beyond their capacity, of course, to prevent the rout of the Congress in several states. Consequently the Congress monopoly sway has been seriously undermined, paving the way for rapid democratic advance, despite them.

The Right Communists, who according to us, had resorted to a Left opportunist manoeuvre in their pre-election political-tactical line as worked out at their Hyderabad session of the National Council, continue to deny that they have departed from their Bombay Programme and assert that their Hyderabad line is quite in consonance with their Bombay line. In that case our Party is hundred per cent correct in stating that we and the Right Communists stand poles apart, ideologically and politically, and the gulf that divides us is as big as that between Marxism-Leninism and Right opportunism and revisionism. Neither our Party's readiness for electoral fronts with them nor our participation in the coalition Governments with them should deter us from carrying on systematic ideological-political exposure of the revisionists as there can be no compromise with it. Let alone the series of key ideological-theoretical issues that sharply divide us and that led to our parting of ways, we cannot but take urgent note of their latest pronouncements regarding their characterisation of the non-Congress Governments in various states and their assessment of the post-election scene. The Rightist ideologies and their spokesmen have been writing in their press that the course opened in the post-election period with the formation of non-congress Governments in some states with their participation confirms the correctness of their concept of National Democracy, that non-Congress Governments in states resemble the transitional form of the Government they visualised in their programme for their National Democracy, and that the election results have proved that the bourgeois-landlord classes can be made to abandon the using of violence to safeguard their social order and political power, etc. We

repeat that these are utterly revisionist conclusions, and to pursue this line of thought is nothing but the continuation of their non-class approach which permeates their Bombay Programme.

As against this we have, in our Programme, correctly laid down the character of these alternate Governments, their possibilities and limitations from a Marxist point of view. Our Programme states : "The Party will obviously have to work out various interim slogans in order to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing political situation. Even while keeping before the people the task of dislodging the present ruling classes and establishing a new democratic state and Government based on the firm alliance of the working class and peasantry, the Party will utilise all the opportunities that present themselves of bringing into existence Governments pledged to carry out a modest programme of giving immediate relief to the people. The formation of such Governments will give great fillip to the revolutionary movement of the working people and thus help the process of building the democratic front. It, however, would not solve the economic and political problems of the nation in any fundamental manner. The Party, therefore, will continue to educate the mass of the people on the need for replacing the present bourgeois-landlord state and Government headed by the big bourgeoisie even while utilising all opportunities for forming such Governments of a transitional character which give immediate relief to the people and thus strengthen the mass movement" (Para 112). Our Party will have to wage a relentless struggle against the pernicious concepts of the revisionists, concepts that mislead and disarm the working class and disrupt the revolutionary struggle against imperialism, feudalism and monopoly capitalism. Our Party, while ready to have unity of action with the Right Communist Party on all issues affecting our people, in all mass and class organisations, in the functioning of the non-Congress democratic state Governments and in its work in the different legislatures and Parliament will have to conduct a principled and uncompromising struggle against revisionism and all its manifestations in our country. This task has added urgency because the Right Communist Party still claims the title of a Communist Party.



We have so far discussed how the events in our country since the Seventh Congress have confirmed the correctness of our political line and the election strategy and tactics worked out on its basis. This, however, does not mean that there were no shortcomings and errors in the concrete application of the political-tactical line to different situations obtaining in different states of our country. The election results show that our assessment of the mass hold of different political parties, in certain cases, went wrong, that the estimation of our Party's own strength in some areas and constituencies was highly defective, that the exposure and isolation of the revisionist menace in the mass following of the once united Communist movement was unduly taken for granted, and the Party organisation and its living, day-to-day contact with the masses proved to be too weak to carry out the tasks facing it in several places. All this is dealt with in the separate election review and need not be repeated here.

### **The economic crisis passes into political crisis**

The defeat of the Congress party in a number of states, covering big areas which contain more than half of the country's population, the narrow majority that the Congress has in the Lok Sabha, the coming into existence of eight non-Congress alternative Governments, the devastating defeats inflicted on a large number of prominent Congress leaders including Ministers and Deputy Ministers, and the emergence of a powerful opposition in the Lok Sabha and several other states – all these developments, undoubtedly have far-reaching political significance, profoundly influencing the course of events in India. In short, a new qualitative change has come about in the Indian political situation, which should be characterised as the beginning of a political crisis.

The Central Committee, meeting in Nurmahal in October 1966, had commented on the developing countrywide mass struggles in that phase and characterised them as 'struggle which inherently carry with them all the elements of a political struggles, the struggle for the rejection of the anti-people policies of the Congress Government'. Further, it sharply described them as "nothing but stormy symptoms

of the beginnings of a political crisis.” The election results prove that this cautious, but essentially correct, reading of the developing situation has been confirmed. But to be satisfied with it and stop there would lead us nowhere.

It is very essential to concretely analyse the nature, degree and the exact stage of this political crisis, to find out the actual opportunities and perils for the democratic movement that are inherent in the situation and to exactly assess in class terms what the breaking of the Congress monopoly of power at the hands of several opposition parties signifies. Only on this basis can a correct tactical line be worked out to meet the requirement of the political situation that has been opened up in the post-election period.

The heavy defeats that the ruling Congress party has suffered leading to the formations and functioning of non-Congress Governments in eight states of the Indian Union and the drastic reduction of the Congress majority at the Centre, first of all signify, in objective terms, the verdict of the people against, the policies of the Government, i.e. the policies of the bourgeois-landlord classes in the country..

The election victories scored by different opposition parties against the Congress party should inspire new and added self-confidence in the people because the myth of Congress propaganda that there is no alternative to Congress rule and that the Congress party alone is destined to rule the country has been exploded. This is a factor which was absent in the past twenty years of monopoly Congress rule and its coming into existence now is of a paramount importance, opening up new opportunities for the acceleration and advance of the democratic forces in the country.

The coming into existence of non-Congress Governments comprising different parties and groups in a number of states denotes a big brake on the chariot-wheels of the Congress monolith which all these years was with impunity, making dangerous inroads into states' autonomy, making a mockery of the spirit and letter of the Indian Constitution and its federal structure. The struggle these non-Congress

Governments will have to carry on in defence of states' autonomy and the rights of the people belonging to different nationalities is essentially democratic and progressive in content and will go a long way in influencing and strengthening the wider democratic movement with its ultimate object of replacing the big bourgeois-landlord setup by a peoples' democratic order. It would be a grievous mistake to underrate it.

The fact that our Party has the key role in forming and functioning the two non-Congress Governments of Kerala and West Bengal has its special political importance and significance. Not only have new opportunities been opened up before us by this to set the tone for several other non-Congress Ministries in the country, it also enables us to work for bringing about a new alignment and regrouping of different democratic parties groups and individuals on a much higher political plane than existing hitherto. The reactionary attempts of the ruling classes to politically isolate our Party from all other democratic parties have received a big blow and several democratic parties discarding some of their prejudices against our party, have for the first time in the post-independence history of India, entered into united fronts and united front Governments. Thus, anti-Communism, the favourite game of reaction and counter revolution in all critical phases they face, has received a rebuff, may be for the time being and not yet a decisive rebuff.

The political outcome of the elections also denotes another important achievement for the people and the democratic movement in the country. The ruling Congress party when faced with the developing economic crisis and rising people's struggles in defence of their day-to-day demands freely indulged in repressive methods of police attack on the people and opposition political parties, of course, making our party the main target of its attack. Civil liberties and democratic rights came to be seriously curtailed. The draconic Defence of India Rules which were imposed four-and-a-half years ago were freely utilised by the Government and were sought to be perpetuated. Attempts continued, as late as June-July 1966, to enact and impose on the country new

penal laws such as the "Prevention of Unlawful Activities Bill". Dissolution of duly-elected Assemblies and imposition of Governor's rule had been freely restored to. Police lathi-charges and firings, arrest and detention of people in thousands, and even frequent summoning of the military to hurl it against the fighting people had become a daily phenomenon in the pre-election years under Congress Raj. The danger of establishment of a police state was very much there.

The devastating blows delivered to the Congress party by the people at the polls, seriously undermining the monopoly of its power, has thrown the bourgeois-landlord classes into confusion and disarray, staving off this offensive, though only for the time being. The retreat forced on the crisis ridden ruling classes and the respite gained by the popular forces is undoubtedly a welcome gain, though it will be very dangerous to take it for granted. The people and the democratic forces who scored this victory have to heighten their vigilance, unity and organisation to defend it and extend it. Special responsibility devolves in this regard on the shoulders of the non-Congress Governments in the states and particularly those where democratic parties and groups are predominant.

Lastly, in the matter of assessing the net political outcome of the election, a debate is on in the press and some Left-wing journals as to whether the country has moved politically to the Left or to the Right, and whether it signifies the emergence of Right reaction as a stronger force or whether the left democratic forces have gained more. Some cite certain facts, such as the emergence of the Swatantra Party as the leading opposition group in the Lok Sabha, the Jana Sangh's spectacular gains in several Hindustani-speaking states as well as the Lok Sabha, and the key role they have in non-Congress Governments like in Orissa, U.P., Bihar, Punjab and the like, to prove their thesis that Right reaction has gained more. Others cite a different set of facts to refute it and advance an opposite thesis : they say that three non-Congress Governments, those in Kerala, West Bengal and Madras are definitely Left and democratic-oriented, that in Bihar, too the SSP, which is present in good strength joined by the Right Communist Party and supported

by the Communist Party (Marxist), is pretty strong, they count the strength of respective Left democratic groups in the Lok Sabha – Right Communists : 25, DMK : 25, SSP : 20, CPI (M) : 19, RSP : 2 and other progressive groups and independence : 10—and assert that this total exceeds a hundred, more than the combined Swatantra and Jana Sangh strength. Hence, they say, the Left and democratic forces have emerged stronger. Both the theses, in our opinion suffer from one-sided emphasis and consequently are over-simplified. Both the theses leave out of account the Congress party or tend to agree that it is centrist and democratic. To do so is to misread the whole situation and to mislead the people.

However, the overall assesment of the electoral result needs more careful and considered thought, if we are to draw correct lessons from such an appraisal.

At the outset, leaving aside any schematic division into Right and Left, it should be clearly and categorically state that the electoral verdict is to be treated as the people's judgement pronounced against the big bourgeois-landlord policies of the Government in unmistakable terms. The fourth general elections, held as they were in the midst of a deepening economic crisis, rising mass discontent and during people's struggles for food, wages, jobs and against rising prices, increasing tax burdens and growing repression, gave the opportunity to the people to express their deep discontent, dissent and opposition to the Congress party and the disastrous consequences of its twenty-year rule over the country. Objectively speaking, the people have expressed their disapproval of and opposition to the capitalists path of development, a path that is based on collaboration with foreign monopoly capital and alliance with landlordism. To fail to understand and appreciate this big reality is to miss the main factor in the entire phenomenon and to mislead oneself politically.

Does it necessarily and automatically follow from it that the electoral verdict is a conscious vote for any alternative path of development, in all its implications? To say so is obviously a mistake and it would be grossly exaggerating the degree of political awakening and

consciousness of our people at the present stage. The people did not and could not agree with the Government's policies, disapproved in clear terms the practical effects of these policies on their day-to-day life, and voted in large numbers in favour of different non-Congress parties, whichever party with its political -organisational strength could capitalise on their discontent. Hatred and anger against the Congress rule predominated in their consideration. It is, *by and large, more a positive pronouncement against the big bourgeois-landlord policies and practice of the Congress, than a conscious endorsal of the programmes as enunciated by the non-Congress parties*, whether they are of a Right or Left character. It would be hazardous for any non-Congress party to claim that the votes it has secured against Congress misrule denotes a clear and conscious endorsement of all that its party programme or election manifesto has put forward. As things stand at present in our country, the political consciousness of the vast bulk of the non-Congress voters is anti-Congress and hence objectively speaking anti-feudal, anti-monopolist and anti-imperialist. But its subjective expression as mainly anti-Congress reflects only the elementary stage of political consciousness.

There is nothing strange in this. The big struggles that have taken place against Congress policies in the recent period have mostly been spontaneous economic struggles expressing the elementary discontent of the people mainly against policies leading to starvation and misery. While many of the Left and democratic parties including our Party have participated in and even led these struggles, due to multifarious reasons, most important of which were the Party's own weaknesses, and the Government repression against our Party, we had not been able to raise this spontaneous discontent of the people to the level of political consciousness. That explains why the anti-Congress vote got dispersed between parties like the Jan Sangh and Swatantra at one end and our Party at the other. In the absence of a conscious effort by the Communist Party to educate the people, spontaneity can lead only to bourgeois politics.

What prompts us to labour on this aspect in such details? We deem it essential because it has some immediate and practical bearing on

our Party's work in the immediate future. If we were to be guided by the assumption that the victory scored by the non-Congress parties is in the main, Left and democratic, we tend to highly exaggerate the class and democratic consciousness attained by the people, dangerously underestimate the class hold of the bourgeoisie and landlords on sections of the masses, exercise through several non-Congress parties and groups, and consequently fail to understand and undertake the stupendous task of raising the political consciousness of the people through prolonged, sustained and patient work to wean them away from bourgeois -landlord influence.

Similarly, if we were to accept the other assumption - that it denotes, in the main, a victory for the forces of Right reaction, we tend to clean miss the objective meaning and significance of the non-Congress vote, fail to orientate ourselves to what is growing and developing in the situation, and end up by drawing utterly defeatist lessons.

We should ask ourselves what the new big factors are that compelled several democratic parties and groups in the country to abandon their strong prejudices against our Party and to fight the election battle in unity with us and even to form and function United Front Governments with us. We should also ask ourselves as to what the new and compelling factors are that forced even the avowed anti-Communist parties like the Swatantra and Jan Sangh to put in abeyance their anti-Communism and express their willingness to form and function non-Congress Governments along with our Party, though for our own reasons we did not agree to join these Government.

Of course, one may find it easy to answer, if one were to brush aside the whole thing as opportunism on their part, and say their aim is somehow to get into Governmental power and secure some ministerial posts! It does not require much Marxism-Leninism to discover opportunism in petty-bourgeois and bourgeois parties, democratic or otherwise. But the specific point to be seriously noted in the concrete situation obtaining today, is the predominance of the anti-Congress mood and temper of the masses, the very mood and temper these parties have capitalised in the elections . At least for the immediate present it

acts as a spur for the democratic parties to fight the Congress unitedly and as a check on the Rightist parties from revealing their real colours and openly going to the support of the Congress party and its Government.

The economic and political crisis, as it unfolds itself, not only leads to the polarisation of the forces for and against the big bourgeois-landlord alliance, but also leads to several frictions, struggles, factional squabbles, splits and formations of separate parties and groups among the bourgeois-landlord classes and their parties. Of course, the degree and intensity of these conflicts and contradictions may vary from time to time and also from place to place, depending on the stage and maturity of the crisis and on the sweep and tempo of the mass revolutionary movement.

Any failure on our part to undertake painstaking and concrete study of these developments and to tend to treat them as of no consequence or consider all of them as a consolidated bloc of reaction will cost our cause seriously. While not for a moment slipping into the nauseating theme of the revisionists of discovering class differentiations among the bourgeoisie and attempting to fit into this pet-theme every development and every turn of events, we should study this phenomenon with great care and work out our tactical line. Otherwise a yawning gulf will grow between the class strategy we have laid down in the Party Programme and the tactics which we have to pursue from time to time and phase to phase of the development in order to realise the strategic objective.

As envisaged and indicated in our Central Committee resolution, the election results have forced the political crisis to the forefront. The mass discontent and anger of the people, born out of the economic crisis and its impact on their livelihood and liberties, has found its sharpest expression during the fourth general elections. The election results, as already pointed out, have seriously undermined the monopoly power of the Congress party and given birth to several non-Congress ministries in the states and a formidable opposition at the centre.



Thus the biggest political party of the bourgeois-landlord classes, the Indian National Congress, which was forged and built over several decades of effort and which enjoyed undivided sway over the destinies of the country for full twenty years, has ceased to be the monolithic representative of the exploiting classes. Splinter bourgeois-landlord parties like the Swatantra and Jan Sangh, which have been in existence for a decade and more by now, have succeeded in mobilising and weaning away sizable sections of the exploiting classes from the Congress party; powerful factions of the Congress party in several states have rebelled against the parent body and formed into the Bangla Congress, Jana Congress, Jan Kranti Dal, Kerala Congress and the like. On top of it, what remains of the Congress party is acutely strife-ridden with warring factions in a number of states and the centre. Such a disorganisation and disintegration of the long established bourgeois-landlord party is the first clear manifestation of the political crisis. This has its immense significance for the proletariat and other popular forces interested in the struggle for democracy and socialism.

The second important manifestation of the developing political crisis which has come to the forefront with the election results, is what is now a days frequently and commonly talked of as centre-state relations. In reality this has a much deeper meaning and import. The federal structure of the Indian Union has come under severe test thanks to the big bourgeois-landlord policies of the Government. The Chief Justice of India observes that "with the coming into power of different political parties in different states, the elasticity of the Constitution would be put to test ....." Of course, that is one way of presenting the problem. There is not a single political party or group in the country which does not now repeatedly harp on the theme of centre-state relations, expressing deep concern regarding their present and future.

What is the real essence of the problem? No purpose will be served by feeling shy of formulating the problem in a straightforward and scientific manner in order to seek a real lasting solution to the issue. It is all the more important and urgent for our party, a Party of the revolutionary working class which is vitally interested in the unity of

the workers and peasants of the entire country and in forging, maintaining and consolidating the unity of different states in the Indian Union.

The Indian Union is a multinational capitalist-landlord state and carries with it all the contradictions inherent in the phenomenon. With the attainment of political independence and the new Government embarking on the path of capitalist development, the furious struggles for the reorganisation of states on linguistic basis were fought out and they scored a victory over the resisting and unwilling central Government. Since then, on numerous issues friction has been growing between the states and the centre. We have been witnessing the fight for equality of all languages and against the imposition of Hindi as the official language, the constant friction on the question of allocation of resources, on the issue of setting up and imposing central services in ever-newer fields, on the question of equitable sharing of industrial and agricultural projects under the five-year plans, and on scores of issues connected with rights of states' autonomy. None of these problems have been resolved so far and the states-versus-centre conflict is all the more getting accentuated with every passing day. The dominant leadership at the centre, principally representing the interests of the big bourgeois-landlord classes, utterly incapable of solving the problem is indulging either in panicky denunciation of all the just demands of the states as leading to national disintegration or issuing barren calls and sentimental appeals for national unity and the strengthening of the bonds between the centre and states.

The peculiar manner in which the Indian Union came to be formed and has been functioning inherently carries with it numerous elements of friction, conflicts and contradictions. The coming into existence of a multinational state in the post-independent era where feudal relics are not yet liquidated, where foreign monopoly capitalists hold on the economy is not yet eliminated, where the development of capitalism is at a snail's pace, where the unfinished bourgeois democratic revolution fetter the full flowering of democracy, all these conflicts and contradictions continue to grow and accumulate. We note their speed

and growth along with the growth and development of capitalism that has been taking place under the five-year plans, and that they are likely to lead to a crisis of centre-state relations. In other words, the crisis that has gripped the capitalists path of development in India has now projected itself into the political superstructure, namely the federal structure of the Indian Union. A stage is reached when the struggle from the economic sphere has passed into the political sphere. Such is the essence of the problem, in whatever language bourgeois liberals and petty bourgeois intellectuals might choose to describe it, and however much they might try to conceal it.

This aspects of the crisis poses very serious alternatives before us. Such a situation fosters on the one hand centrifugal forces who work to wreck Indian unity and its federal structure and on the other provides fertile soil for the birth of anti-democratic and dictatorial forces who doggedly are for a unitary set-up. Both endanger the unity of the different nationalities and states in India and both tend to destroy the federal structural of the Indian Union. Similarly both these attempts seriously endanger the class unity of the Indian working class, and the unity of other democratic classes and forces of different states and nationalities in our country.

Either our Party studies this problem in all its dimensions so as to enable it to adopt a correct attitude and to place the correct solution before the people and lead them or we fail in this job and allow the proletariat to become the camp-follower of different national bourgeois parties to the great detriment of the People's Democratic Revolution.

The political representatives of the big bourgeois and their kept press are loudly bemoaning the post-election developments in our country. They say that great political instability and uncertainty have come to prevail. We agree with them, but differ seriously in one important aspects. It is certainly great instability and uncertainty as far as the big bourgeois-landlord regime is concerned, a regime that merrily went on for twenty years without a break. But the proletariat and its democratic allies have no reason why they should share with them this depression and despondency. On the other hand, they should

enthusiastically welcomed these developments, and boldly utilise the opportunities opened up before them to put an end to the crisis and the bourgeois-landlord class rule that is entirely responsible for bringing about the crisis. But in doing so, we, as revolutionary realists, cannot but take into serious account, the strong as well as the weak points present in the situation before us.

### **Prospects and perspectives**

The deepening economic crisis, no doubt has now passed to the political sphere and set in motion the political crisis. And yet it is still in its initial stages, though in the days to come it is bound to get intensified and mature. Any attempt to overrate or exaggerate the degree of its depth and maturity would lead us to grossly underestimate the immense reserve still at the disposal of the big bourgeois-landlord classes, the room to manoeuvre which they still have on the one hand, and do everything in their power to disrupt and suppress the popular struggles on the other to perpetuate their exploiting class rule. Such a wrong or oversimplified estimation of the situation is fraught with dangers to our Party and other democratic forces since it might land them into erroneous moves, and thus play into enemy hands.

We should discard the idea that the deepening economic crisis and maturing political crisis can always and in every circumstance be utilised by the proletariat and its democratic allies to their exclusive advantage. In the absence of a definite set of objective and subjective factors it may be utilised only partially or sometimes not at all. It would also be naive on the part of anybody not to bear in mind that the crisis may also be exploited by the exploiting classes for the purpose of strengthening reaction and counter-revolution, if the democratic forces are not organised and strong enough to rebuff it. It is double edged weapon.

The single biggest weakness in the whole situation that stares our Party in the face is the deplorable state of the political level of the proletariat, its class-consciousness, its organisation, and its unity with the other toiling masses and particularly the peasantry. As a class it is

very poorly organised, and to the extent it is organised in trade unions, the movement suffers from crude economism. Only a very small part of the organised trade union movement in the country is led by the Communist Party while the rest is under the leadership of several petty-bourgeois and bourgeois parties. Its class consciousness is at a pitifully low level and its Communist Party is extremely weak and confronted with the menace of revisionism organised in the shape of the Right Communist Party. Living and functioning in a country as ours, with a predominantly agrarian population, its unity with the toiling masses, particularly with the peasantry, is not yet forged even in its rudimentary form. We as Marxist-Leninists are quite aware that the entire course of progress and the outcome of the struggle ultimately, depends upon the degree of the development of the class consciousness and organisation of the proletariat as a class and its firm alliance with the peasantry. Our Central Committee has already examined the serious defects of our work in the working class and peasant fronts and discussed the ways and means to overcome them and these conclusions are embodied in two separate documents now before the entire Party.

But the new extremely favourable conditions that are opened up before our Party and other democratic forces in the country offer them tremendous possibilities to overcome these weakness, however grave they are by themselves. The stage in which things moved in a painfully slow and halting manner is coming to a speedy end. The crisis as it unfolds in all its depth and dimension, is sure to force on the agenda a real and live debate on the programme, policy and practice each political party and group has pledged to pursue. Every party's political sincerity, seriousness and loyalty to the cause of democracy and the people comes under severe test. The trying times ahead, with the deepening of the crisis and the mounting assaults of the U. S. imperialists on our country's economic and political independence, are sure to reveal glaringly which party stands where – for or against imperialism, for or against genuine national interests and for or against the people. The time when parties could cash on mere anti-Congress discontent of the masses, even without any positive, progressive and alternative policies and practice of their own, is coming to an end. Unlike in the dull and drab periods,

the developing crisis draws the masses, even the most politically backward, into active politics with astonishing speed and tempo. In short, a great new realignment of class forces begins and sharp class polarisation takes place; new and immense opportunities to rouse the class consciousness of the proletariat, to organise them on a wider scale and to lead them into action have grown; the ever-increasing scope to win allies and to build the People's Democratic Front is unfolding. The future alone can show how far our Party will succeed or not in successfully utilising these great opportunities that history offers it at this juncture.

The crisis in the industrial field is already hitting hard several branches and sectors of the industry. The installed capacity in a number of big industrial plants, in both the privately owned and the public sector undertakings is lying idle as neither an adequate internal market is available nor the external market is opened to their full production. Several engineering industries particularly small and medium are facing an acute crisis partly because of the paucity of raw material imports which are needed and partly because of the shrinkage of the market. Even the country's textile industry, often talked of as the pride industry of India is hit hard and compelled to run only five days in the week, for shortage of required cotton imports and necessary foreign exchange to meet their cost. Lay-off, Lock-outs, retrenchments and closures have become quite frequent phenomena these days. The bourgeoisie has been openly talking about an "industrial recession" and "unrest among the working class".

Is there any doubt that all this, in the first place, leads to the extreme sharpening and accentuation of the contradiction between the working class and the capitalists, paving the way for furious class battle? Surely, it will be so and to think otherwise is to live in a dreamland of one's own.

Similarly, is it not to be visualised that conflicts and contradictions will grow faster between the big and monopolist sections of the capitalists on the one hand, and the rest of its class brethren – medium, small and the like, on the other, as the latter go deeper into the crisis

and the former attempts to solve it, not only at the expense of the workers and the people but also, at the expense of the latter? Yes, we should carefully follow and analyse this feature, a feature that is bound to bring about the political and class differentiation among the Indian bourgeoisie, dividing them into monopolist, collaborationist and pro-imperialist sections on the one side and anti-imperialist and genuine national bourgeoisie on the other.

Together with the sharpening of the contradictions cited above, is it conceivable that the crisis does not force the agrarian question to the forefront as the central item on the agenda, and open the prospect of securing wider allies for the proletariat on this issue, including those sections of the bourgeoisie interested in the speedy expansion of the internal market? Do we not observe that the grave food crisis, the shrinking of the consumers' goods market, the paucity of raw materials like cotton and jute, the growing unemployment in the countryside, the drying up of the internal resources for capital formation, etc. are compelling every political party to focus its attention on the agrarian issue? For any Communist to presume otherwise tantamounts to missing the essence of the Marxist-Leninist characterisation that the Indian revolution is, at the present stage, passing through the stage of the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and democratic revolution, and that the agrarian revolution is the axis of such a democratic revolution.

Such are the big prospects and great opportunities that the present economic-political crisis unfolds before the proletariat and its Communist Party in our country. It is for our Party either to fully understand this rise to the occasion and skilfully utilise them to further the cause of the revolutionary movement and its advance with great strides or to fail to do so by drifting into Right or Left opportunist blunders and court defeat and disaster.

It goes without saying that all that we have indicated above does not take place automatically, left to itself. Everything depends, primarily, on the degree of class consciousness of the proletariat, its organisation – both Party and trade union, the degree of the alliance it forges with the peasantry and the heroic struggle it wages. This alone sets tone to the entire process, intensifies class conflicts and

contradictions between the different other classes and strata, and paves the way for winning more and more allies for the democratic revolution.

### **Contradiction Between Nation As a Whole And Foreign Imperialism**

Before closing our observations on this specific topic of the prospects and perspectives opening up before our Party and the people it would be a grievous mistake on our part to omit another important detail, namely the contradiction between foreign imperialism and our country as a whole, and its intensification and the consequent impact on development at home.

We discussed in the foregoing pages the growing threat to our national independence and sovereignty at the hands of the imperialists, notably the U.S. imperialists, and the danger of the big bourgeois-landlord dominated Government of India surrendering to them, step by step, in the face of the growing imperialist pressure and blackmail. This is a patent and the danger is real. There can be no two opinions about it and we are witnessing increasing awareness of the this danger in our countrymen.

In the days to come, as the economic crisis deepens and the pressure of the imperialists increases, the danger of greater and greater concessions to the imperialists by the big bourgeois-led Government, allowing the foreign monopolists to make still bigger inroads into our economy and political life, becomes more serious. It would be dangerous to underrate this menace and relax our struggle against it. In fact, much more is left to be done in this regard and the Party will have to do everything in its power to mobilise the entire nation against the menace of imperialism and the treachery and betrayal of the big bourgeoisie.

However, it might lead us into serious tactical blunders if we do not bear in mind another aspect of the same problem and leave it out of account as of no consequence. Our Party Programme deals with that aspect and lays down the line to guide our activities in no uncertain



terms. It states that the central and fundamental contradiction at the present stage of our People's Democratic Revolution is the contradiction between the People's Democratic Front comprising of workers, peasants, middle classes and the national bourgeoisie other than the big bourgeoisie on the one hand and the state and Government led by the big bourgeoisie on the other. While stating this, the Programme goes further and observes that the working class and the Communist Party "does take cognisance of the contradictions and conflicts that do exist between the Indian bourgeoisie, including the big bourgeoisie, and foreign imperialists. They express themselves on the issues of war and peace, on the economic and political relations with socialist countries, on the terms of aid from foreign monopolists, on the question of finding adequate markets for our exports, and on the question of foreign policy and defence of national independence. In the background of the daily intensifying general crisis of world capitalism, the different contradictions obtaining in the national and international sphere are bound to get intensified." (Para 108, p. 47)

This is clearly meant to warn ourselves against one possible mistake, namely the mistake of seeing only the compromising and collaborationist aspect of the big bourgeois leadership of the state while neglecting or ignoring the aspect of conflicts and contradictions between imperialism and the Indian nation including the big bourgeoisie, the mistake of equating every concession and each step of surrender with final surrender and final going over to imperialism; and the mistake of refusing to base the Party's political-tactical line on the concrete developments that take place from time to time and, instead indulging in repeating the programmatic generalisations, which describe the final and ultimate positions the big bourgeoisie is expected to take, when its very order and political rule is threatened by the advance of popular revolution. To put it sharp, it would be an infantile exercise to substitute tactics for strategy and vice-versa. We should guard against it.

It is not some sort of academic interest that prompts us to dilate on this aspect in the present report. The whole point has an immediate and direct bearing on our Party's activities in the period ahead. The

economic and political crisis that is enveloping the country, no doubt, sharpens the basic contradiction between the big bourgeois-landlord alliance and the rest of the democratic classes and masses. At the same time, the fissures, conflicts and contradictions between the big bourgeoisie and imperialists are not only not ruled out, but in fact they do also grow and find expression. A painstaking and concrete study of these contradictions and the skilful utilisation of the same to advance the mass movement is absolutely essential.

Did we not find that during the last two or three years, there arose serious differences and conflicts between the Government of India and U.S. imperialism on a number of questions such as the Indo-Pak war, the fertiliser deal, Indo-U.S. educational foundation, terms and conditions for food aid, the rupee devaluation and the tightening of U.S. and other foreign credits, etc.? Neither was the big bourgeoisie as a class untied in its attitude over all such issues, nor was friction and conflict between them and imperialism absent. As the U.S. offensive increases such conflicts are bound to increase, and the big bourgeoisie does not stop utilising popular pressure for its bargaining with the imperialists, until and unless their isolation in the country reaches a high degree and the threat of imminent revolution to overthrow their class rule is posed sharply before them.

In this connection, mention must also be made of the fact that the big bourgeoisie is still banking upon utilising the contradiction between the socialist and imperialist camps. It would be grievously wrong on the part of anybody to presume that the strength and scope to utilise it is already exhausted, as the big bourgeoisie has now become weak, economically and politically. This tendency of utilising the contradiction between the socialist and imperialist worlds, at least in the immediate future, may even acquire added vigour because of their efforts to defend themselves against increasing U.S. pressure and their eagerness to stave off the economic crisis. Big socialist investments, particularly from the Soviet Union, the offers of still larger aid, and the other trade and economic relations developed between the Soviet Union and the Indian bourgeoisie are important factors to reckon with.

The world contradiction between socialism and imperialism, the exact manner and extent to which the big bourgeoisie seeks to utilise it, and its actual economic-political effects, do, certainly, form an important subject of our study. It would be wrong to satisfy ourselves and rest content with the idea that, in the ultimate analysis, whatever the quantum of socialist aid the Soviet Union and other socialist countries may give, and whatever the scale and scope for the big bourgeois leadership of our state to utilise it, socialist aid cannot prove a miraculous substitute for the democratic revolution in India, and hence what proves strong and real is the collaboration of the big bourgeoisie with foreign monopoly capital and not the friendly ties with the socialist states, since the big bourgeoisie is capable of severing the latter at any hour it chooses. That is an oversimplification par-excellence.

As noted in the earlier part of the report, inner-imperialist contradictions, too, are getting accentuated. We already witness the struggle between the U.S. imperialists and the British for the Indian market, the latter struggling to maintain and perpetuate its existing hold on the economy and the former trying to overwhelm it and establish its own predominance. To a considerable measure the U.S. has succeeded in making deep inroads into the Indian economy, by its loans, investments, collaboration agreements, PL 480 funds and several other measures. Is it conceivable that a huge country with a 500 million population like India, the single biggest economically dependent and backward country, will be allowed by other foreign monopolists like the British, German, Japanese, etc., to become the exclusive sphere of U.S. monopolists without any resistance? True, at the present stage the operation of these inter-imperialist contradictions, directly and immediately influencing the economic and political developments in our country, is not markedly discernible. But it will be erroneous on our part to leave this factor out of account altogether. We will have to watch and study carefully how they will unfold, how different groups of the big bourgeoisie will seek to utilise them and with what success, and their impact on our economic and political life in the days ahead. The deepening crisis will certainly hasten this process and may convert the country into a cockpit of all the world contradictions of our time.

Hence the economic and political crisis that has set in and the possible course of developments as they unfold themselves more and more, confront us with an extremely complicated political situation, testing our Party's ideological-theoretical maturity, its political acumen and its organisational talent. Life has demonstrated that the ruling classes in our country could not be mobilised and united into a solid bloc to isolate and smash the Communist Party, as the Congress Government and other reactionaries fondly hoped and seriously worked for, particularly during the course of the last three years and more. It also demonstrated that the ruling classes miserably failed to prevent the developing unity among different democratic parties and groups, their forging electoral fronts to fight against the Congress, and finally forming and functioning United Front Governments in several states, in two of which, Kerala and West Bengal, our Party occupies a central place. Life and experience, further, has equally shown how the attacks of the Congress Government on the lives and liberties of the people, on the country's Constitution and its democratic provisions and on the proletariat and its Communist Party could be beaten back and the drive towards establishing a police state could be checkmated and a new chapter in the current political situation opened up.

This line of political development for which our party was fighting for has scored an initial, but significant, success. How has this become possible when our Party's organisational and mass strength in the country as a whole is very weak, when the revisionist disruption has considerably weakened the united working class and Communist movement in India and when the class enemy, in the form of the Congress Government, looked formidable and was behaving in an avowedly anti-Communist and dictatorial manner? It has become possible because the political line of the Party is based on the correct class analysis made in its Party Programme; because the election strategy and tactics it followed were based on the concrete political realities present in the country; and also because the crisis and the consequent conflicts, divisions and contradictions that were growing among the ruling classes rendered their unity and united assault on the people impossible.

The big bourgeois-landlord classes and the Congress and other political parties representing them, would not take the defeat lying down. They will embark on repeated attempts to unite all the reactionary parties and groups into a bloc or a single party to pit against the popular forces and the Communist Party. They will also try every trick to drive a wedge between the other democratic parties and the Communist Party. But the objective class realities and the contradictions inherent in them, hinder these attempts at every stage, preventing their fructification. The proletariat and its Communist Party should and can foil all ruling class machinations provided it proceeds on correct class lines and the correct tactics that follow from it.

So, we should neither allow ourselves to become victims of the naive and erroneous idea that the unity of all our class enemies against us is always easy, possible and round the corner, nor should we lose our self-confidence and conviction that by studying carefully and utilising skilfully every fissure, conflict and contradiction in the enemy camp the proletariat and its Communist Party can and should foil their attempt.

The single biggest lesson that stands out is that by pursuing a determined struggle to win allies on a wider scale and concentrating the main fire and directing the main edge against the Congress party and its Government, since it continues to be the chief instrument of the class rule and exploitation of the big bourgeoisie and landlords, we have succeeded in contributing considerably to the people's victories at the polls. This we should pursue with vigour and also cover up the gaps, if any, found on more closer examination. The fact that the Congress party still is the strongest class party of the bourgeois-landlord classes should not be lost sight of and no room should be given now for the revisionist scare of non-Congress right reaction at the present stage, and consequent advocacy of a united democratic front with this or that section of the Congress; it will be disastrous to do so.

### **Struggle in Defence of Unity and United Fronts and the Place and Role of the Kerala and West Bengal Governments**

While addressing ourselves to the most important and urgent topic of the struggle for allies, we should, at the very outset, make it perfectly

clear that this struggle for allies and the degree, measure and extent of its success are dependent upon, first and foremost, the independent strength of the Party, and its organisational class and mass base. Devoid of this strength the talk of struggle for allies remains a catechism and lacks the real sanctions to realise it.

Equally correct and necessary is it to emphasise that the struggle for allies based on correct class lines alone, in its turn, assists the consolidation of the independent mass strength of the Communist Party and its expansion, and thus facilitate the process of its securing the hegemony over the entire course of revolutionary movement.

Having reiterated these premises, let us proceed to discuss the tasks facing our Party in connection with the two non-Congress Governments of Kerala and Bengal where our Party, together with several other democratic parties, has to function and play the major role in running them, before we go to discuss other pressing tasks connected with the Party, i.e., its future line of action in class and mass fronts and Party-building.

In both the Kerala and West Bengal states, our Party is participating in the running of the coalition Governments which comprise of several democratic petty bourgeois, bourgeois parties, groups and individuals. Our strength in the Kerala legislature is, no doubt, decisively preponderant while in the case of West Bengal it is not so, though our Party happens to be one of the principal components of the coalition. Obviously, the class character and composition of these Governments do reflect in the policies they frame and implement, and different parties and groups in these Governments try to put different imprints of their own, even on the commonly accepted Governmental programmes. This should not be lost sight of by our representatives.

In both the states, despite the electoral majorities the respective United Fronts won, a good section of the people, ranging from 35 to 40 per cent of the voters, are still under the influence of the bourgeois-landlord parties, mainly, the Congress. In Kerala, if the United Front had gone to the electorate with some broad Governmental programme,

in West Bengal, that was not the case as different parties had gone to the voters with their respective election manifestoes. In both the cases, it may be stated, definite mass sanctions for a clearly laid down and well-defined programme of action were not there yet. The vote secured by the United Fronts, by and large, reflect the deep mass discontent against Congress rule more than the endorsement of a radical programme, with all the deeper implications such a programme entails. The Governmental programmes adopted and endorsed by parties in the fronts cannot be taken for granted, as far as the masses are concerned. The task of mobilising the mass of the people around specific issues, as they arise, and carrying forward the unity of the allies in the fronts and Governments remains as an important one before our Party and its representatives in the united fronts.

Above all, Governmental power in the states has got to be understood in clear class terms and with all its limitations. The essence of state power, we know, lies in the army, police, bureaucracy, judiciary and jails, and all this machinery belongs to the bourgeois-landlord state. In class outlook, composition and in several other respects it is not an instrument that is suitable even for the implementation of a consistently democratic administration, let alone any class policies decisively directed against the vested interests. A good and essential part of state power resides in the Union Centre and the Congress Central Government and whatever small share of power the state Governments possess, under the provisions of the country's Constitution, will have to be exercised within the confines of this overall central power. Naturally, under these circumstances, to speak of real political power for the state Governments, that, too, of non-Congress Governments comprising of different opposition parties, is unreal and devoid of substance.

It is to be noted that the entire state apparatus, bureaucracy, judiciary and police even at the states' level as now constituted, is definitely class-oriented with a definite bias to the well-to-do and propertied classes. Several well-intentioned pieces of legislation and administrative orders of the new non-Congress Governments, which

are definitely intended to give relief to the poor and toiling sections, have no guarantee of effective and timely implementation. The state Governments, working under the present Constitution, are not free to overhaul and reorganise the state apparatus in such a way that it becomes the effective instrument of implementing their new popular policies. Transfer of officers from one department to another, punishment of the utterly recalcitrant ones and relying on the good natured and dutiful officers, etc., might mitigate the evil but can never eradicate it. This limitation imposed on the democratic, non-Congress Governments of the states will have to be realised, and the people be made aware of it.

It is regrettable that this reality is not fully understood by several opposition parties, let alone the colossal ignorance that the mass of our people are left in on this crucial question. Sometimes, several among the members of the Communist Party, too, fail to grasp it fully. Unless all the democratic opposition parties and the UF Governments, comprising these parties, make earnest and conscious efforts, through concerted actions and propaganda, to dispel this ignorance among the wide masses of our people, it would become a handy weapon in the hands of the ruling bourgeois-landlord party to discredit the opposition democratic parties by holding them responsible for not solving any of the burning problems of the people, a thing which they just cannot venture to undertake within the framework of the present set-up.

This danger, which is common to all the democratic opposition parties, proves doubly disastrous for the Communist Party, a party of revolutionary opposition. Hence a special responsibility devolves on our Party and its representatives functioning in the non-Congress cabinets to endeavour to educate the proletariat and other toiling masses on this issue in order to raise their level of political consciousness and dispel their ignorance. Failure in this regard will cost our cause heavily.

The slogan of “centre-state co-operation” or, in more clear and plainer class terms, the slogan of co-operation between the Congress-dominated central Government and state on the one hand and state Governments dominated by non-Congress parties on the other, deserves closer and careful examination and proper appraisal. Is it not intriguing



that the central Congress Government which, a decade ago, in 1957-58, did not show the least enthusiasm for such 'co-operation', and resorted to every devilish device at its disposal to overthrow the Kerala Communist-led Government, is now too enthusiastic about it? We admit that the times have changed, the correlation of political forces, too, have changed and the Congress leaders' outlook on the nature of the country's federal structure and centre state relations, too, has probably changed since then, and particularly in the post-election period. The crucial question that arises is, whether the bourgeois-landlord Government in state power at the centre shows its readiness to co-operate with the non-Congress Governments and the states with quite opposite class policies and programmes. Or is the Congress party and its central Government asking the non-Congress parties and their state Governments to support its policies? On is the central Government, willy-nilly, proposing a sort of truce, by implication, demanding that these Governments do not attempt to implement their pledged policies and programmes in such a way that they go too far and seriously affect the bourgeois-landlord classes, and in case they fall in line with the demand, it is prepared to tolerate certain measures of reforms within the confines of the bourgeois-landlord framework? Before we decide our fundamental approach to the new slogan of centre-states co-operation, clear answers to these questions must be found.

It is naive on the part of any democratic opposition party to imagine that the central Congress Government has ceased to represent the big bourgeois-landlord classes or has stopped pursuing policies that are in the interests of these exploiting classes, and has assumed a supra-class or non-class character. At any rate, the Communist Party cannot entertain any such illusion except at its own peril. Hence the idea that such a change of heart has come about in the central Congress Government as to make it co-operate with the opposition state Governments and support their policies should not arise.

Then, is it conceivable that the non-Congress democratic Governments, in the name of centre-state co-operation, can either put their programme, policies and pledges to the people in abeyance or

abandon them and support the Central Congress Government and its class policies? Even to propose such a course is absurd as it implies asking the opposition parties to agree to and their agreeing to transform themselves into appendages of the ruling Congress party, since they have formed Governments in some states and are working under the Union and its Centre.

If it is a question of some sort of “truce” that is being proposed between the Central Government and the non-Congress state Governments, one can understand it and decide one’s attitude to it. It is so because the ruling party in power at the centre has ceased to be that-strong, powerful, and holding monopoly sway as to frontally and immediately challenge the opposition parties and their non-Congress Governments in eight states; the opposition parties, too, have not yet acquired the requisite strength and necessary mass sanctions to frontally and immediately challenge the authority of the central Congress Government. Both mark time, avoid head-on conflicts for the present, and move cautiously and with circumspection in formulating and practising the respective Governmental policies. To give any other meaning to the slogan of ‘centre-states harmony’ is deceptive in the extreme, and it is all the more so with the non-Congress state Governments.

The so-called centre-states friction and conflict is not merely, as some try to explain away, some abuses of authority by the central Congress Government to deny the autonomous rights of the states or its attempt to convert the federal structure into a unitary one. The reality is that behind this apparent centre-state friction lie furious class and national contradictions, which, of course, can neither be satisfactorily resolved within the big bourgeois-landlord social framework nor can they be smoothened, at least for a time, since the outmoded and bankrupt path of capitalism is pursued. Any facile idea of establishing smooth relationship with the existing centre, its Government and its class policies is nothing short of trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Our Party and its representatives functioning as partners in the UF Governments, first of all, should clearly understand this, in all its

implications; they should patiently and perseveringly explain to the people and educate them; they should take pains to convince fraternal parties in the UFs about the correctness of this understanding; they should, of course, avoid rushing the pace, and allow time to them to learn through their own practical experience which would be gained in the course of running the non-Congress Governments in states; finally, presenting the case before the public, *at this stage*, care should be taken not to give any handle to our class opponents to slander it and rouse popular prejudice against it, while not giving up or compromising the principle behind it. The truth that what today is actually undermining the unity of different states in the Indian Union, leading to the danger of disintegration, is the undemocratic, pro-landlord, pro-monopolist, and pro-imperialist policy and practice of the present Congress Government. This should be laid bare before our people, rousing them to fight against this threat and for an alternative policy.

The defeat of the Congress and the coming into existence of several opposition parties' Governments in states have roused big hopes and expectations among our people. But a closer examination of the nature of the political power that rests with the states and the scope of relief these state Governments can offer to the people reveal their extreme limitations. Judging from the enormity of the problems facing the people today, it appears that the record of the Communist Government of Kerala in 1957-59 in the matter of giving relief to the masses becomes enviable. With the deepening economic crisis and the acute food crisis that have enveloped the entire economy, with depleted resources and limited powers for the states, and with the running of the Kerala and West Bengal Governments together with several other political parties who do not yet see eye to eye with us on several pressing issues, our Party is faced with an extremely difficult and formidable task. Either our Party rises to the occasion and boldly grapples with it or allows itself to be overwhelmed by events and lose initiative and face all the politically damaging consequences that follow from it.

Hence it is imperative that our Party realises that its immediate political future, in no small way, depends on how it plays its worthy

part in running the two state Governments of Kerala and West Bengal. It would prove suicidal even to remotely entertain the idea that it is the responsibility of the Kerala and West Bengal state units of our Party alone to see how efficiently or otherwise the two ministries are run and how effective or otherwise is the part played by our Party's representatives in these ministries.

Since the fortunes of the entire Party, at the present stage of development, are closely linked with the successful running of these ministries and the role our Party plays in them, the whole Party throughout the country will have to be mobilised to back the agreed programmes of these two non-Congress ministries and see that they are earnestly implemented. Our Party should mobilise ever wider popular support to these programmes and expose every obstacle placed in their way and all attempts to torpedo them by the central Congress Government as well as its party's agencies working in the respective legislatures.

In doing so, our Party will have to preserve its independent identity, and should not hesitate to come forward with open criticism of these ministries, if they are found drifting too far from the commonly accepted policies and popularly expected performances. Of course, earnest attempts by our Party's representatives should be made at the level of co-ordination committees and United Front Cabinets to prevail upon other partners and their representatives to strictly adhere to the policies, promises and pledges commonly made to the people. Only in extreme cases, our Party through its press and Party's spokesmen, shall come forth with its open criticism, which should be friendly and persuasive as far as possible. True, such a development appears somewhat embarrassing to our representatives in these ministries, and also may become a source of stress and strain in the relations between different parties in the front. While doing everything in our capacity to avoid such exigencies, our Party shall not hesitate or avoid doing it on such occasions where it becomes absolutely necessary and inevitable.

Such being the Party's political and organisational stand, a stand without which it cannot play its independent political role, the question

of proper Party relations and co-ordination between the Party's representatives in the ministries on the one hand and the concerned State Committees and the Central Committee on the other, assumes special importance. The CC and State Committees concerned have to appreciate the nature and class character of the UF Ministries and also understand fully the extremely difficult and delicate conditions in which our Party's representatives have to function and the slippery ground they will have to tread on. Similarly our representatives in the Ministries will have to realise how big a responsibility rests on them and how loyally and in a disciplined manner they have to conduct their duties.

Our Party's representatives in the ministries function under the discipline of the Party and a precise and clearly drawn code of conduct will have to be adopted and implemented properly, and it may be corrected and improved as we gain experience in implementing it. Without such a code and without proper co-ordination between the legislature wings of our Party and the respective State Committees and the CC, it is unthinkable that our Party at all levels and on an all-Indian scale can either be firmly and solidly unified, or can contribute its full to sustain, strengthen and take forward the unity achieved so far, among different democratic parties and groups. Any drift in this regard, allowing things to take their own course, and in the meantime to accumulate differences arising out of either small or big errors or even any misunderstandings, would cost the Party's unity dearly. Strict discipline in the matter is warranted.

No quarter is to be allowed to the erroneous idea that it is the exclusive responsibility of the three or four of our ministers to conduct the work of these Governments, ill or well as they can, while the Party committees enjoy only the prerogative of periodical criticisms over differences, misunderstandings and mistakes that have piled up, or busy themselves in the day to day work of the mass movements, outside the legislatures.

Finally, there is one point to be constantly borne in mind by our comrades working in the UF Cabinets. We cannot forecast the actual life-span of these Governments and all the possible vicissitudes they

will have to undergo during the tenure of their ministries. We cannot also definitely say how much relief can be given to the people and what actual possibilities are opened up for these Governments to do so. Our ministries, without either entertaining undue illusions about giving relief in a big way, or courting despair that nothing can be done under the present set up, should always bear in mind that they, as the Party's representatives, should strive to tender our bonafides to the people. Any failure on this score compromises the Party's political line in the eyes of the people; adversely affects the independent mobilisation of the people; and their activities, and all this in turn, will not help us to resist and overcome the vacillations, wobbings and sometimes even possible backsliding of some democratic parties in the UFs and their respective Governments. In a word, the UF Governments that we have now are to be treated and understood as instruments of struggle in the hands of our people, more than as Governments that actually possess adequate power, that can materially and substantially give relief to the people. In clear class terms, our Party's participation in such Governments is one specific form of struggle to win more and more people, and more and more allies for the proletariat and its allies in the struggle for the cause of People's Democracy and at a later stage for Socialism. . .

### **Our Attitude To Other Non-Congress Fronts And Governments**

However, our discussion on the question of the struggle for allies and the forging of mass unity for struggles will not be complete without assessing the different non-Congress fronts and Governments in states other than in Kerala and West Bengal; their class composition and character and our attitude to them.

First of all, it is essential to state in clear and categorical terms, that our Party is totally opposed to the opportunist concept of forming single legislature blocs of opposition parties about which a sort of public debate and discussion is on, and to function them, more or less, as a legislature party of the combined opposition, with the paraphernalia of elected common leaders and deputy leaders, and making them abide

by some agreed programme and common party discipline, at least in the respective legislatures. This apparently good-intentioned and innocent-looking proposal carries with it a lot of mischief, which undermines the political-ideological independence of parties, opens, the dangerous prospects of steamrolling of the small and weaker parties by the numerically strong ones in the proposed blocs, and consequently endanger the very unity of the fronts and their smooth working. As such our Party is, in principle, opposed to it, and cannot compromise over it. It is opposed to such blocs even in state legislatures like Kerala and Bengal, where our Party is numerically stronger than any one of the component parties of UF, and where it also happens to be a partner in the state Governments. Naturally, the question of accepting such blocs in other state legislatures or in Parliament does not arise and is ruled out.

Then, coming to the concrete issue of different non-Congress Governments, as they have come to exist today in eight states, our Party cannot treat them all alike and it would be wrong also to do so. Examined from the angle of the different political parties that these fronts and Governments contain, their programme and class character, they can be roughly divided into four categories. Kerala and West Bengal come in one category as the strength of Left and democratic parties is markedly pronounced and where our Party occupies the central place in the Governments. The DMK Government in Madras comes in the second category and stands on a special footing. It is so because it does not share power with any other party, whether it is of Left or Right character; its programme, pledges and its activities during the last decade and more present picture of a Left radical bourgeoisie in class character, despite certain communal and regional trappings in the past; and it also demonstrated its consistency in opposition to the ruling Congress party in its policies. Bihar and Punjab may be classed into a third category despite some degree of differences between the two. The special characteristic of these two states are that in both these non-Congress state Governments, the parties, groups and individuals who, in general terms, can be called democratic and Left are found in

considerable strength, though in both these states the avowed Rightist Party, the Jan Sangh, happens to be an important component. The combined strength of the SSP, Right Communist Party and some Independents in Bihar and the strength of the Sant Akali Party, right CP and certain Independents in Punjab are of a preponderant character in these fronts and Governments. In the last and the fourth category come Orissa, Haryana and U.P., where non-congress fronts and Governments have been formed. Despite some degree of difference in the class composition and character among these three, all the three can be characterised as Governments with a predominant composition of Right and reactionary parties like the Swatantra, Jan Sangh and the like. From this, it inevitably follows that our Party cannot afford to have a uniform attitude and approach to all of them, and a differentiated approach is strictly demanded of it.

As we have discussed at length in the foregoing pages about Kerala and West Bengal we shall now proceed to deal with the other three categories mentioned here.

The attitude our Party has adopted and our state unit of Madras has been pursuing, both during the course of the general election and after the formation of the DMK Government, is correct. Ours is conditional support to the DMK Government. No idea of joining the ministry should be entertained, even if such an offer is made by the DMK, and our Party's place in that Legislative Assembly cannot be on the treasury benches but in the opposition benches. The principal guiding line for such an attitude is based on the correlation of forces obtained in the state of Madras, both in the Assembly and among the people. Our Party is weak and encounters the serious danger of reducing itself to a camp-follower of the DMK, and losing its independent identity among the people, unlike in Kerala and West Bengal where the Party's mass position is on a far different footing and higher level. This does not preclude our Party from working together with the DMK in the mass and class organisations, if the DMK is willing to do so. In fact we should strive for such united mass work and cannot afford to shun it



on the false plea that the DMK happens to be the 'ruling party'. Why it is so? It is so because the DMK by virtue of its assuming the role of running the state Government, does not automatically cease to be an opposition political party and get transformed itself into a ruling party, either in all-India sense or in its class character and programme. It remains an opposition democratic party and its Government in the state, too, is by character an opposition Government in relation to the congress Government and state at the centre. In so pursuing the political line, our Party should come before the people, on every issue and from time to time, with its independent stand, and mobilise ever wider sections of our people behind it. Any lapses on our part in this regard might prove as harmful to our Party as it was the case, when the Right opportunist line of total opposition to DMK and support to the Congress was put in practice, with all its disastrous results.

Regarding the non-Congress Governments of Bihar and the Punjab our Party faces a ticklish situation which arises from two political factors. The first is that the Left and democratic parties such as the SSP, Right CP, Sant Alkalis, etc., are not in a position to form Governments by excluding the Jan Sangh and Swatantra parties and like groups and individuals; secondly the strength of Congress and non-Congress forces is so evenly balanced that our Party's support, even though its strength in the respective legislatures is four or three, becomes crucial for the formation of non-Congress Governments. Considered from the angle of our relations with the SSP in general and also the coalitions with it in Kerala and West Bengal we could not afford to deny our support on the plea that it is allying with the Jan Sangh. Similarly our Party cannot afford to keep aloof from the Sant Akali Party in its struggle for setting up a non Congress Government on the plea that it is joining hands with the Jana Sangh to achieve the same; lastly when people see the prospect of ousting the Congress and setting up non-Congress Governments there, with hopes of getting some relief from these Governments, it would be hazardous to reject our support for the formation of non-Congress Governments and risk the onus of responsibility for objectively helping the Congress party to

reinstall itself in the state Governments. But when we examine the class and party alignments there, and the extremely weak position of our Party both in the assemblies and people outside, we will have to lend our support in order to enable the other alliances to form the Governments. Joining those 'United Fronts' and agreeing to participate in the ministries, even on the ground of an agreed programme, is not permissible. Any attempt to do so would be trying to play high politics without the minimum necessary independent strength and mass sanctions. Support should be conditional, and in no case more than what we do in the case of the DMK Ministry in Madras. To go beyond this position is fraught with grave political risk for all that our Party stands and fights for, a sort of falling prey to the present, short-lived and doubtful benefits and sacrificing the future. Precisely these were the prime considerations for the Polit Bureau to alert the state units concerned, asking them to desist from any such temptation of joining those Governments under the pressure of other interested parties and the immediate surroundings.

Regarding the rest of the non-Congress Governments *i.e.*, Orissa, U.P. and Haryana, it is quite evident that the predominant and even exclusive elements in some of them, are the Swatantra, Jan Sangh, rebel Congress and like parties and groups. By no stretch of imagination can these Governments be characterised as more democratic or progressive than the earlier Congress Governments. Hence the question of our supporting them does not arise. And yet in the initial stages of their formation and functioning, our Party's criticism or opposition to them should not be such that it will be misunderstood by the anti-Congress minded people, that it plays into the hands of the overthrown Congress parties in those states, and that it does not give a ready handle to the reactionary parties and groups in these Governments to bracket us with the Congress opposition and thus isolate us from the people. Our Party in these states should popularise the progressive steps, measures and pieces of legislation enacted by other non-Congress democratic Governments, particularly in Kerala and West Bengal, and build popular movements to demand implementation of such measures

by these Governments. The most vulnerable points of these Governments would be their food policy which is opposed to controls, procurement, to minimum wage fixation for agricultural labour, their anti-labour and pro-capitalist proclivities and above all their attitude to civil liberties and democratic rights of the people. The concrete study of the policies and practice of these Governments on these more vulnerable fronts and patient systematic exposure of their anti-people policies will have to be undertaken by our state units as well as by our Party, on an all-India scale. But in so doing; we should not allow ourselves to become victims of the time-old revisionist thesis that the *main* forces of reaction are represented by these parties and the main danger for democracy and progress in the country emanates from this so-called Right reactionary parties and the like. We shall not forget that still it is the Congress party which is instrumental in the main in perpetuating the reactionary rule of the big bourgeoisie and landlords and facilities their exploitation and loot of the people.

These should serve as the guiding lines for the present and we shall await further developments and if any modifications become necessary we will make them.

### **The Slogan of National Coalition Government and What it Implies**

With the emergence of eight non-Congress Governments in states and the precarious majority for the Congress party in the Lok Sabha, the leaders of the Swatantra and Jan Sangh parties have been raising the slogan of a National Government at the Centre. It is also followed by intermittent threats of forcing a midterm election on the Congress party, if it is not willing to accept the slogan and form a coalition with them. The monopolist Press in the country has taken the cue and has busied itself with the selling of this slogan. A debate is on in several political parties, particularly the Congress, Swatantra, Jan Sangh and the like, with arguments for and against it. Hence it is incumbent on our part to understand what this slogan is and what its political and class implications are in the situation our country is in at the present time.

Is it not strange that neither the sponsors and initiators of the slogan nor others who plumb for it have spelt out clearly as to what the specific object and programme are of such a National Government and which political parties are proposed to be included in that coalition ? How do they propose to solve the food crisis ? What do they intend to do with the U.S. pressure and blackmail ? Is there a method by which rising prices and growing tax burdens are to be arrested ? Are there alternative proposals to solve the foreign exchange crisis ? How do they want to get over the industrial slump and threatening unemployment ? There is not a word from either the sponsors of the National Government slogan or those who readily fall for it. And yet a delightfully vague talk over this has been set in motion, with a view to mustering support behind the slogan.

Some Congress leaders like S. K. Patil who sense the danger of the ground slipping from under the feet of the big bourgeois-landlord rule have come out in full support of the slogan and are eager for its fructification in order to stabilise and reinforce the reactionary rule that was shaken in the elections. Whereas others like Kamaraj, the President of the National Congress, have come out sharply against it, openly stating their opposition. The reasons for their opposition, also, seem to be from the long-range interests of the Congress party. If the Congress is outright to abandon its facade of secularism, democratic socialism, planned development, building up of a powerful industrial state sector and the foreign policy of non-alignment and instead straightaway join hands or merge with the Swatantra and Jan Sangh, they are afraid it may cost more by loss of mass appeal and the base of the Congress than the temporary and doubtful gain that accrues from such a ganging up. The vast bulk of the Congress leadership is still undecided and is sitting on the fence. Few of them even threaten to walk out of the Congress fold if the Congress coalesces with the Swatantra and Jan Sangh. Many in the Congress are also becoming aware of the dangerous implications of such a move, nationally as well as internationally, because it amounts to a big shift in the internal and external policies of the Government of India in a right reactionary direction.

The Swatantra and Jan Sangh parties which raise the slogan are themselves not free from sharp division of opinion in their respective ranks. Several among them are afraid that the anti-Congress mood of the masses, which they capitalised in the elections would go against them and their parties would utterly get exposed and discredited among the masses as nothing different from the ruling Congress party. Some of them even feel that they would be losing their separate identity and the Congress party would devour their parties. Many among them realise that the stock of the Congress, among the people is rapidly falling and any coalition with it, instead of saving and stabilising the Congress, would go to objectively strengthening the parties of the democratic and Left opposition. They are also worried about the likely complications for them in several states where their parties have certain electoral understandings, agreements, and also partnerships in running some non-Congress state Governments.

There is a whole historical process how parties such as the Swatantra, Jan Sangh and the like-minded, had to be formed and developed. The bulk of these parties at one time or the other were in the Congress fold, and they deserted the Congress. The objective and subjective conditions that led to this process have not disappeared, all of a sudden. The same are coming up against this nice and neat plan of the bourgeois-landlord ideologues, at every stage, and making the task not as easy as some 'wise men' among these parties imagine.

At any rate this slogan of a National Coalition Government at the centre in alliance with the Congress Party runs diametrically opposite to the whole process that has brought about the Congress defeat in several states and the coming into existence of eight non-Congress state Governments, covering more than half of India's population. The slogan, in substance, is a slogan aimed at nullifying the popular victories scored against the Congress in the fourth general elections. It is a slogan, first and foremost, that calls for a united front of bourgeois-landlord classes and their political parties to confront the democratic opposition parties, and with avowed aim of stabilising and consolidating the tottering bourgeois-landlord Government and its rule and the disruption and suppression of the democratic forces. Shorn of all niceties it is an

out-and -out reactionary and counter-revolutionary slogan and needs to be countered effectively and unhesitatingly.

No democratic party or group in the country should fall into this trap, and no democrat or progressive belonging to any party, worth his grain, should allow himself to be lured into this snare. Our Party will have to oppose it tooth and nail, and pledge to carry forward the electoral mandate of our people, a mandate to dislodge and defeat the Congress, and its anti-people and anti-national policies. It strives to unite all the democratic parties and groups in opposition to this treacherous move and carry forward its struggle for the alternative policies and in the process for the realisation of a non-Congress alternative Government at the centre.

In the present phase it lays utmost stress on the fight for alternative policies, the policies that alone can enable the country to overcome the crisis and save our people from the threatening rise of prices, growing famine, growing unemployment, and save our country from the growing dependence on the U.S. under its economic pressure and political blackmail.

The democratic and Left parties, groups and progressive individuals in Parliament should exchange views and initiate discussion whether they would be able to work out a minimum agreed Governmental programme at the centre, similar to the commonly agreed programme worked out for the non-Congress democratic Governments in several states. We are aware that there are serious hurdles in the way of working out such a programme, as it involves some basic issues concerning the internal and external policies of the country. And yet an earnest effort in that direction will have to be made, and the wisdom and statesmanship displayed by several democratic parties and groups in rising to the occasion and chalking out agreed Governmental programmes in several states adds to our confidence and optimism in this regard. Pending the fructification of such an agreed programme, the democratic opposition in the central Parliament should strive to solidly unite on issues, from time to time, and put up a stiff resistance to the Congress Government and its anti-people policies.

It is this struggle of the democratic parties and groups in different legislatures and among the people, in Parliament and in states with non-Congress democratic Governments that alone can pave the way for consolidating and widening the unity achieved by the democratic forces and open the prospects of realising the slogan of a non-Congress democratic Government at the centre.

If the Swatantra and the Jan Sangh parties in their craze for sharing power with the Congress and in their anxiety to save the rule of the bourgeois-landlord Congress succeed in realising the slogan of National Coalition with the Congress party, and if the Congress leadership falls for it, that, surely, is not going to save the bourgeois-landlord classes from their disunity and disintegration. It, in its turn, will give birth to still more differences and disunity among these classes, and probably, on a much higher political plane than at present. At any rate the democratic parties and groups have nothing to fear from such an unholy coalition of these parties, because by such a coalition these parties throw the banner of anti-Congress opposition on to the shoulders of the democratic parties which these parties will be proud to carry, and the anti-Congress opposition mask that the Swatantra and Jan Sangh parties are wearing will be torn to pieces. Nothing is more welcome than such a development.

### **Broad Conclusions That Emerge**

The report has become already lengthy because of the attempt we have made to cover a wide range of topics connected with the assessment of the current economic-political situation in the country and the tasks that confront our Party. It is possible that the analysis of the new developments and several tasks deduced from that analysis are diffused throughout the report and do not stand out in bold relief. Hence we feel that it would be beneficial to summarise them here and also indicate the lines on which we will have to plan our work in striving to discharge these stupendous tasks facing our Party today.

The report has attempted to assess the present economic crisis, its origin and growth, its nature and character and its inseparable

connection with the intensifying world capitalist crisis. We have also tried to point out how the new frenzied drive of U.S. imperialism to shift the burdens of its crisis on to the shoulders of the colonial and economically dependent countries of the world, the countries of Asia in particular, has a direct and immediate bearing on the economic and political life of our country.

Further, the report has drawn pointed attention to the fact that the deepening economic crisis has passed into the political sphere, giving birth to a political crisis. Notwithstanding the fact that the political crisis is yet in its initial stages, it threatens all the same to grow rapidly and envelop the entire social order. Several manifestations of it in the post-election stage go to clearly corroborate the same.

The deepening economic and political crisis also reveals how all the social contradictions obtaining in our country are rapidly sharpening and maturing and forcing into the forefront with bold relief the principal contradiction, the contradiction between the collaborationist big bourgeois-landlord alliance on the one hand and the democratic, anti-imperialist classes and forces on the other. The massive and widespread spontaneous people's struggles that preceded the pre-election year and the results of the fourth general elections, essentially, reflect this contradiction. The damaging blows that the ruling Congress party received and the division, disruption and utter disarray into which the bourgeois-landlord classes and their political parties are thrown into, in no small way, express this reality.

The crisis and the consequent mass upsurge have thus opened a new inspiring chapter in the history of the post-independent revolutionary mass movement of India. An ever-increasing number of common people are being drawn into the vortex of political life, with a new class and mass awakening. It offers tremendous opportunities to the working class and its Communist Party to take big strides forward in building the class and mass organisations of the people, in forging and consolidating the united front of different democratic classes and in defeating the class policies of the big capitalists and landlords and



opening the bright prospects of replacing the present Government by an alternative People's Democratic Government.

However, the report takes serious account of the fact that considering the immense possibilities and opportunities that have been opened up before the working class, there exists a big gap between the requirements of the situation and the state of class and mass organisations of the people and the level of their political consciousness. Special note is taken of how the degree of class consciousness and the organisation of the working class is at a pitifully low-level, how its Communist Party is very weak and even non-existent in the greater part of the country how the Communist movement in India is further faced with the onslaughts of revisionism organised in the shape of the right Communist Party.

The course of economic and political developments that has taken place since the Seventh Congress of our Party, and the events that are unfolding at present before our eyes, go to confirm the correctness of the class analysis made in the Party Programme and the political-tactical line worked out at the Congress. The present report is an earnest attempt to carry forward that understanding and to further concretise, elaborate and integrate it with the concrete conditions obtaining at present. In other words it is an attempt at a new political-tactical line for our Party to suit the newly opened current situation. As is well-known to all Marxist-Leninists, "tactics are the determination of the line of conduct of the Proletariat in the comparatively short period of the flow and ebb of the movement, the rise and decline of the revolution", and our Party is by duty bound to work out such tactical lines from time to time, depending upon the changing situation, and see to it that it dovetails into the class strategy worked out for the entire stage of the revolution in our Programme.

Such in short is the aim and purpose of the present report, and the analysis and tasks deduced on its basis have to be judged from this angle.

The first and foremost task that confront us is the raising of the level of the political consciousness of the people. In the context we are

speaking, in concrete terms it means to rouse the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and anti-monopolist consciousness among our people, besides the general task of propagating the theory and ideology of Socialism and Communism.

Thanks to the big bourgeoisie and its treacherous policies of compromise and collaboration with imperialism, there has been a systematic, conscious and deliberate attempt, since the attainment of political independence, to erase the anti-imperialist ideas and consciousness from the minds of our people and depict the imperialists as friends and benefactors to India. So-called imperialist 'aid', which is nothing but huge "exports of foreign monopoly capital" into underdeveloped countries to exploit and loot them, is sought to be palmed off as invaluable assistance for our national development. The collaboration agreements with foreign capital, principally meant for the joint loot of our people, are defended and praised to the skies as the most effective means of raising the capital resources and meeting the foreign exchange needs of the nation. U.S. imperialism which is rightly characterised by the International Communist Movement as the chief bulwark of world reaction, as the gendarme of international imperialism and as the main enemy of the world people struggling for peace, democracy and Socialism is sought to be passed off among our people as the bosom friend and the protector of Indian democracy.

A systematic and persevering exposure of this fraud by the big bourgeoisie and other apologists and stooges of U.S. imperialism is a must. And the urgency of this task is all the more underlined with the mounting assaults of the U.S. on our economic and political life on the one hand and the increasing danger of piecemeal surrender of national sovereignty and independence by the big bourgeoisie on the other. A concerted plan to produce books, pamphlets, leaflets and articles in our press should be drawn up. All our agit-prop work must be geared to this. Organising seminars at different centres, bringing out special numbers of our weeklies and dailies, conducting study circles in different educational centres, planned utilisation of the forum of Parliament for the purpose and organising critical studies of the several

U.S. missions on our soil and the collection of information about their shady activities will have to be seriously planned for and implemented. The slogan of immediate "moratorium on all foreign debts and their repayments" should be put across to the people to mobilise them around it, while we have to continue propagating the demands for banning of repatriation of profits by foreign monopolists and the confiscation of imperialist concerns and the elimination of profits by foreign capital. To carry out this task the Central Committee should work out the necessary organisational guarantees.

In this context, it becomes an immediate and urgent task for the Party to organise a powerful campaign against the U. S. war of aggression in Vietnam. The campaign so far has been far below what is possible and necessary. We have to understand that the menace from U.S. imperialism is to freedom everywhere in the world, especially in Asia at present, that the struggle of the Vietnamese people for freedom and our own struggle against the American threat to our country's independence and sovereignty are inextricably interlinked, that the campaign in support of Vietnam's liberation is at the same time a campaign against the Vietnam policy of the Government of India and its policy of surrender to U. S. imperialism. It is with this understanding that we have to now intensify the campaign for solidarity with Vietnam and against the American war there.

Then, the task of agitation and propaganda emphasising the urgency of radical agrarian reforms, organising and rousing the peasant masses, and mobilising different democratic parties, groups and individuals around the agrarian programme not only acquires added urgency because of the crisis, but the conditions such as the grave food crisis, the growing unemployment in the rural areas and the steep fall in their purchasing capacity and the coming into existence of non-Congress democratic Governments in some of the states provide additional, new opportunities to boldly campaign for such agrarian reforms and build a powerful movement around it. Our Party's representatives in the state Governments of Kerala and West Bengal should take the lead in the matter, prepare certain land and other agrarian bills, and strive to get

them enacted by the respective UF Governments. In order to strengthen the hands of these ministries, and also to arrest possible vacillations and wobblings among the other parties and groups in the ministries, independent mass mobilisation for such legislations and around them is to be undertaken without delay.

It should be made clear that a number of tasks connected with the work in trade union and kisan movements are already worked out, in the October 1966 CC meeting. The experience during the general elections and after corroborate the correctness of our self-critical examination of these two major mass fronts and the tasks we have deduced. What is urgently needed is to educate the entire Party membership around these documents and to reorganise and reorientate the work on these lines.

On the working class front, it is ever-more necessary today, with the deepening of the economic crisis and the attacks of the ruling classes to pass the burdens of the crisis on to the shoulders of the workers, that we do our all to forge working class unity. All trade unions under our guidance and the AITUC, the central organisation to which they are affiliated, must take the initiative to forge this unity. Along with the forging of this unity, we have to break with our revisionist past of only conducting the economic struggles of the working class and must carry on systematic work to politicalise the working class to raise their consciousness from its present spontaneity to the level of socialist consciousness.

Only if such consciousness is installed in the working class, the class that has to assume the leadership of the People's Democratic Front, will it realise its special responsibility in forging the worker-peasant alliance and to forge this alliance, extend and all support to the demands and struggles of the peasantry.

The Party has to first give attention to the main areas where major and basic industries are concentrated and then extend and consolidate its work so as to expand the Party's working class base.

On the Kisan Front, the Party has laid down the task of reorientating our entire work, of breaking with the practice hitherto of building

peasant unity around the rich and middle peasants and building kisan unity around the rural poor—the agricultural labourer and poor peasant while at the same time championing the demands of other sections of the peasantry against feudal exploitation and bourgeois-landlord misrule.

Unless the Party begins serious work to fulfil these tasks on the two fronts, all talk of building the PDF will be just empty talk. Hence the PB and CC should take it as their first charge to get them implemented by different state Committees, beginning with major state units like Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra and Tamilnad. In the final analysis the measure of success in our basic task of raising the level of class consciousness and organisation of the working class and the building up of worker-peasant alliance, the alliance which is the core of the People's Democratic Front, depends upon the measure of success we achieve in implementing the two documents, the CC resolutions on our work in the trade union and agrarian fronts.

New sections of the people have been drawn into the vortex of politics during the campaign of the fourth general elections, a new consciousness has been imparted to the masses by this campaign and these sections are in search of solutions to their own problems as well as the problems of the nation. The Party, while consolidating this new base through education and organisation, has to pay special attention to radicalise and activise the students, youth and women whom the election campaign has drawn into political activity.

Another important task that the post-election situation has pushed into the forefront is the issue of the centre state relations or in other words the Indian Union and its future political setup. So far a bold, straight forward Marxist-Leninist formulation of the issue in all its dimensions and the correct solution to the same could not be placed before our people. Our Party, as its past practice shows, was in the habit of expressing its standpoint piecemeal as and when certain issues connected with this big question were brought to a head by one bourgeois party or other operating on the Indian political scene.

Consequently by Congress party and certain other reactionary parties are still able to carry considerable public opinion with them that they alone are staunch advocates, defenders and saviours of Indian unity, while certain parties like the DMK, the Akalis and such other parties and groups are able to assert that they alone are champions of the rights of nationalities and states' autonomy. But what is actually happening is something different. Neither are the autonomous rights of the states being ensured nor is the unity among the different states of the Indian Union getting in any way strengthened. On the other hand interstate rivalries, union-state conflicts, and disunity and distrust between different peoples are on the increase. It is assuming, in a good number of cases, an alarming character sowing discord among the working people and threatening the unity and united struggle of the Indian proletariat for People's Democracy and Socialism. The Kashmir problem, the Naga issue, the Mizo struggle, official language quarrel and the so-called centre-states problem that is acute today, are all integral issues of one and the same big problem of the multinational union of India. Our CC should take immediate steps to see that our Party studies the problem, formulates the question properly, takes initiative in the matter and intervenes in the situation effectively.

The ministries in Kerala and West Bengal should take the lead to formulate the problems of centre-state relations concretely and rally all the forces in defence of democracy, of the rights of all the nationalities and peoples. Only by respecting these rights can the real unity of India be built up. Hence by championing these demands we become the real defenders of Indian unity against its disruption both by the Congress rulers who deny these rights and against the national chauvinists of the various states. The undeniable truth that it is the exploiting classes which are the principal organisers of strife between nations, and are the actual centrifugal forces that operate in a class society, must be squarely placed before our people. Or else the class unity of the Indian working class is in jeopardy.

Of course, it goes without saying, that the task of Party building stands as the central task, about which we intend to deal separately

and more exhaustively on another occasion. Still, we deem it necessary to make some observations on this all-important task before the Indian proletariat and all working people. Without fulfilling this task, the working out of a political line or enumerating a number of tasks that flow from it will not take us very far. Here it would be extremely fitting to recall the highly instructive statements of Lenin and Stalin pertaining to the issue under discussion. "It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general. One must be able at each particular movement to find out the particular link in the chain which one must grasp with all one's might in order to keep hold of the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link." (Lenin)

Elaborating the point Stalin observed : "The point here is to single out from all the tasks confronting the Party the particular immediate task, the fulfilment of which constitutes the central point, and the accomplishment of which ensures the successful fulfilment of the other immediate tasks," (*Problems of Leninism*)

"A correct political line is, of course, the primary and most important thing. But in itself it is not enough". "After the correct line has been laid down, after the correct solution of the problem has been found, success depends on how the work is organised' on the organisation of struggle for application of the Party line; on the proper selection of the personnel; on the way check is kept on the fulfilment of the decisions of the leading bodies. Otherwise correct line of the Party and correct solutions are in danger of being seriously prejudiced. Furthermore, after the line has been laid down, organisational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its successes or failure". (*Problems of Leninism*)

Things are made as clear as clear can be.

The question before us now is how the correct political line which our CC is laying down can be implemented and what are the organisational guarantees for the same. The other follow-up question

is : in all the tasks deduced from our political line, what is the particular immediate task, the fulfilment of which ensures the successful accomplishment of the other immediate tasks?

The particular immediate task, in our opinion, the fulfilment of which ensures the successful fulfilment of the rest of our tasks is the one of educating, reorganising, rebuilding, consolidating and expanding the Party organisation. In fact, a sort of well-organised rectification campaign is the dire need of the hour without which it is next to impossible to carry out any one of the other immediate tasks with any measure of success.

In a situation of fast deepening economic crisis and the maturing political crisis we find our Party extremely weak to shoulder the stupendous responsibilities that history has thrust on its shoulders. It has hardly a lakh of membership on its rolls in a country of 500 million people. Excepting in Kerala, West Bengal, Andhra, Tripura and Tamilnad, it does not command a mass base, even to contemplate contesting the elections at least for a half or one-fourth of the existing constituencies. Even in these states there are gaps and serious limitations. In vast areas in states like U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Punjab, Mysore, Orissa, Assam and Gujarat our party is extremely weak and cannot be considered, by any standards, as an organised serious political force to which people can look for guidance and leadership. In the AITUC the Right Communists still have an edge over our party. The AIKS which is weak in its organisation, though mainly under our Party's influence, is not free from Rightist disruption. Above all, our Party's political-ideological unity and its organisational cohesion are far from full achieved.

Today, as things stand, a look at our Party organisation would convince every one of us that it is not in such a shape and form as to cope with the tasks confronting it in any appreciable manner. Heavy legacies of the Right opportunist and reformist politics of the past and the consequent organisational practices still haunt our Party organisation, despite our ideological-political break from the



revisionists. The standards for membership are neither uniform in different states nor upto the minimum mark that the Party Constitution prescribes; organised Party education and self-education is not yet planned and implemented; the concept of criticism and self-criticism in the Party which was virtually abandoned is not yet revived; discipline and democratic centralism, the first casualty of Right opportunism and revisionism, is far from restored; the proper selection, promotion and grading of cadres, and their proper deployment in different class and mass fronts, in fact, what is known as a cadre policy which was extinct in the once united Communist Party, still continues to be extinct; the political-ideological control and check-up on our Party's dailies and weeklies is absent and an organised drive to push up their circulation widely in different states, districts and sections of the people is replaced by spontaneous distribution; the systematic collection of funds to stabilise the Party's resources and organised payment for the Party's wholetimers has been reduced to the job of few comrades, at different levels and the Party as a whole is neither made conscious of this stupendous task nor is each comrade made to contribute his best; the failure to politicalise the working class movement and recruit adequate number of workers into the Party and the failure to concentrate our work among the rural poor and build the Party by drawing a good number of them into it had left the Party with a predominant composition of elements of petty-bourgeois origin. Notwithstanding the rightful pride we take for the revolutionary role our Party has played at this juncture of our Party's development— and the immense sacrifices our comrades are making for the cause of the working class and the country, we cannot afford to overlook or ignore its many weakness. We have to make concerted efforts to overcome them in the shortest possible time, and discharge the duties that have fallen on our shoulders with success and honour.

## Goa Communists to Join C.P.I.(M)\*

*The Communists in Goa in a special all-Goa session, called on April 16 at Vasco da Gama, have resolved to dissociate with the revisionist Dange group and join the Communist Party of India (Marxist). The special session which was presided over by Gerald Pereira, prominent communist and trade union leader of Goa, was attended by over 200 delegates representing all the five Party branches in Goa.*

The Dange group led by Narayan Desai is thoroughly isolated and the attempts made by him and the former Secretary of the Goa unit, Divakar Kakodkar (now expelled), to disrupt and liquidate the Party by actively co-operating with the bourgeoisie, have been foiled. The revisionists could not muster more than thirty members and their other attempt to disrupt and break the trade unions, kisan sabha and other mass organization have also been foiled.

Among the prominent leaders of mass organizations who were present at the session were Gerald Pereira, General Secretary of the Goa State Trade Union Council (AITUC), member of the General Council of the AITUC and the Secretary of the Port, Dock and Waterfront Workers' Federation of India, George Vaz, General Secretary of the Goa Mining Labour Welfare Union and President of the Goa Kisan Sangh, S.V. Rao, Secretary of the Mazgaon Dock Workers' Union (AITUC), Ibrahim Suleman, President, and Babal Harmalker, Treasurer, of the Marmagoa Port, Dock and Transport Workers' Union (AITUC), A.M. Baig, General Secretary, and Sham Kalangutkar Joint Secretary, of the Goan Mundkar and Agriculturists Sabha, J.B.X. D'Cruz, Vice-President of the Goa Kisan Sangh and a Vice-President of the GMLWU, S.S. Bhonsle, General Secretary of the All-Goa General Employees' Union (AITUC), Teofilo Araujo, former Secretary of the now-dissolved Fronte Popular, and several other trade union and kisan leaders and prominent social workers.

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## **Elections Reviewed**

The recent elections to the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Goa were analysed by the session.

The session noted with satisfaction that the Congress had been thoroughly defeated at the polls.

The Communist Party did not contest the elections officially though three Party members contested as Independents. But because of the intense communal passions raised by the two main local parties in Goa—the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party and the United Goans Party,— all the three candidates were defeated in the elections.

The ruling Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, though it has some reformist and liberal elements inside it, is basically a bourgeois party backed by the landlords. A resolution adopted by the session described the elections as a temporary setback for the democratic and progressive forces because of the active role played by the communalist, casteist and obscurantist elements”.

The resolution has also noted the open backing the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party obtains from millowners, capitalists, big zamindars and the mercantile bourgeoisie with the foreign monopolists.

## **For Communal Harmony**

The Communist party has resolved to actively work to foster cordial and fraternal relations among all the communities and to cooperate with all progressive and democratic parties for genuine progress of Goa.

With this object in view, the party has criticized the Lt. Governor’s inaugural address to the Legislative Assembly “as a step in the wrong direction that will lead towards further pauperization of the poor people as it places no concrete plans to solve the basic problems facing the mass of people”.

The session after carefully analysing the Lt. Governor’s speech, which is the policy statement of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party

Government, warned the Government of Goa of the various consequences and repercussions in case they did not immediately tackle the burning problems facing the people.

The Party has placed the following minimum programme for implementation by the Government :

Procurement of local rice from big farmers; obtaining more foodgrains from the surplus States and increasing the present rice quota of 80 grams per head per day to 180 grams;

Reducing the prices of essential commodities and much-needed articles of life and holding the priceline;

Decrease in the taxation both direct and indirect on the working class, peasantry and the low-income groups;

Fixing the cost of living index for Goa and granting dearness allowance to all industrial and commercial workers, white-collar employees and Government employees;

Free education for all upto the high school and concessions to low-income group students for university education;

Prevention by ordinance of eviction of tenants by landlords and legislation for safeguarding the tenants' interests in land and their house sites;

Distribution of cultivable and fallow Government lands as well as lands of the big zamindars to landless peasants and agricultural labourers;

Government housing schemes for middle and low-income groups at subsidized rents;

Rapid electrification of villages and asphaltting of the main roads in the villages, and supply of sufficient water to the towns;

Construction of more hospitals and health centres and improved health schemes, especially in the mining areas;

Opening of industries in the public sector and all-out support to the co-operative societies and setting up of co-operative farms in the present village comunidades.

### **Mass Agitation**

The Communist party will agitate for the implementation of these demands which have been totally ignored in the first policy statement of the new Government of Dayanand Bhandodkar. The Communist Party at the same time will support any progressive reforms which might be brought forward by the Government.

Geroge Vaz, Secretary of the Communist Party, in his report to the special session called upon the Goan Government to orientate its plans for the benefit of the people.

The Planning Commission has finalized and approved for Goa a total outlay of Rs. 40.24 crores for the Fourth Plan. For the current year, the proposed outlay amounts to Rs. 7.25 crores. The Communist Party will endeavour to see that this huge sum is not wasted in pet projects of the authorities and the people swindled in the name of schemes. The Communist party has also demanded a thorough probe into the failures of various schemes, in which lakhs of rupees have been wasted in the course of last three years.

The special session has resolved to hold the Second Conference of the Party in Goa in July 1967 and has invited P.Sundarayya, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, to inaugurate the Conference and B.T. Ranadive, member of the Polit Bureau of the Party and Editor of the Party's Central weekly *People's Democracy* to be the guest of honour.

A.K. Gopalan, leader of the Party's Group in the Lok Sabha, has been invited to Goa in May to visit various areas in preparation for the Second Conference of the Goa Unit and also to inaugurate the Kisan Conference.

The Special All-Goa Session has also unanimously confirmed and endorsed the expulsion of Divakar Kakodker, former Secretary of the

Goa Unit. He has been forbidden from issuing any Press statements or to speak on behalf of the Party.

An organizational resolution and a political report have also been adopted by the session. The five-member Secretariat of the State Committee will function with its head-quarters at Vasco da Gama.

The nineteen-member Goa State Committee of the Party will meet in the second week of May to chalk out a concrete plan of action to mobilize the masses on the minimum programme.

**Greeting of May Day 1967**  
**Defeat Employers' Attack on Jobs & Wages**  
**Unite Against the Capitalist Offensive**  
**Editorial of "People's Democracy",**  
**April 23, 1967**

*We offer our May Day greetings to the working class of India. We offer our greetings to the working masses of the Socialist countries ; to the fighting workers in all capitalist countries engaged in the struggle against the rule of capital; to the people in all countries struggling against imperialism and for achieving independence.*

May Day is the day of international solidarity for the working class. On the day the working class of India must raise high the banner of proletarian internationalism, and express their solidarity with the workers of other countries who, like them, are waging a relentless battle to free themselves from capitalist exploitation. They must send their warm greetings to the working masses of the Socialist countries.

Spurning the efforts and conspiracies of India's rulers to malign and slander the Socialist revolution in China, they must offer their warm greetings to the revolutionary workers of People's China who are today in the vanguard in the fight against American imperialism and express their resolve to work for India-China settlement.

**Firm Solidarity With Vietnam**

Proletarian internationalism today means above all firm solidarity with the people of Vietnam who are waging a life-and-death struggle against the American imperialist butchers, for the freedom and independence of their country, for protecting the Socialist Republic of North Vietnam, for defeating the American attempts to export counter-revolution to Vietnam. The working class of India must demand the

withdrawal of U.S. imperialists from Vietnam and complete freedom for the Vietnamese people to shape their future.

May Day this year comes in the midst of a capitalist offensive against the workers of our country. The bankrupt capitalist path pursued by the Congress planners, the attempt to build capitalism in India with landlords as allies in the rural areas, has brought the country to ruin and near-collapse.

The people—the workers, the peasants, the middle classes—have been the hostages of this fake planning. They have been victimized by high prices, high taxation and food famine. The ever-rising cost of living has made a mockery of all wage-scales. After eight hours' hard labour only a few among the workers earn enough to satisfy the bare food requirements of thier families. For the rest it is one continuous tale of deprivation, privations and outright starvation. The path of capitalism in India is already strewn with the corpses of workers.

### **Big Offensive Against Jobs**

And now this year sees the big offensive against workers' jobs, against thier livelihood.

One factory after another, one industry after another, is throwing out hundreds of workers on the streets by retrenching them or laying them off. Thousands of textile workers are forced to take a compulsory additional holiday every fortnight and a law has been passed to that effect. Several textile mills are already closed with thousands having no jobs nor any unemployment benefits for months.

The wave of retrenchment, non-recruitment and lay-off is spreading rapidly and threatens to engulf every industry. The railways are refusing to have new recruitment and are replacing men by machines. With the railways reducing their orders to engineering factories, the latter are either closing down, or laying of or retrenching thousands of workers. In the City of Calcutta itself, more than 30,000 workers are directly or indirectly affected and the offensive shows no sign of abatement.



In the South, entire textile mills are closed. In Kanpur, thousands of workers have been dismissed. In Maharashtra, the Government had to take over certain mills and run them and they ran them by cutting the dearness allowance of the workers.

The mining areas, the coal areas, reveal the same tale. Employment has dropped for want of demand for coal from the steel and other industries. The fall in demand has been further accentuated by stoppage of coal exports to Pakistan after the 1965 Indo-Pakistan conflict.

And now the recession is seizing hold of the holy of holies—the public sector of the government of India. Long before the public sector could reach its targets, it is complaining of over-production of steel and preparing a list of those to be thrown out of employment. Durgapur is preparing to throw on the the streets not less than 700 workers.

There is, further, an intensive drive for automation threatening the jobs of thousands of employees. The LIC, once again a Government concern, has taken the lead in the matter and refuses to reconsider its steps. Other public sector agencies are introducing similar devices to reduce labour power and the big firms and banks are also moving in the same direction.

### **Drive Against Wages**

This big offensive against the jobs of the working class is accompanied by an intense drive against their wages and other emoluments. There are cases where workers have to go on strike or stage stay-in strikes in the mines to secure wages for work already done.

Wage-revisions have been denied to large sections. Bonus is being withdrawn and the employers are often flatly refusing to grant it. The treacherous deal of Dange in connection with the Bonus Commission has only helped the capitalists to mulct the workers of their due share.

The Bonus Commission, the Government of India and finally the Supreme Court judgment all have combined to deprive the workers of their legitimate share of bonus.

The rising cost of living accompanied by faulty compilation of the cost of living index is robbing tens of thousands of their dues and forcing down the real wages of the workers. By 1965, the real wage of the workers had already been reduced to the 1939 level of the British days—a fall of 15 per cent, thanks to the treacherous industrial truce policy of the Dange clique in 1962.

Now the real wage is below even the 1939 level. And over and above all this, the worker is forced to starve under the rationing system of the Government. He cannot get a square meal for himself or his family.

The trade union rights are trampled underfoot. There seems to be no law to check the incessant attacks on the workers' organizations. The legal machinery to settle disputes has become a weapon of only prolonging the disputes interminably. Besides, the employers often refuse to implement verdicts and awards which go against their interests.

### **Unite to deal Counter-Blow**

It is against this mounting offensive against their jobs that the workers have to combine unite and deliver a counter-blow to the capitalists and employers. The offensive is not launched by a few capitalists of this or that city, or this or that industry.

It is the attack of the entire capitalist class against the entire working class backed by the Congress Government at the Centre, by legislations which protect private profits, by court judgments which protect the right of capitalist private property. It is by this class attack that the capitalists seek to pass the burden of the economic crisis to the workers.

Against the combined might of the capitalist class and the capitalist state, the workers must raise their united class might. How can they do it?

They can only do it by uniting their forces, by uniting the entire working class round the fighting unions, by bringing together the organized strength of different unions into a single united front, embodying the unity, will and determination of the workers to resist the capitalist onslaught.

The All-India Trade Union Congress and unions affiliated to it must set an example by taking quick steps to forge such a powerful united front composed of several unions and different all-India centres to oppose the anti-working class offensive.

The message of unity and united front must reach every factory and every industry. The revisionist attempts to start rival unions, disrupt the existing unity, must be exposed and unmasked, if they do not desist from them in future. Only a persistent effort for united front will create such confidence in the working class and such visible strength that even the unorganized and most backward sections will be attracted to its banner.

Without such an all-powerful unity of the working class the offensive cannot be stemmed. The united front must include every section of the workers, every section of the employees including Government employees. The general strike notice given by the Delhi trade unions to support the demands of Delhi's striking policemen shows the necessity of such a front.

Let May Day then be a day of working class demonstration to forge their class unity in the battle against the capitalist offensive against their jobs.

The workers of Calcutta have already taken the challenge and started their resistance by demonstrations and peaceful gheraos. They have been maligned by the capitalists who feel chagrined that the democratic Ministry is not putting the police at their disposal to break the resistance of the workers.

The workers are not faced with just retrenchment and lay-off of normal times. They are face to face with the crisis of the capitalist path, the effects of capitalist crisis. In this crisis the employing class and its state will show no mercy. Only by securing a further advance against the economic power of the capitalist class, can the working class secure safety for their jobs and livelihood.

### **Raise Basic Demands**

While therefore, raising the demand for no retrenchment, no loss of job for a single worker, the working class organizations must raise

certain basic demands, popularize them among the workers, so that the latter are able to raise them consciously and fight for them in the second round of struggle.

They must popularize the demand for nationalization of banks and credit institutions, of monopolist industries and foreign trade, democratization of the management of the State sector, genuine and creative participation of workers in running the industries and control over profits.

Apart from demanding an immediate stoppage of all offensive against workers' jobs and wages, they must demand full insurance against unemployment at the expense of the State and the capitalists and wide extension of democratic rights.

To protect thier wages and standard of living the demand for reduction of prices, of level of taxation and reduction of the wasteful defence expenditure must also be made.

The trade union organization must raise the demand for a drastic and immediate solution of our agrarian problem and break-up of the land monopoly of the landlords and richer sections. The trade union movement has hardly taught the working class its responsibility towards the peasant problem, thought that question is deeply affecting the workers in the shape of food shortage and food crisis.

Now the ruination of the peasant has clogged the internal market, drastrically reduced the purchasing power of the peasant and is aggravating the industrial crisis. The workers can ignore the peasant only at his own peril. Without a firm worker and peasant alliance the struggle of the working class for its own amelioration will not succeed.

### **Fight Menace From U.S. Imperialism**

And finally, the trade unions must squarely put before the workers the danger of American imperialism and raise the demand for nationalization of all foreign concerns. Steeped in economism, the trade unions have in the main failed to rouse the working class to the danger of American penetration and our growing subjection to it. The worker

hardly knows that the sell-out of our economy is round the corner ; that our country's independence is in danger, that the recent rise in prices was dictated by the Americans through their demand for devaluation; that plans are afoot to open the working class to the merciless exploitation of the American capitalists and that the recent automation and other offensives are the direct result of the American demand for more efficient functioning of the industries.

The nation's security and workers' livelihood alike are threatened by the American imperialists. The trade unions must rouse the workers to this danger and demand immediate moratorium on all debt payments to the imperialists.

The growing capitalist crisis once more teaches the workers that they can have no peace under capitalism; that they can have no justice under the capitalist plan imposed by the Congress rulers on India. Only Socialism abolishing exploitation of man by man, the private property in the means of production, will free the worker and all the toilers from the curse of poverty and degradation.

The working class must declare on May Day their firm determination to achieve Socialism, and prepare for their objective by forming the widest possible People's Democratic Front to realize their immediate goal of a State of People's Democracy, led by the working class and based on the alliance of the workers and peasants.

## The Language Question Again\*

B.T. Ranadive

*At the inauguration of the Education Ministers' Conference on April 28, Morarji Desai, Deputy Prime Minister, gave expression to unbridled chauvinism on the language question. In doing this he also revealed the reactionary secret of the three-language formula.*

Earlier Education Minister Triguna Sen, in a fit for regard for truth so rare in a Congress Minister had stated that the three—language formula was dominated more by political than educational considerations.

### Secret of Three—Language Formula

In counteracting it Morarji stated, “The three—language formula was not merely a political decision, it is vital to our national scheme of education”. If they decided to have only two languages, these could only be the regional language and Hindi. They cannot be anything else. But in order not to create a controversy (over Hindi and to make room for English also) they must have three languages. Unless the three languages were compulsorily taught, “as was practically accepted in most quarters”, they would not be able to make an “effective” system.

It is significant to note that the Prime Minister who opened the Education Ministers' Conference did not think it necessary to contradict her Education Minister who had demanded an end to the three—language formula. She apparently took a noncommittal part, not opposing the suggested change. All that she said was that some people had favoured the three— language

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\* Published in *PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY*, Calcutta, May 7, 1967.”

formula while some others had expressed “other views” (how delicate and non-committal !). She hoped that the Education Ministers would give the problem serious thought “in the context of national integrity and unity”.

It is obvious that the important language issue is also dividing the Congress party and the Cabinet.

For Morarji and his ilk the place given to English is only the means to an end -- the compulsory infliction of Hindi on the people. That is the secret of the three-language formula which Morarji has spelt out. His talk that it is a vital part of our educational system is just plain eyewash.

What occasioned Morarji’s outburst? The sane and progressive stand which the Education Minister and M.P.s’ Committee unanimously took on the language question threw Morarji into a rage.

### **MPs’ Committee’s Recommendations**

At the conference, Triguna Sen had pleaded for reconsideration of the three—language formula. “If standards are to be improved we have to reduce the language load in school studies -- it now takes up as much as 45 per cent to 55 per cent of the total time available”. That takes care of the three-language formula a vital part of our education system.

It is the younger generation, the teenagers who have been the worst victims of Congress policies. They have to devote major part of their time in manoeuvring against the languages to the utter neglect of all other subjects. Is it not correct to hold this notorious three—language formula as one of the reasons for the rapid fall in the quality of students that are emerging from the schools?

Morarji was all the more incensed because the MPs' Committee on Education had unanimously recommended a day earlier that the three-language formula be scrapped. They, besides, suggested a number of important steps in the direction of quality of languages in the educational curriculum and freedom from compulsion to study any language.

In the first place the MPs' Committee correctly assessed the importance of the regional languages and recommended that the States should switch over to the full use of regional languages as media of instructions, both at the undergraduate and post-graduate level within five years.

It is disgraceful that after twenty years of Congress rule, by and large, the medium of instruction in the colleges and universities is still English. Some of the fanatical opponents of Hindi also do not find anything objectionable in English continuing as the medium of instruction of higher education in preference to their own mother-tongue.

Another important recommendation made by the Committee is that the three—language formula “which has been found impractical” should be done away with. In the Committee's view children should be taught only one language at the first substage of school covering four or five years.

A second language should be introduced, on a compulsory basis at the beginning of the next substage. **The second language can be any of the languages included in Schedule VIII of the Constitution (any of the recognised languages) including English or any other language.**

It is this recommendation that has specially raised the ire of Morarji because it obviates the necessity of studying either English or Hindi as a compulsory second language. Any of the Indian languages in Schedule VIII can be taken as a second language; freedom from compulsion for studying any particular



language including Hindi or English is recommended ; equality of languages concerning their study in schools and colleges is introduced—that is enough for Morarji to fly into a fury.

The MPs' Committee has further suggested certain other measures to ensure that proposed freedom to study any language does not result in inequalities for those who exercise this freedom; that the right is not reduced to a formality, with none daring to exercise it.

The Committee asked the Union Government to ensure that the students who receive education in their regional language are not put to any disadvantage in the Union Public Service Commission examinations. Suitable methods of moderation should be evolved to ensure a fair deal to students who might prefer to answer questions in these examinations in their regional language.

It has further recommended that all-India institutions should, as a matter of strict policy, make arrangements for providing intensive courses to newly admitted students in Hindi or English to enable them to follow with ease classroom lectures. No student should be deprived of the right of admission to any all-India institution only because he had not received schooling in Hindi or English.

### **Sound Recommendations**

So far as the educational system is concerned these are very sound recommendations. In the first place, they propose to ensure highest education in regional languages—people's own language. This will lead to a free development of the regional languages which has been curbed, imprisoned and forced to stagnate under the three-language formula whose effect is to deny full education in the regional languages.

Secondly, by removing the compulsory element in the study of any language it puts all languages on a footing of equality —so far as the educational system is concerned and opens the way for creating a favourable atmosphere for the study of the other languages of our toiling people including Hindi -- the language spoken by the biggest single section of our toilers.

Thirdly, it also envisages steps to see that this freedom to study or not to study any language is not reduced to burden, that no handicaps are put by the State on the students who prefer to study some other language than either Hindi or English.

### **Resiling Under Pressure**

It is a matter of shame that the same MPs' Committee resiled from this healthy position within twenty-four hours of its recommendations. It seems the MPs could not withstand the reactionary pressures and with unscrupulous nonchalance agreed to introduce the compulsory element again. Having once more discovered that Hindi and English are the two official languages of the Union, the MPs went back on their previous recommendation.

To eliminate the possibility of a student going through his entire school career without studying any of the two official languages of the Union, the Committee next day decided that a student who had not studied either Hindi or English in the earlier classes should be under obligation to study one of the two languages from Class VIII to X.

This is the essence of the theory of official language, as Congressmen and the Committee understand it. It must be compulsorily studied by everyone, whether you want it or not. You are free not to study your mother-tongue, the regional language, but English and Hindi, you must study. Here there is no choice, no equality, no freedom. And all this is done in the

name of national integrity and unity of the country. In reality it's the surest way of disintegrating the country, of sowing seeds of division among the Indian people, because by implication it tells vast sections of our people that their languages have, in free India, a status inferior to that of Hindi and also English.

The MPs' Committee after correctly asserting that regional languages must be the media of instruction even for university education has again surrendered to the three—language formula—or in essence to the domination of the two languages over the rest.

### **What Is Morarji Afraid Of**

Why was Morarji so angry with the suggestion to scrap the three-language formula? Because coupled with the MPs' Education Committee's suggestion, the recommendations suggested the removal of the inequality of languages obtaining at present in the educational sphere.

The bourgeois—landlord government led by the big bourgeoisie can never think of uniting the country, the people, on the basis of equal treatment, equality of all nationalities, equality of the languages of the people which is the only abiding foundation for national integration and unity. Had they thought of it, India would not have faced troubles leading to armed struggles in its border regions inhabited by backward nationalities.

Everyone knows how the Congress leaders including Pandit Nehru viciously opposed the elementary demand for formation of linguistic States. Only when the people of Andhra came out in virtual open revolt and paralysed the entire administration, the Grand Moghuls of the Congress acceded to their demand. Similarly Samyukta Maharashtra was attained only after an unprecedented orgy of mass killings of the people under Morarji's benign direction. And the people of Punjab till the

beginning of this year were denied the right to have a linguistic State.

This open hostility to the democratic demands of linguistic regions is born out of the class outlook of the bourgeois-landlord combine led by the big bourgeoisie. It is suspicious of the rising consciousness of the people of the various linguistic regions and is doing its best to run India as a unitary State keeping only the form of federalism intact.

The States have been virtually reduced to the status of supplicants at the door of the Centre, their Ministries not having the power of dismissal of reactionary officials without the sanction of the Union Government.

### **Weapon of Domination**

The bourgeois-landlord combine seeks to utilise every weapon of domination -- including that of the language. It thinks by imposing Hindi or English on the people, by relegating the regional languages to a secondary status, it will be able to dominate the consciousness of the people of the various States, create a strata firmly tied to itself and rule the rest with a firm hand.

It is not accidental that the Central Government has hardly shown any enthusiasm for running the State's administrations in the languages of the region. The idea of domination of one language in the State is pursued through the domination or exclusive status of that language in the field of education. And when that is attacked in the sphere of education Morarji realises that the whole system of domination can be challenged later on -- hence he is angry beyond measure.

As Marxist-Leninists we stand for the equality of languages not only in the sphere of education, but what is vital, equality

of all languages in the administration and the State. This latter is the real basis of equality -- from which equality in the sphere of education will follow.

We regard all Indian languages as the languages of our toilers, our entire people. We love and respect them all. We want the unfettered development of every language in India.

Hindi is the language spoken by the biggest section of our people. The Hindi-speaking peasants and workers constitute the biggest section of our fighting detachment. As the toilers' struggles in the Hindi regions reach new heights, the voluntary spread of Hindi in all regions will be accelerated. The same is true of the languages of other regions.

### **Communist Party's Stand**

But the ruling classes seek to divide the ranks of the working class and the people by compulsorily imposing Hindi on the other people. They seek to exploit the Hindi people's love for Hindi to pit them against other regions and peoples. The working class has nothing to do with this chauvinism. In its firm struggle for People's Democracy and Socialism, it must continue to demand equality for all languages, for all regions, so that its ranks are united and strengthened.

Our Party Programme has correctly defended equality of all languages in the State as "Right of people to receive instructions in their mother-tongue in educational institutions; the use of the national language of the particular State as the language of administration in all its public and State institutions, as well as its use as the medium of education in the State up to the highest standard; provisions for the use of the language of a minority or region where necessary in addition to the language of the State. Use of Hindi as an all-India language will not be obligatory but will be encouraged as a means of intercourse

between the people of different States. Adhere to the principle of replacing English by the regional languages at the State level and Hindi at the Centre as administrative language. Transition from English to Hindi at the Centre should be simultaneous with the same from English to the regional languages in the States ; the preparation for this transition which is being made by the Centre with regard to Hindi should also be made with all necessary assistance in States in regard to regional languages. At the same time, for the transition period, the duration of which should be decided with the consent of the non-Hindi speaking regions, English should be given the status of an associate administrative language. Equality of all national languages in Parliament and Central administration will be recognised. Members of Parliament will have the right to speak in any national language and simultaneous translation will be provided in all national languages. All Acts, Government orders and resolutions will be made available in all national languages, Urdu language and its script would be protected.”

We must remember the following words of Lenin: “Fourthly, the strictest rules must be introduced on the use of the national language in the non-Russian republics of our nation, and these rules must be checked with special care. There is no doubt that our apparatus being what it is, there is bound to be, on the pretext of unity in the railway service, unity in the fiscal service and so on, a mass of truly Russian abuses. Special ingenuity is necessary to struggle against these abuses, not to mention special sincerity on the part of those who undertake that struggle. A detailed code will be required, and only the nationals living in the Republic in question can draw it up at all successfully” (*Selected Works*, Vol. III, page 806). Thus spoke Lenin about the domination of one language -- of one nationality.

### **Utter Reactionary Outlook**

The MPs' Education Committee's suggestions do not touch these vital aspects of equality of all languages in relation to the

State. They relate only to equality in the educational sphere. And yet they are virtually denounced by Morarji as undermining the basis of the very system -- obviously the system of domination.

This should be enough to show the utter reactionary outlook of the Congress rulers on the language question. It is a part of the same policy of suppressing democracy to bolster their class domination.

Morarji's refusal to give up the three-language formula must be met by a wide demand for its withdrawal. And the agitation cannot be confined to the concerned linguistic regions. The working class of the Hindi region must be educated to participate in this agitation, to denounce linguistic chauvinism and forge new bonds of class unity in the struggle for linguistic equality.

## Hare Krishna Konar Calls for Popular Initiative to Implement Progressive Measures\*

*"It is impossible to do anything revolutionary under the limitations imposed by the present Constitution and the existing legislations. But it is certainly possible to introduce some progressive measures that would bring immediate relief to the peasantry. These progressive measures will help the toiling peasants to develop their initiative and their organized force to go forward. The development of peasants' initiative and the advance of organized force would pave the way for further progress. Some measures have already been taken in the interest of the people but they cannot be implemented without the help of popular initiative and organized force," thus remarked Hare Krishna Konar, CPI (M) Minister of Land and Land Revenue of West Bengal, in a special interview to Ganashakti, Bengali daily of the West Bengal State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).*

In reply to the question, what measures the UF Government had adapted for granting immediate relief to the peasants, Konar said, it will take some more time to contemplate big changes. Meanwhile, even under the limitations imposed by the prevailing laws, the problems that we are trying to tackle are : (1) remission of rent in drought areas, (2) records of homestead lands of poor peasants, (3) remission of rent on one bigha (about one-third acre) of homestead land, (4) distribution of lands vested in the Government and (5) putting a stop to the eviction of *bargadars* (share-croppers).

**Remission of Rent in Drought Areas :** The Government has decided that the areas growing 60 per cent or less of the crop that

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they produce normally will be granted remission of rent. In other areas rent will be asked for but no certificate will be issued.

### **Records of Homestead Lands of Poor Peasants :**

In many areas the homestead land of poor peasants have not been recorded in *their* names. Instructions have been sent for ascertaining such cases and making the records anew. Any attempt to eject such peasants from their homestead lands shall be severely dealt with.

### **Remission of Rent on One Bigha of Homestead Land :**

Necessary instructions have already been sent from the Land Revenue department for implementing the decision.

### **Distribution of Lands Vested in The Government :**

The problem, according to the Minister, is very serious. In addition to the question of *benami* transfers, it appears that because of orders of the court, the Government had not been able to take possession of 121,000 acres of land.

Then there was the question of distributing the lands that were already in the hands of the Government. There are very serious allegations in relation to the way in which lands were distributed during the Congress regime; many undeserving persons had received land. Many charges have also been levelled against the Advisory Committee formed during that regime. So the UF Government has decided to handle the task of land-distribution on the basis of democratic consultation as far as practicable.

Hence the Government has dissolved the Advisory Committee formed during the Congress regime and has decided to distribute land among the landless and poor peasants on the basis of consultations with the members of gram panchayats, representatives of kisan sabhas, members of the legislature and anchal pradhans.

### **The Problem of Evictions :**

This is the most serious of all the problems. No sooner than the UF had formed the Government, the jotdars and other reactionary

elements began to spread the lie that UF Government would rob small and medium owners of their lands and in this way they created a spate of evictions in the countryside. So the Government had to immediately take steps to expose this lie, prevent ejection and save the *bargadars*.

The UF Government knew very well that unless this false propaganda was fought politically and the organized force of poor peasants developed adequately, ejection could not be stopped simply by legislative and administrative measures. So, on the one hand, the Government announced its policy giving assurance to small and medium owners and, on the other, it called upon the peasants to stand boldly against ejection.

At the same time, instructions were issued to Government officials to help the peasants against ejection. It was unequivocally stated in those instructions that officials must intervene whenever any *bargadar* brought to his notice any case of ejection and they must try to prevent such ejection. If necessary, the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code were to be resorted to.

The UF Government is convinced that if these immediate measures are implemented, it would be possible to make further progress.

#### **Attitude of Government Officials :**

In reply to the question, what the attitude of Government officials was in relation to the above measures Konar said: So long they have been accustomed to one way of work. Now they are to adjust themselves to another way of work. At the outset many of them found it difficult to understand the significance of the aforesaid measures. So further instructions had to be issued. There are instances where instructions were not carried out.

#### **Class-struggle Sharpened :**

The Minister, further said, "On the basis of these two months' experience I can say that cases of ejection are now on the decrease and the instructions have started to be implemented. One thing is

clear—the class-struggle between the zamindars and jotdars on the one hand and the toiling peasantry on the other is getting sharper. As such, the task of getting the peasants organized had become all the more urgent. I also note with pleasure that initiative and organization are developing among the toiling peasants.”

### **Surplus Land in Tea Estates :**

Regarding surplus land in tea-garden areas, Konar said: The problem is very much complicated. The Congress Government virtually did not take over any such lands. Even the report of the Tea Gardens Advisory Committee was not given effect to by it. The UF Government has decided to take immediate measures with regard to the matter.

### **Recovery of Benami Lands :**

Regarding the question of recovery of *benami* lands, he said that the Government had not yet been able to take any decision. The hurdles put by the Constitution and the court, papers and documents are stupendous. Anyway, something has got to be done with regard to such lands—particularly the large ones. Need for transforming administrative machinery : Towards the end of the interview, Konar wanted two things to be noted in particular.

First, the limitations put by the bourgeois Constitution and the bourgeois administrative machinery should not be underestimated. The limitations are suffocating.

Second, the *benami* transfers resorted to by Zamindars constitute a big obstacle, which, unless overcome, would make the problem of land distribution an impossible task. So this has to be overcome. And for that, the administrative machinery of West Bengal requires to be radically transformed.

## West Bengal State Committee of the C. P. I. (M) Reviews 1967 Election, Charts Immediate Tasks

*The West Bengal State Committee of the Communist Party of India has issued the following communique to the Press :*

The West Bengal State Committee of the Communist Party of India met on April 4, 1967. The Committee at this meeting finalized its review of the Fourth General Elections in West Bengal. It discussed the food policy of the U. F. Government and adopted a resolution on the directives for Party units to organise the people for launching campaigns on certain urgent issues facing the people.

The decision states that with a view to conduct three-pronged campaigns and movements of the people, viz., (1) helping the procurement policy of the Government and dehoarding the hoards of the profiteers and blackmarketeers; (2) stopping eviction from land and for distribution of vested land; and (3) fight against corruption in administrative and other spheres, local People's Committees with the representatives of local parties and mass organizations and democratic individuals will be organized.

These People's Committees will grow out of the local people's movements in various localities, in villages, anchals, etc., in rural areas and in wards in urban areas.

The Committee resolved to fight the coming municipal elections in various towns unitedly with all democratic parties, organizations and individuals on the basis of a civic programme

prepared for respective areas and by functioning the traditional united organizations for civic work in different municipalities. The allotment of seats will be made on the principle of strength revealed during voting in the last General Elections.

The meeting discussed the preparations for making the April 9 rally of the Party on Brigade Parade Ground, Calcutta, a success. The Committee further decided to bring out the Party's evening daily from May 1, 1967.

### **Election Review**

The review of the Fourth General Elections as adopted by the Committee warmly congratulated the people of West Bengal for the defeat they inflicted on the Congress by reducing it to a minority and expressed its satisfaction at the fulfilment of the urgent desire of the people to form a united Front Government in the State of West Bengal.

The review dealt the political background of the election where it states :

“The Fourth General Elections came in the wake of the biggest mass struggles in the State of West Bengal against the ruling Congress party and its Government. Since the last General Elections in 1962, the exploitation of the people by the foreign and Indian capitalists and landlord-feudal vested interests continued in greater and greater proportions. In the name of national defence and on the plea of India-China conflict the ruling classes further stepped up this exploitation of the people.

Against the anti-people policies of the Congress Government the workers, peasants and middle class employees organized struggles on a far more extensive scale than ever before.”

A glorious and prolonged battle was fought by our people culminating in the 48-hour general strike and hartal in September 1966. The Congress Government let loose a reign of terror and took the lives of 60 persons including boys. The Congress became thoroughly exposed as the most anti-people organization. It became completely isolated from the people. The people began to realize more and more that this hated Government had to be dislodged from power. The Congress organization, too, began to disintegrate to some extent, internal quarrels and squabbles reached its height in the period and a section of it came out of its parent body.

The review after analysing the poll results stated :

The Congress secured 5,198,743 votes, our Party 2,317,246 votes, Bengal Congress 1,325,013 votes; the Rightists got 822,053 votes and F. B. got 491,704 votes. Total votes polled were 133,72,355. The Jan Sangh got 114,716 votes in 58 seats and Swatantra 88,443 votes 21 seats. Percentage of valid votes : Congress-39.01, CPI-18.5, B.C-10.5, Rightists-8.5 and F. B.-4.01, SSP-2.5, PSP-1.8 others parties- 6.4, Independents- 8.8.

The percentage of votes of the various parties may be mentioned here from a sample survey of 23 seats where our Party had to face triangular contests with the Congress, Rightists or Bangla Congress or Forward Bloc. In such contests, the Congress got on average 40.5 per cent, our Party 29.4 per cent, Rightists 9.6 per cent, Bangla Congress and Forward Bloc 8.8 per cent and Independents and other 11.9 per cent.

Our Party lost 22 out of 36 sitting seats of our bloc, the Rightists lost nine sitting seats out of 13. We lost deposits in 16 cases, and Rightists lost deposits in 22 cases. Our Party candidates' deposits forfeited were in the following districts : Bankura-2, Midnapur-5, Darjeeling-1 Birbhum-1, Hooghly-1, Calcutta -2, Murshidabad-1, Cooch Behar-1, 24-Parganas-2.

In spite of triangular contests, the ULF and PULF defeated the Congress candidates in 41 constituencies. The United Left Front won 23 seats by defeating both the Congress and PULF candidates. The Bangla Congress Front won 17 seats by defeating both the Congress and the ULF candidates. In these triangular contests our Party won 19 seats, by defeating the Rightist in eight places, the Bangla Congress in four places, FB in six places, and Bolshevik Party in one place.

The Rightists won defeating our Party candidates in four places, Forward Bloc won defeating us in four places, and Bangla Congress won in five places defeating us. Our Party defeating both the Congress and Bangla Congress in four constituencies, we defeated the F B and Congress in six seats.

We lost 12 seats by small margins of 29,43, etc., upto 1000 votes and lost four seats by getting small votes between 1000 to 2000.

In six districts we did not get any seat.

We were defeated by the Congress in more or less straight contest with them in 14 seats and we defeated the Congress in straight contest in 17 seats.

### **Objective— How Far Achieved?**

The review then discussed the objective set by the Party on the eve of the elections and states in the section— “Objectives— how far achieved” :

The objective of reducing the Congress to a minority has been fulfilled, though the congress has not been inflicted a crushing defeat at the polls in our State. The Congress secured 127 seats and 39.01 per cent of total votes polled. Its organizational strength and influence over the people is yet considerable. It signifies that the Congress in our State has still

a big striking power against the democratic movement of the workers, kisans and the toiling people.

Secondly, the aim of forming an alternate Government in West Bengal has been achieved. After the poll results were announced, all the Left, democratic and other parties, in spite of their differences in many spheres of ideology and policy, came together to form a United Front, which could not be done before the election campaign started. All the fourteen parties and some individuals came forward to honour the verdict of the people who wanted to end the misrule of the Congress regime and to set up an alternate government in this State.

Thirdly, our Party strength in the Assembly has been increased from 33 to 44. In this respect our performance is not upto the expectation. Neither does it reflect the real strength and influence of our Party in this State. The causes for this failure have to be thoroughly discussed.

However, it has to be noted in this connection that our Party has increased its strength and influence during the past few years and this has been reflected in the election results also.

We should compare the results with the results of previous elections. We like to quote what the Polit Bureau of our Party said about our State in this context. The PB, in its Statement on March 1, 1967 after a preliminary discussion of the election results, said : "The Left forces in West Bengal have reduced the Congress to a minority and made yet another breach in its monopoly of power. The Congress would have faced the same fate in West Bengal as in Kerala, had not the Dange revisionists formed the rival electoral front and split the anti-Congress vote facilitating the success of a number of Congress candidates. The figures of voting clearly show that but for this division of votes which weighted the scales against our candidates, the Congress would have lost a large number of seats and the United



Front would have secured an overwhelming victory against it. In spite of this, our party has secured the largest number of seats amongst the parties challenging the Congress and has once more emerged as the leading force among the Left parties. Our Party cadres, members, and sympathizers who had to face hostile attacks from all sides, proved their mettle and reserve our warmest congratulations.”

It should be mentioned here that despite the fact that our Party did not achieve the results which we expected, yet the people of our State look up to it as the foremost challenger to the Congress and the vested interests.

Fourthly, we successfully campaigned on our political policy and demarcated our politics from other parties, Specially in the task of exposing the revisionists, our campaign reached its height in some areas where we had to fight against the candidates of the revisionist party. Our Party to fight not only against Congress policies, but also against the slanderous campaign of the Congress and other parties specially the Rightists.

We popularized our Party Programme— its essential points, and explained our Election Manifesto to the masses of people in hundreds of big mass meetings. One lakh copies of election speeches prepared by the State Committee, 50,000 copies of C. C. Election Manifesto in Bengali and one and-a-half lakh political posters and four lakhs of Bengali leaflets and 10,000 copies of daily bulletins besides our organs *People's Democracy*, *Deshitaishi* and *Hindi Swadhinate* were sold and distributed mainly in 136 constituencies in our state covering half of the entire population. But it would be mistake to think that all those who listened to us and read our literature have accepted or understood fully our politics.

Our agitators exposed the anti-people policies of the

Congress; explained to the people how the Congress Government imposed intolerable burdens on the people in the interests of the big bourgeoisie. Our campaign emphasised the shameless surrenders by the Indian ruling class to American imperialists, the grave threat to India's independence and sovereignty from U. S. Imperialism and the reactionary foreign policy of the Congress Government. We campaigned for peaceful settlement with China and for Indo-Pak amity. We consistently exposed the role of the Congress Government in perpetuating India's disputes with China and Pakistan, not because these disputes cannot be settled, but because they find it a handy weapon to impose more burdens on the people, to curtail democratic rights and liberties in the name of defence and to screen their growing dependence on the U. S. in the form of "aid" to build up defence, etc. Our political campaign on these points received good response from the people.

Of course, the rejection of Congress rule in about eight States does not prove that the people voted against them in a fully conscious manner, though in the States where the democratic movements and our Party exist, the people voted for us consciously to some extent on the basis of our policies.

### **Disruption— Whose?**

The review then discusses the question. "who disrupted all in unity?" and states :—

It should be mentioned here that the State Committee of our Party refused to be blackmailed by the revisionist' tactics to reduce our strength by not allotting to us the constituencies where our Party is stronger than others. The revisionist party pursued its tactics to reduce our strength in the elections and their line was given by Dange in the Maidan meeting when the electoral unity parleys began in our State. He publicly stated that his party wanted unity on their terms i. e, "Preventing the

Marxist Communists assuming a dominant position”, and there he called us “Peking heroes”.

In accordance with this political outlook, the revisionist party in our state allied with the Bangla Congress and Forward Bloc during the negotiations to put pressure on us so that we might give up most of the seats, but it was a political alliance against our Party, specially on the issue of our attitude towards the India-China dispute, on the question of national defence and of our revolutionary path for India’s advance to Peoples’ Democracy and Socialism. Thus the Rightists paved the way for disrupting all-in unity on the eve of the General Elections in our state.

In our opinion, we pursued basically correct tactics in our unity efforts. It is the Rightists whose intransigence, in the main, stood in the way of forging all in unity. This is not a subjective study of the situation. It was an objective reality. And that is why we could succeed in building up a United Left Front with seven Left parties, who constituted the main body of leadership during the heroic struggle of our people for the last two-and-a-half years. The Rightists, too, gave a formal rubber-stamp to their front in the name of the PULF, which they had already formed surreptitiously long before and specially during the negotiation period.

If a united electoral front had been achieved, the democratic forces in Bengal would have dealt the Congress a far more decisive defeat and forged a far more stable democratic basis for the alternative Government that has been formed. Specially so would this have been, as such an electoral front would have come as the culmination of the united mass struggles that were fought gloriously all throughout 1966, rousing great expectations among the people.

Analysing the role played by the Rightists, the review further states :

If such a united electoral front had been forged, the Congress would have lost at least in another 60 Assembly seats, and in seven more Parliamentary seats.

The Rightists refused to concede us many of our strong working class seats— Assembly and Partientary Seats— because they wanted to make out that we were nowhere among the working class and that they were the real trade union and working class leaders.

The refused to concede our strong centres in key political-organizational bases, and tried to reduce us into an insignificant force; or at least to penetrate our strong bases to disrupt the class consciousness of the fighting masses.

They, for this purposes, worked out a electoral strategy of combining with parties whose politics run closer to theirs, parties whose politics do not go beyond the ideological framework of the ruling classes and achieve some electoral victories for their own revisionist party, but the main direction was to reduce our strength. That is why they practically came to an understanding with the FB and certain dissident Congress leaders (later, Bangla Congress) as early as in February, 1966.

### **Failures And Their Causes**

The review then deals with the “failures and their causes” and states :

a) Though in a majority cases we have proved correct in assessing our political organizational strength on the basis of which we decided to adhere to our proposal for seat allotment, in some cases our estimation was totally wrong. This is quite evident in our assessment regarding Midnapur, Birbhum, Bankura, West Dinajpur and Cooch Behar districts. In the case of Garbeta East, Kharagpur, Basirhat, Rampurhat, Vishnupur

and Cooch Behar South constituencies, we behaved most irresponsibly. During the unity tasks these seats should not have been insisted on. Our failures in this respect has to be taken special note of.

b) After breakdown of all in unity we should not have added so many seats to our original list of constituencies. In those four districts, we ought to have restricted to two to three seats only in each.

c) The State Committee, rather the Secretariat which authorized to finalize the list, should not have accepted whatever the DCs and LCs decided. The leadership failed to intervene and allowed the DCs to spread out the fight to more and more seats. The Secretariat should have struck to its opinion regarding Basirhat and not succumbed to the LC and DC decision.

d) We failed to intervene where we should have. The PCM from Darjeeling advised us to have unity with the Gorkha League by giving up Siliguri and Darjeeling Town. We did not accept his proposal. Though the DC was not unanimous on it, we should have accepted his proposal.

e) We failed to lay stress and to set up the necessary organization in prestige seats like Dhakuria, Alipore Lok Sabha and North-East Calcutta Lok Sabha seats. The State Committee Secretary committed a mistake in publicly stating that the Rightist candidate's deposit would be forfeited in Dhakuria. And even after that we did not make special effort to guide the election campaign and organization in that area and it was entirely left in the hands of the Local Committee. Excepting Barrackpore Lok Sabha to a certain extent, we did not give attention to any of our prestige seats.

Why did we fail to fulfil our expectations? We should self critically check-up our understanding, find out what are the main

lags in our Party functioning during the period under review. It is a fact that the assessment of our strength in certain districts was wrong and that we failed to counteract bourgeois propaganda successfully in all places.

The main cause has to be found out in the style of organizational work and method of political propaganda during the last five years. At the beginning of this report we mentioned the heroic fight of our Party ranks against revisionism, against the attack of the Congress Government and the Dangeites, and their glorious role in organizing and participating in the mass movements on people's issues. During the period of Government-revisionist offensive since 1962 end when a large part of our leadership was in jail and a small part was underground, our Party's main job was campaigning against slanders, keeping the banner of Marxism-Leninism flying aloft and mobilizing the masses of the people on various burning issues facing them. Campaign and mobilization were our main activity. The most neglected was the task of building the Party organization and mass organizations.

We tried to equate the anti-Congress sentiments of the people with a pro-Communist tendency. We forgot that spontaneous feelings of the masses against the Congress regime generally remain under the influency of bourgeois ideology, unless the Communist Party through its organized efforts raises it to the level of political consciousness, socialist consciousness.

The big attendance in election meetings led us to take it for granted that they are all with us. This simplified and wrong understanding regarding people's mood and consciousness led us to expect that our Party would win a larger numbers of seats than what we really can.

Strong districts like Calcutta, Burdwan, Howrah could not give the expected number of seats. Our contact with the people

is not so deep as to equip us with the knowledge for correct study and assessment. Even after polling in these districts, we talked of winning a larger number of seats. This reveals our weakness in Party organization and mass organizations in these major districts. Causes of our failure in these districts have to be further investigated in detail.

### **Immediate Tasks**

The review, in conclusion, enumerated some of the immediate tasks for the coming period. These are :

1) New situation has been created by the formation of the United Front Government in our State. Extension of civil liberties and expansion of democratic right have opened up new opportunities for developing mass movements and the struggle of the workers, kisans, middle classes, of the toiling millions against the vested interests and their exploitation. But it has to be remembered that the State power is in the hands of the exploiting class. The U. F. Ministry will have to function according to the bourgeois rules and under the bourgeois State machine. Further the Ministry is formed on the basis of a conglomeration of fourteen parties with different policies and ideologies and they are united with the aim of serving the people's interests. It has to function on the basis of a non-class outlook.

If we realise this we will understand the need for a two-sided struggle : (a) the Congress attempting to topple the Ministry at the first opportunity and we having to fight it in cooperation with other parties, and (b) the people have to fight for their immediate demands and through mobilization and movements alone will they be able to keep the Ministry on the right track to serve to the people's cause.

The Ministry has to take some quick measures and harness the enthusiasm of the people. Then they will not fall a victim to Congress provocation. In any case, our party must quickly move the masses in defence of their own interests and in defence of the Ministry and thus build their strength to get ready for a trial of strength with the Congress, to baffle the vested interests' conspiracy. We must realize that only the maximum mass activity will enable the Ministry to do something for the people and enable us to forge new ties with the masses now following the Congress.

The people should defend the Ministry against the attacks of the bourgeoisie, criticize it if and when it deviates from people's interests and strengthen its hands with constant mass mobilization; organized mass initiative in support of the Ministry alone can help it to discharge its responsibilities towards the exploited masses.

(2) The new opportunities for building up mass organizations and mass movements on the basis of demands—immediate and long-term—must be availed of without delay.

(3) Build up the mass movements and struggles of various sections of the people for realizing their immediate demands and in defence of the UF Ministry, against the attacks of the vested interests and their organizations, like the Congress and others.

(4) Educate the people to make them politically conscious against bourgeois ideology, revisionist politics, etc., raise their level of consciousness to a stage of conscious participation for changing the present social set-up.

Political exposure on concrete issues should be consistently carried on in order to win the masses under bourgeois influence for a really democratic change replacing the present ruling



classes. We must understand how difficult it is to build unity. We are partly responsible for rousing hopes for all-in unity among the people. By some of our actions we created the impression that it was easy to build all-in unity, just when it was our task to take the people in confidence and tell them about the difficulties in forging all-in unity at every stage of our negotiations for electoral unity.

We did not accept the suggestion that first inside the ULF we ought to discuss about the distribution of seats and to draft the *programme*. On the contrary, instead of doing that we held a meeting on 30th August, 1966 with all parties. Thus an impression was created among the people that all-in unity was knocking at the door. And the bourgeois Press took advantage of it in subsequent campaign against our Party. Now we have to realize all this and learn that building unity with other parties is itself a struggle with which the people have to be associated.

(5) Build and strengthen the class organizations of workers and kisans, build agricultural labours' organizations. (Immediate drive for mass membership of Kisan Sabha to be launched in all the districts.)

(6) Pay special attention to bustee peoples' grievances ; build organizations for their movement.

(7) Pay special attention to Muslim and other minority problems and Scheduled Caste and tribal problems.

(8) Remember the strength of the striking power of the Congress and prepare to fight it out. It has still a tremendous pull over the people. It has not been routed, rather it has got organized strength in all the districts. The Congress has been ousted from the Government mainly because of its debacle in Midnapur, Bankura, Nadia and some parts of 24-Parganas. Therefore, the fight against the Congress is not so easy as some

may be tempted to think. We need terrific political-organisational activities to weaken the Congress in our State and to win the masses from under its influence and organisation.

(9) Organise the youth and the new cadres coming towards our Party.

(10) Lay greater stress on Party building, setting up of Party organisation in new areas, Party education, training of new cadres, arrange for whole-timers, arrange for stricter scrutiny of the Party members, drop those who remained inactive during the election.

Nearly four to five hundred new people have been thrown up during the campaign in each constituency. They have to be quickly contacted, grouped together and educated. Special attention to bring the workers and poor peasants inside the Party has to be paid. Hold workers' (PMs' and sympathizers') baithaks and plan out mass work.

(11) Plan for regular sale of Party organs (*People's Democracy, Deshhitaishi, Hindi Swadhinata*) and Party pamphlets and classics.

(12) Plan out for regularizing the Party fund. Organise mass and individual collections. Strengthen the Party finances for increasing the number of whole-timers and carrying out the work of Party organisation. Legislators' salary and allowances have to be drawn by the respective Committees and not by the MLAs and MPs themselves. The entire money will be drawn by the party Committees and they will have their wage and allowance from the Party as decided by it.

## Root Out Anti-Party Tendencies

Editorial of "People's Democracy", June 25, 1967

The Polit Bureau resolution on organizational matters constitutes an important directive to all Party members to be alert in fighting anti-Party tendencies in our midst. The statement makes it quite clear that revisionist tendencies still constitute the main obstacle to the growth of the people's movement. Unless every Party member and leader examines his own performance and consciousness in the recent period, and mercilessly struggles to eradicate all manifestations of revisionism, the Party will not be able to discharge its revolutionary duty to mobilize the masses for the next stage of the struggle.

The post-election situation, with the defeat of the Congress in a number of States, with the formation of democratic Ministries in Kerala and West Bengal with our participation, and with the bourgeois-landlord clique yet hesitant and unable to launch a frontal attack on the people and their election victories, may blind some people to the grim reality of the developing crisis and the urgent need for the bourgeois-landlord Government to attack the people and to abrogate many a democratic right.

Against these revisionist illusions, the Central Committee of our Party meeting in April made a correct estimate of the situation when it stated in its Report, "The maturing economic crisis, as the post-election scene evidently demonstrates has passed into the political sphere, ushering in a political crisis. The ruling classes are finding it increasingly difficult to rule in the old way and the people, on the other, are more and more unable to put up

with the misrule of the big bourgeois-landlord classes and are being compelled to resist and fight back.” (*New Situation and Party’s Tasks*, Page 4)

And again on Page 81, “The crisis and the consequent mass upsurge have thus opened a new inspiring chapter in the history of the post-independent revolutionary mass movement of India ...It offers tremendous opportunities to the working class and its Communist Party to take big strides forward in building the class and mass organizations of the people, in forging and consolidating the united front of different democratic classes and in defeating the class policies of the big capitalists and landlords and opening the bright prospects of replacing the present Government by an alternate People’s Democratic Government”. And again, “In a word, the UF Governments that we have now are to be treated and understood as instruments of struggle in the hands of our people, more than as governments that actually possess adequate power”. (Page-69).

All these are clear formulations to combat revisionist outlook and illusions about the present situation.

The Polit Bureau resolution at the same time sharply attacks the other deviation—Left-sectarian adventurist deviation—which in places like West Bengal is playing into the hands of extreme reactionaries who seek to disrupt the united front and restore Congress rule over the State. The PB addresses a serious warning that it has reason to believe that agents-provocateurs have penetrated the ranks of these elements to exploit this adventurism for their nefarious aims. The Polit Bureau had to adopt a stern and uncompromising attitude towards these elements to save the organization and the movement from the machinations of enemy agents.

The West Bengal Committee of our Party has been waging a patient and prolonged struggle against the erroneous and harmful

ideas of these Party members. Every effort was made in the past to dissuade them from their anti-Marxist-Leninist outlook, to educate them through a series of ideological articles in the Party journal and through general body meetings where the Party line was repeatedly explained.

But they unfurled the banner of open defiance and revolt against the Party. We will deal with their political and ideological formulations subsequently as directed by the Polit Bureau. Suffice it to say here that these elements do not accept the minimum norms of Party discipline and have started issuing leaflets and bulletins against the party, its leadership, thus openly and shamelessly undermining and disrupting the Party.

The logic of all anti-Marxist-Leninist tendencies is inexorable. The revisionists as well as the Left deviationists start by attacking the basic Leninist concept of the Party, its discipline, its capacity to act as the vanguard. The first step in their great revolutionary venture is the disruption of our Party—the same party more than one thousand of whose members were jailed by the Congress Government till recently.

To cover this anti-Leninist stand, they hypocritically proclaim their adherence and acceptance of the Party Programme and at the same time say there is nothing sacred about a programme, that polemics must continue. And by polemics they do not mean inner-Party and actions which only help the Government to discredit the Party in the eyes of the people.

To fortify their disruptive stand, they have tried to utilize Lenin's name in one of their leaflets. They quote Lenin (from *Collected Works*, Vol. IV, Page 231), "The elaboration of a common programme for the Party, should not, of course, put an end to polemics...." They conceal from their readers that Lenin wrote these words when a common Marxist party did not yet

exist (1899); when there were several groups in Russia whom Lenin was trying to consolidate into a single party on the basis of a common programme with only partial differences remaining to be solved.

But the choice of this quotation is not accidental. The anti-Party elements do not regard our Party as a party, and they seek to apply the logic of a group stage to the present situation. The simple fact is that they pretend to accept the programme to get the ear of Party comrades; yet they do not recognize the Party, its central authority, its discipline. They consider themselves free to advocate anything they like.

That is how they deliberately and wantonly distort Lenin. When Lenin talked of "Polemics" in those days, he did not support it at the cost of centralized authority—which is essential for the functioning of a Marxist party. That is why Lenin later on laid so much stress on democratic centralism as the organizational foundation of a Marxist party.

It is not accidental that these elements are afraid of quoting Lenin after he fully developed the organizational principles of the Party in the fight against the Mensheviks. This is how later on Lenin compared the two periods; "Formerly our Party was not a formally organized whole, but only the sum of separate groups, and therefore no other relations except those of ideological influence were possible between these groups. Now we have become an organized party, and this implies the establishment of authority, the transformation of the power of ideas into the power of authority, the subordination of lower party bodies to higher party bodies." (Quoted by Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, Page 85).

Have these elements never read Lenin's words that factions inside the Party are impermissible? Have they not heard of Lenin's

instruction that a Communist Party must be organized on the principle of democratic centralism; that the minority must submit to the majority; that lower committees must submit to higher committees?

They talk in the name of Lenin but abandon every Leninist norm of organization and in the name of polemics attack the Party publicly and contravene the Party line in mass organization and actions. Lenin described such elements in the following words : “It is clear, I think, that the cries about the famous bureaucracy are just a screen for dissatisfaction with the personal composition of the central bodies, a fig-leaf ..... You are a bureaucrat because you were appointed by the Congress against my wishes; you are a formalist because you take your stand on the formal decisions of the Congress, and not my consent; you are acting in a grossly mechanical way, because you plead the ‘mechanical’ majority at the Party Congress.....”

These elements, in short, apart from advocating and pursuing a wrong and injurious and adventurist political line, with which we will deal subsequently, embarked upon a disruptive organisational line, publicly attacked the Party, did everything to discredit it in the eyes of the people while mouthing Left slogans and objectively helped the reactionaries. They demand the right to defy and disrupt the Party and set at naught all Leninist norms of discipline. They have no place in a serious Marxist-Leninist Party and they have to be expelled.

## **Bengal Situation: \***

### **Ideological Questions, Organisational Issues**

#### **Polit Bureau of the C.P.I.(M) issued**

#### **Press Communique on June 20, 1967.**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following communique to the Press on June 20, 1967 :*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) held its monthly meeting from June 15 to 18. Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad could not attend as he was busy with preparations for Kerala Assembly due to open on the 19th.

#### **On West Bengal Political Situation**

The Polit Bureau considered the political situation that is fast developing in West Bengal, the determined efforts to enforce the President's rule in West Bengal by certain sections of the Congress High Command and some members of the cabinet of the Government of India, in league with Big Business and vested interests, and in league with some high bureaucratic officials in West Bengal and decided to launch a public campaign exposing this conspiracy.

In this connection, the hue and cry raised in the Big Business-controlled Press about the so-called law and order situation rapidly deteriorating in West Bengal, is considered by the PB as politically motivated and false propaganda, purposely carried on to prepare the public opinion for instituting President's rule on the ground that law and order has broken down. Demonstrations and gheraos in the industrial field, even the Naxalbari peasants'

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, June 25, 1967.



unrest on land problems are nothing extra-ordinary and are being dealt with by the UF Ministry by adopting correct economic and political methods. It should not fall into the trap of being hustled into "law and order, and massive police actions" line. The PB gave the necessary instructions to the West Bengal State Committee.

### **On Food Situation in West Bengal**

The Polit Bureau considered the deteriorating food situation. In its opinion the food situation in the country has become extremely grave and is threatening to erupt into starvation deaths and food riots. Unless immediate drastic steps are taken, the Government would be failing in their elementary duty of feeding the people.

The PB holds that the Central Government has failed to meet West Bengal State's need of rice and wheat by supplying at least the quantities given to Congress Government last year. It has failed even to keep its pledge of supplying the rice and the quantity of rice and wheat supplies which it had promised. This has suddenly brought about a very serious food crisis in West Bengal. The PB demands that the Central Government should not only rush the current supplies but make up the old shortfalls in this very month and advance further supplies even as loan.

Enough supplies can be procured to assure all the people in all the States, at least a limited amount of guaranteed ration, provided the Central Government gives up its own pro-hoarder and pro-landlord, and pro-blackmarketeer policy and insists on all States to procure all the surplus from the big producers, millers and big traders.

The Polit Bureau notes that the West Bengal Government's food policy had serious drawback. It adopted a policy of 1) doing away with levy, without an adequate procurement policy and the machinery to implement it; 2) removing all intra-district movement of foodgrains throughout West Bengal except in the statutory rationing area; 3) increasing procurement price of paddy hoping that the big producers, the millers, the big traders

and stockholders would voluntarily offer to sell the required amount of grain to the Government; 4) limiting its responsibility of supplying even the meagre rations to the existing statutory rationed areas covering only about 90 lakh persons, and leaving the rest of the three crore of the population of Bengal to the mercy of landlords and big traders; 5) refusing to take drastic steps to procure the limited targeted quantity of rice from the big producers, millers and big traders.

The Polit Bureau directed the West Bengal Committee to see that ministers belonging to CPI(M) insist on the following measures to be taken by the Cabinet :

(1) The Government must progressively assume the responsibility of supplying foodgrains to the whole population of West Bengal and shall open ration shops in every group of villages, with a population of 1,000 and shall strive to supply a ration of 250 grams per adult per day to start with. As procurement and stock position improve it shall strive to increase the ration amount up to 400 grams per day.

(2) Immediately announce the maximum retail price of rice at which a person can sell to any buyer. Anyone trying to sell above this is committing a cognizable offence and as such immediately can be hauled up before the court and be sentenced.

(3) No family, either an agriculturist or non-agriculturist, should be permitted to keep stock of rice of more than one quintal of rice or 1½ quintal of paddy per head on July 1, 1967. This is sufficient for the next six months till the aman crop is harvested at the end of December. Anything found in excess of this from any person can be seized by the Government or persons authorized by the Government or the People's Food Committees.

(4) Every landholder of over 10 acres, a rice-miller, a grain dealer or a stockist must declare his stocks as on July 1 and keep an account of how much he is selling to the Government or to persons authorized by the Government.

(5) All the stocks in excess of one quintal of rice per head from any family shall be considered as Government stocks and they must be properly preserved and accounted and delivered to the persons and at places as directed by the Government from time to time.

(6) Every landholder of over 10 acres, if he had not delivered to the Government or to the persons authorized by the Government by the end of June all the surplus from his crop of 1966-67, must immediately deliver to the Government such amount of rice or paddy as fixed by the Government or persons authorized by the Government. This shall be based on the average yield during the current year, minus the amount deducted for seed and agricultural purposes and for personal consumption. Twelve maunds of paddy or eight maunds of rice per adult per year and two maunds of paddy per acre for agricultural and seed purposes.

(7) Of the stocks procured or seized, the Government shall keep enough grain in that village, thana or district or sub-division, which would assure at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  kg of rice per day per adult for all persons.

(8) The Government shall fix up the retail prices of all essential commodities like pulses, vegetable oils, sugar, coarse and medium cloth, and other articles of day-to-day use; and of fertilizers and agricultural implements; and see that the traders supply these goods to the people at these fixed rates. The Government must take special steps to see that these essential commodities reach the peasants in the rural area, especially the poor and middle peasantry and to all those who promptly comply and deliver the paddy to the Government in time. Supply them through ration shops.

(9) People's Food Committees from village level on should be created and it is through these bodies, and people's volunteers organized by them, along with the existing Governmental machinery that the dehoarding, the procurement and check-up of shops and fair distribution to be organized.

(10) The main concentration for procurement must start from the biggest hoarder and landlord and gradually spread to the smaller ones. Nowadays the stocks of the hoarders and landlords cannot be found in their own premises. They hide it in the premises of small peasants and agricultural labourers. We must mobilize their support, by guaranteeing them one quintal per head for the coming six months and get them behind us for dehoarding.

So give up the practice of today of sending the police and volunteers to chase the women and children who carry one or two kg. of rice in handbags or in their dress. Find out from which hoarder or black-marketeer they are getting it and get at the hoarder.

Take drastic action against the big hoarders and black-marketeers and other anti-social elements.

### **On Ideological Questions**

The Polit Bureau discussed the draft on the pending ideological issues and finalized it. However, some PB members suggested that some issues be further elaborated and that they would give written notes indicating how those issues should be elaborated. Comrade P. Ramamurti is proceeding to Kerala to meet Com. E. M. S. and discuss with him the document.

After this preliminary work is completed the PB's draft will be circulated to all Central Committee members and State Committees for discussion and for suggestions and amendments. The Central Committee will be meeting on August 18-24, 1967 at Madurai (Tamilnad) to finalize the document to be released for discussion among the ranks.

### **On Certain Organisational Matters**

1. The Polit Bureau considered the organizational situation of the Party and has come to the conclusion that revisionism has so much corroded the very vitals of the Party over the period of 1954-64 that in spite of political and ideological campaigning and reorganizing the Party at the Seventh Party Congress held at Calcutta, still the Party is bogged in reformist conceptions and

practices, and still constitute the main obstacle and danger to the growth of people's movement and the Party. The PB decided on the steps that are required to carry on this sustained and prolonged struggle and to reorganize and to re-educate the Party on the basis of the Party Programme, and Report on the Fight against Revisionism; The New Situation and Party's Tasks; Tasks on T.U. Front and Tasks on the Kisan Front; and on the basis of Draft Organizational Report submitted to the CC.

The PB in view of these heavy responsibilities, decided that comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet should be functioning wholly from the Centre, and he should be relieved immediately from the responsibility of the Punjab State Committee Secretaryship and also from the responsibility in the Coordinating Committee of Punjab UF.

2. The PB has considered the activities of certain individual Party members, especially in West Bengal, and has come to the conclusion that they are no more a political trend in the Party but have grouped themselves into an organized anti-Party group advocating an adventuristic line and actions challenging the Party Programme and resolutions and directives passed by the CC.

There are reasons to believe that certain agent provocateurs have penetrated into these groups and taking advantage of the line and actions of groups of these to help the reactionary elements and the Central Government who are preparing to attack the Party and destroy it, before the Party could mobilize the democratic forces to frustrate the landlord-big bourgeois Government conspiracy.

As such the PB declares all those belonging to such groups are outside the pale of the Party. The PB directs the State Secretariats, especially the West Bengal State Secretariat, to immediately expel from Party membership.

The PB has decided to launch a political and ideological campaign against this trend in *People's Democracy* and other organs of the Party. But the success will be achieved in isolating the rabid anti-Party elements from the rest of militant and honest

ranks only when the whole Party, especially its Central and State Committees, combat revisionism manifesting in different ways in the Party and by developing the mass movement on correct lines.

The PB considered the recent deplorable and indefensible attacks that took place against the Indian Embassy officials in Peking and against Chinese Embassy officials in New Delhi. It is well known that every foreign embassy takes it as part of its regular activity to gather intelligence for their respective Governments and all the host Governments are aware of it, and they expel some official or other who, they feel, have exceeded the limit. The PB considers that allowing such kinds of attacks by the crowds on foreign embassy officials will only embitter the relations between the concerned governments and between the peoples of the countries involved and should not be allowed. The PB is alarmed at this further worsening of relations between India and China and urges on the democratic forces and parties in the country to find a way to improve India-China relations or at least to prevent these from worsening further.

## **Divergent Views Between Our Party and The Communist Party Of China On Certain Fundamental Issues Of Programme And Policy \***

*Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the C.P. I. (M) at its Madurai Session from August 18 to 27, 1967*

The recent writings in the Chinese Communist Press and the broadcasts by the Radio Peking regarding the political developments in India and our Party's political stand, reveal that divergent views and serious differences prevail between our Party and that of the CPC, on a number of issues connected with the Indian revolution.

A careful study these writings, broadcasts, and other steps of the Chinese comrades by our P. B. compel it to arrive at the conclusion that these differences cover a wide range of fundamental questions, which require to be properly formulated and urgently examined.

We are of the opinion that the Chinese Communist Party has practically come to the conclusion : (a) that our Party Programme is fundamentally wrong in certain vital aspects; (b) that the entire assessment of the country's political situation made by our Party and the Political-tactical line worked out accordingly is wrong and reformist; (c) that our Party is not genuine Communist Party while the extremist rebels who are expelled by our Party and all those who rally round them are the real revolutionary; (d) and that our Party's political line is to be publicly denounced through their Press and Radio as reformist and revisionist. This, no doubt, is a grave development as far as the Party and the revolutionary movement of our country are concerned. But there is no escape from this unpleasant reality and it would be grievously wrong on the part of our Party either to gloss over these differences or to hush them up.

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\* *Published as a booklet*

## **The Origin and Nature of the Differences**

The Nature of our differences with the CPC falls roughly into three categories. The first is regarding the programmatic aspect i. e., the class character of the present Indian state and government, the character and role of the different sections of the Indian bourgeoisie and its attitude to imperialism, etc. The second concerns with the actual assessment of the economic-political situation in the country, the degree of development of the class contradictions and class consciousness among the proletariat and toiling peasantry, and the concrete tactics and forms of struggle adopted to the requirement of the mass struggles. The third category falls in the matter of political-organisational principles governing the fraternal relations between two Communist Parties, i. e., our party and the CPC. We shall proceed to discuss the subject accordingly.

## **The Programme Issues**

The serious differences over programmatic and policy issues inside the Indian Communist movement, let alone the earlier period before the programme of 1951 was adopted, started anew in the middle of June, 1955, i. e., with the June C. C. resolution, as a draft for the Fourth Party Congress held at Palghat in April 1956. Notwithstanding the different shades of opinion and views by different members of the then Central committee, two sharply opposed stands clearly expressed themselves and the same can be seen from the discussion documents and Forums released, preceding the Congress.

In brief, one view was that the Nehru Government, as it was constituted and was functioning, essentially represented the aspirations of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal sections of the Indian bourgeoisie, that it was encountering increasing opposition from the right reactionary sections who were avowedly pro-imperialist and pro-feudal, and hence it was necessary to lend some sort of support to the Government to fight the danger of extreme reaction.

Of course, this line which was being fervently advocated for several years by a small group of CCMs led by P. C. Joshi was quite



unacceptable to the then dominant leadership of our party. It was only subsequently that such a full-fledged line of co-operation with the Nehru Government came to be accepted by the revisionist party.

It is redundant to narrate here the manner in which the CPSU has gone in the matter, as it has been dealt at length in our Programme discussions and the ideological draft of our C. C. Hence we propose to confine here to the subject of the CPC's assessment regarding our Programme.

The Chinese viewpoint on the Indian situation is nowhere more clearly elaborated than in the two published documents of the CPC., i.e., "Nehru's Philosophy" and "Once More on Nehru's Philosophy". All other Chinese Communist material regarding India consists either in the form of recent editorials in the PEOPLE'S DAILY, short notes and comments in their Press, and Radio Peking broadcasts. All these taken together can be treated as systematically expounded views on the entire Indian issue. What does this assessment of the Indian bourgeoisie and the character of the Congress Government, in the main, state?

It maintains that the Indian big bourgeoisie is a parasitic class fostered by British imperialism, that it represents the comprador, bureaucratic capital in India, and that the Congress Government acts as the chief instrument and the main mouthpiece of the comprador, bureaucratic monopoly capitalist class.

It holds the view that, for some time after the attaining of political independence for India, Nehru in some degree acted on behalf of the non-comprador, non-bureaucratic and non-monopoly sections, but, of late, due to the sharpening of the internal class contradictions, had gone over to imperialism and had become the lackey and mouthpiece of imperialism, like the Chiang kai-shek Government after 1927.

It, then, practically comes to the conclusion that the stage and nature of the Indian revolution is principally anti-imperialist and the

fight against British imperialism and also against U.S. imperialism gets specially emphasised, though the struggle against feudal landlordism and bureaucratic capital is stated to be fundamental and important.

Our analysis of the Indian bourgeoisie, its divisions into different categories, the class character of the new Indian state and government, and the stage and strategy of the revolution worked out accordingly in the Party Programme do not tally with the analysis and assessment of the CPC comrades. Our study of the concrete conditions of the Indian situations compels us to differ with them and arrive at different conclusions of our own in the matter. What are the essential factors and the principal ground on which we differ ?

First of all, we proceed on the widely accepted premise which was repeatedly emphasised by the Communist International in its documents that India, when it was completely colonial, was the most capitalistically developed country among the colonial and semi-colonial countries. During the period of the Second World War, and more particularly in the post-Independence period— for nearly three decades since 1939— capitalism had further developed and the capitalists had strengthened their class position in the society, and today stand on a footing far different and stronger than from their counterparts in the pre-liberation China of the 1930s and '40s.

This difference between present-day Indian capitalism and the Indian bourgeoisie on the one hand and the pre-liberation capitalist development of China and the Chinese bourgeoisie is a very important factor which every Marxist-Leninist has to take into account and cannot afford to ignore.

Secondly, there exists a vital difference between the place and role of the comprador bourgeoisie and its bureaucratic capital in the pre-liberation Chinese society and that of the place and role of the big bourgeoisie in present day India. The phenomenon of commercial or comprador bourgeoisie was, no doubt, common to all the colonial and semi-colonial countries under imperialist domination. This section

of the trading bourgeoisie, linked as it was with imperialism and dependent upon it, was parasitic in nature, did not reflect the native industrial interests, and was often found in the service of imperialism and its capital.

In India, too, this category of the bourgeoisie had its existence and played its servitors' role at one stage of development or the other, with one degree of difference or the other compared to their counterparts in other countries. Even today this element is not totally absent in India. But the fact to be noted here is that, it is the industrial big bourgeoisie which, today, has emerged as a powerful force holding the leading position in the new State and government, and not the comprador element.

Closely connected with it is the concept of bureaucratic capital, i.e., the big comprador capital which, in alliance with feudalism and in utter dependence on imperialism, amasses wealth by utilising the state bureaucratic apparatus and does not interest itself either in the expansion of industries or the development of the national economy. This is a specific characteristic of the Chiang Kai-shek regime dominated by the notorious four big families of Soong, Keng, Chang and Lin.

Though certain tendencies of the nature are present in the Indian situation, too, it is by no means the principal characteristic of the Indian big bourgeoisie which is heading the state and government. Hence our programme states that the present Indian Government is a bourgeois-landlord Government led by the big bourgeoisie which is compromising and collaborating with foreign monopoly capital. It further observes that this big bourgeoisie is, by its nature, counter-revolutionary, inimical to the people and cannot have any place in the People's Democratic Front, even though there still exist conflicts and contradictions between them and the foreign monopolists— a factor to be taken into account for tactical purposes and not at all for the strategical objectives at the present stage. From this follows the nature of our revolution, i. e., anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and anti-monopolist.

The third point of difference arises regarding the appraisal of the Nehru Government, its class character and role, prior to 1959, i.e., before the good relations between Indian and China were strained and the Indian Government had veered round to the containment of China policy initiated by the U.S. imperialists. The Nehru Government as well as the present Indian Government is a Government formed by the Congress party. The entire record of its programme, policy, activities and the role of the Indian National Congress prove beyond any doubt that its leadership represented, in the main, the class interests of the Indian big bourgeoisie, and its national-reformist opposition to imperialism, in the the pre-Independence days, was due to that character.

Several documents of the Communist International (C.I.) have stated, and our Party has always maintained, that the all-India leadership of the Congress party represented the interests of the Indian big bourgeoisie. We cannot subscribe to the view that the Congress Government, at any stage of its existence during the last twenty years, represented the interests of the middle and non-big bourgeoisie (which the CPC characterises as national bourgeoisie), as against and in demarcation to the Indian Big Business which is compromising and collaborating with the imperialists and allying with big landlordism

The markedly servile behaviour of the Nehru Government towards imperialism during the 1947-53 period as well as the subsequent, comparatively, independent, anti-imperialist and vocal postures adopted by it between 1954 and 1959— both these were class policies of the Indian bourgeoisie led by the big bourgeoisie, and it is wrong to think that the former arose because the Government represented Big Business and bureaucratic capital and the latter emanated because it represented the class interests of the middle and non-big bourgeoisie. Similarly, the surrenderist stances glaringly noted after the 1959 period are the continuation of the same class policies, adopted to the narrow, selfish needs of the class in the present phase of development.

It is quite a different thing to state that the middle and non-big capitalist sections also are sharing state power though they are coming

to be hit more and more as the economic crisis is deepening. But to say that the Congress Government represented the non-big Indian bourgeoisie till 1959 and that it became the instrument of the big monopolists subsequently, is contrary to facts and the concrete class realities in India.

The fourth point of divergence is about the assessment of the actual growth of internal class contradictions and their impact on the Government of Nehru which, according to the CPC, had led to its surrender and going over to imperialism. In other words, it is an attempt at explaining in class terms the reasons for the change in foreign policy of the Indian Government after 1959, from one of Sino-Indian friendship and amity to that of hostility to and containment of China policy.

The explanation in plain terms is that the Nehru Government which was till then representing the class interests of the non-big bourgeoisie and to that extent playing an oppositional role to imperialism, had, due to the extreme sharpening of internal contradictions, transformed itself into the representative of the anti-national big bourgeoisie and big landlords, and a lackey of imperialism.

We disagree with both the above premises, and have already dealt with one aspect showing how it has always been a bourgeois-landlord government led by the big bourgeoisie which is compromising and collaborating with imperialism. Then coming to the question of intensified class contradictions at home which are supposed to have led the Government to reduce itself to the stage of 'stooge', 'puppet', and 'lackey' of imperialism, it needs a brief discussion. It is an incontrovertible truth that, "as social contradictions grow, the national bourgeoisie inclines more and more to compromise with domestic reaction and imperialism", as Correctly emphasised in the Moscow Statement of 81 Parties.

Our contention is that as far as the big capitalists of the Indian bourgeoisie are concerned, they, after gaining of political independence and securing of leadership in the new state power are

compromising and collaborating with imperialism. The other non-big Indian bourgeoisie has neither so far split away from the big bourgeoisie nor politically differentiated with it, let alone playing an oppositional role and abandoning it in face of growing class contradictions and consequent threat to its very existence at the hands of revolution. This development so envisaged did not yet actually take place either in the 1959 period or even now in 1967, more than seven years after such an assessment was made.

It is an admitted fact that the crisis in the Indian economy is deepening, that it has also extended to the political sphere, and that different social contradictions inherent in the situation are getting accentuated. But either an exaggeration of the degree, depth and maturity of these contradictions or the extent of their subjective political expression is fraught with the risk of committing serious errors. As correctly observed by the Sixth Congress of the C.I., in its these on *The Revolutionary Movement in Colonies and Semi-Colonies*, there exist and “excessively marked lack of correspondence between the objective revolutionary situation and the weakness of the subjective factors,” and it persists even today, in several countries.

Our own experience teaches that the Congress party still holds considerable political influence among the people, that several bourgeois-landlord reactionary parties still command certain mass following, that the character of many petty-bourgeois parties and groups still is not exposed to any appreciable extent, and that the proletariat and its revolutionary party are far from properly organised and built. In face of such reality it would be a grave error to exaggerate this aspect of sharpening class contradictions to the point of suggesting that class revolution on the part of the masses has already become immediate and acute and menacing to the bourgeoisie as to make its capitulation to imperialism final and irrevocable.

What we observe in the contemporary world situation is that several bourgeois-landlord governments in the newly liberated countries, despite their basic compromising and collaborationist

policies towards foreign monopoly capitalism and imperialism, are trying to exploit the different world contradictions that are prevailing, so as to bargain with the imperialists and to extract concessions from them. The case of Pakistan, which is drawn into the imperialist military blocs and still is formally not out of them, is glaring example in this regard.

Hence, we do not find any valid reason for the present Indian Government, which has a more wider social base when compared to most of its counterparts in several countries and which does not face the imminent threat of class revolution at home, opting to play the role of a 'puppet', 'stooge' and 'lackey' of imperialism.

One can understand the argument that its need for dollars and rubles to buttress its class position and its designs to crush the Communist movement at home are at the root of its joining the chorus of the atrocious U. S. policy of 'containment of Communist China'. This dangerous line, of course, has its own logic, if pursued to the end, and it need be fought out and defeated. But from this neither a case of sharpened class contradictions as immediate cause for the government to join hands with the U.S. imperialist and their 'containment of China' policy, nor the Indian big bourgeoisie being the representative of the big bureaucratic capital to act as the parasitic puppets of imperialism, etc., should be built, and it does not also stand the test of facts and realities.

Lastly, two differing views emerge from the above analysis on the question of the stage and strategy of our revolution— the one enunciated in our Party Programme and the other that follows from the CPC's analysis. The assessment of the CPC leads one to conclude that the new Indian state is not a bourgeois-landlord state, led by the big bourgeoisie, which pursues the capitalist path of development in collaboration with foreign monopoly capital, but a puppet government, led by the bureaucratic capitalism, run by them, principally, in the interests of imperialism while reconciling themselves to live as parasites, depending on the crumbs thrown by their foreign masters.

If such a premise were to be accepted as a fact of life, then the national liberation aspect of our revolution stands in the forefront, the edge of the revolution will have to be directed against the foreign imperialists, the contradiction between alien imperialists and the nation as a whole assumes the principal role, and a corresponding strategy of general national united front will have to be substituted in place of the present class strategy incorporated in our Programme. The concept of concentrating the main fire against the bourgeois-landlord state power with the agrarian revolution as its axis will have to be given up.

These differences of ours with the understanding of the CPC are not new, and all the comrades who assembled at Delhi in January 1964, to discuss the outlines of the new Draft Programme had discussed about them. Further, with a view to keeping other comrades of our Party, who were to participate in the then proposed programmatic and ideological discussion, informed about these differences this was mentioned in the introduction to the draft in the words : "We would also like to bring to your notice that on some of the concrete questions such as the characterisation of the present Indian state, the nature of the present government and its leadership, we have some differences and serious reservations with the positions taken by CPC, as well as CPSU, in some of their documents. In drafting our programme we tried to incorporate our understanding on these questions and excluded all this from the ideological document". (from "a Contribution to Ideological Debate")

Of course, these aspects were again clarified during the Party Congress discussions by comrades who were piloting the draft programme on behalf of the Steering Committee, for the benefit of the delegates. But it becomes now evident that several of our Party members at different levels have not been able to follow all the intricacies involved in these differences and find themselves confused when divergent views are put across in the Chinese Communist Press and over Radio Peking. Hence, we are compelled to once again cover all the ground over, already covered at some stage or other of our inner-Party discussions.



## **Two Different Assessments of the Current Situation And Two Different Tactical Lines.**

We have so far dealt with some of the programmatic issues on which the line of our Party differs from that indicated by the CPC's statements and pronouncements on the subject. The Programme, as everybody is aware, deals with the stage, class strategy, nature and tasks of the People's Democratic Revolution. This class strategy changes only with the passing of the revolution from one stage to another but will remain essentially unchanged throughout the given stage of our revolution.

But tactics, as Stalin lucidly presented, "deal with the forms of struggle, the forms of organisation of the proletariat, with their changes and combinations. During a given stage of the revolution tactics may change several times depending on the flow and ebb, the rise or decline of the revolution." Summarising the experience of the Bolsheviks in the second and third stages of the Russian revolution, he observed that "tactics changed dozens of times, whereas the strategical plans remained unchanged."

Since we are dealing with the subject it is also pertinent to remember what Lenin said regarding revolutionary tactics. "Of course, without a revolutionary mood among the masses, and without conditions favouring the growth to this mood, revolutionary tactics would never be converted into action; but we in Russia have been convinced by long, painful and bloody experience of the truth that revolutionary tactics cannot be built on revolutionary moods alone. Tactics must be based on sober and strictly objective estimation of *all* the class forces in a given state—and in neighbouring states, and in well states of the world over—as well as of the experiences of the revolutionary movements". (*Left-Wing Communism*)

During the Seventh Party Congress, along with the new Party Programme, we had adopted some resolutions such as, "On the Tasks of the Party in the Present Situation", "On Kerala Election", "On Food and High Prices", "On Bonus" and similar other topics. The

effort in all of them was to concretely assess the effects of the deepening crisis, to note the growing mass discontent against the bourgeois-landlord policies of the Congress Government, to evaluate the class character of different political parties and their mass hold, to analyse the weakness in the trade union and Kisan movement and organisation in our country, to take stock of the political-ideological and organisational weakness and shortcomings of our Party, and to work out a tactical line of action to lead the people's struggles, corresponding to the concrete conditions then prevailing.

Similarly, the C. C. of our Party, as it faced ever new issues and developments, from time to time, was concretising the same political-tactical line in its resolutions. In continuation of the same, the April 1967 meeting of the C. C. had reviewed and reassessed the entire political situation in the country that had come to exist after the Fourth General Elections and incorporated its conclusions in the document entitled, "New Situation and Party's Tasks" for the current period.

It is relevant here to mention the key points this document emphasises. Briefly they are :

The economic crisis in the country is deepening and fast enveloping one sector after another of the nation's economy. Further, it has also extended to the political sphere and a political crisis has set in and is likely to mature with speed in the coming period, even though, at present, it is only in its initial stages.

The crisis is closely linked and forms an integral part of the world capitalist crisis, and the pressure from and offensive of imperialism, particularly U. S., to shift the burdens of its crisis on to the shoulders of the weaker and dependent states, are on the increase, the manifestations of which are clearly seen in the case of our country.

The bourgeois-landlord Government, led by the big bourgeoisie, in its pursuit on the capitalist path of development, is depending and relying on foreign monopoly capital to come to its aid, and, consequently, the threat to our national independence is growing.

Unless the policies of compromise and collaboration pursued by the big bourgeois leadership of the state are resisted and decisively defeated in time, the danger of neo-colonialism stares us in the face.

The crisis is causing growing mass discontent among the people, and the mass protest actions, demonstrations, strikes and several other forms of struggles are on the increase. Due to the growing economic distress, people are not only compelled to resist and fight back the offensive of the exploiting classes, but they, in ever-increasing numbers, are being drawn into the vortex of political life, with a new class and mass awakening. It offers tremendous opportunities to the working class and its Communist Party to take big strides in building the class organisations of the people and in forging and consolidating the united front of different democratic classes to defeat the bourgeois-landlord Government and its policies.

The single biggest weakness in the whole situation is the deplorable state of the political level of the proletariat, its class consciousness, its organisation, and its unity with the other toiling masses and particularly the peasantry. Special note is taken of the fact how the communist Party is very weak and even non-existent in the greater part of the country and how it is further menaced with the onslaught of revisionism organised in the shape of the Right Communist Party.

The C. C. resolution warns the Party ranks against “any attempt to over-rate or exaggerate the degree of its [crisis] depth and maturity”, as “it would lead us to grossly underestimate the immense reserves still at the disposal of the big bourgeois-landlord classes, the room to manoeuvre which they still possess on the one hand and to do everything their power to disrupt and suppress the popular struggles on the other to perpetuate their exploiting class rule”.

Lastly, it emphasises the need for struggle to win over the masses to our Programme and political line, underlines the scope for the use of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles in correct combination, analyses the character, scope and functions of the non-

Congress democratic state coalition Governments in which our party is functioning while sharply pointing out how they are to be treated “as instruments of struggle in the hands of our people” and as “our participation in such Governments as one specific form of struggle to win more and more people and more and more allies” for the People’s Democratic Revolution, and urges on the Party to boldly lead the mass struggle.

But the estimation of the current situation inside our country by the Chinese comrades, as understood by us from the writings in their Press and broadcasts in Radio Peaking, from the manner in which the extremist rebels who were expelled by our Party are being hailed as real Communists and revolutionaries and the manner in which our participation in the State Governments of West Bengal and Kerala is being decried, is totally opposed to the one that our Party puts forth in the “New Situation and Party’s Tasks.”

To cite few formulations from the Chinese Communist Press, “The so-called ‘non-Congress Government’ in West Bengal openly side the reactionary Indian Government in its bloody suppression of the revolutionary presents in Darjeeling. This gives added proof that these renegades and revisionist are running dogs of U.S. imperialism and soviet revisionism and the lackeys of the big Indian landlords and bourgeoisie. What they call the ‘non-Congress Government’ is only a tool of these landlords and bourgeoisie.” (People’s Daily Editorial, July 5, 1967)

Further, “In India today, the rule of the Congress clique has become so discarded that the Indian reactionaries have had to try some new tricks such as bribing some scabs and renegades in some states to establish a so-called ‘non-Congress Government’ in order to deceive the people.” (People’s Daily Comment, July 11, 1967)

Many such comments can be multiplied from their writings.

As a matter of fact the overestimation of the situation in India, as pointed out above, was reflected in their earlier writings of 1950-60, which led them to conclude that the social contradictions in our

country were sharpened to such a degree that the Indian bourgeois-landlord Government had finally gone over to imperialism under the threat of imminent class revolution. The same line is now being put across much more bluntly and openly.

We are of the definite view that such an estimation of the situation is highly exaggerated and extremely subjective. It is virtually negating our premise of a deepening economic crisis and the initial stages of a political crisis, and in its place substitution of the premise of an already matured revolutionary situation and a revolutionary crisis, demanding the highest revolutionary forms of struggle.

While disagreeing with the estimation of the Chinese comrades, we wish to point out how it is impermissible for Marxist-Leninists to ignore the equally important subjective factor even if an objectively revolutionary situation has come to exist. Lenin, analysing what a revolutionary situation is and what the objective as well as subjective factors that should be taken into account, after pointing out the objective conditions which mark a revolutionary situation., observes:

“This situation existed in 1905 in Russia and in all epochs of revolution in the West, but it also existed in the sixties of the last century in Germany, and in 1859-61 and 1879-80 in Russia, although no revolution occurred in these cases, Why? Because not every revolutionary situation gives rise to revolution; revolution arises only out of such a situation when to the abovementioned objective changes, a subjective change is added, namely, the ability of the revolutionary *class* to carry out revolutionary mass actions *strong* enough to break or undermine the old government, which never, not even in the period of crisis, : ‘falls’ if it is not ‘dropped’.

“Such are the Marxian views on revolution, views that have been developed many, many times, have been accepted as indisputable by all Marxistse...etc.” (*Collapse of the Second International*)

It is precisely basing on the above guidelines stated by Lenin, the concrete analysis of the class relations and the objective and subjective factors obtaining in the post-election Indian situation are presented

by our Party in its document "New Situation and Party's Tasks". It was only in the months of February and March, 1967, that the Fourth General Elections took place and different political parties with their respective programmes went to the people, and each party could measure the exact strength of popular support it could mobilise for its programme. Basing on these facts, noting the rapidity with which the principal ruling party of the bourgeois-landlord classes, the Congress, was disintergrating, and also the illusions that large sections of the people still entertain about several other so-called oppositional parties, our Party decided to orientate to what is growing in the situation, with a view to giving proper and effective leadership. Events during the last four months confirm the correctness of our estimation of the situation.

The political line pursued by our Party has nothing in common with the reformist outlook regarding the character and scope of the bourgeois Parliaments and Legislatures. It is in strict accordance with the accepted Marxist-Leninist outlook on the whole question. Our Party Programme states that :

"However, universal adult franchise and parliament and state legislature can serve as instruments of the people in their struggle for democracy, for defence of their interests. Although a form of class rule of the bourgeoisie, India's present parliamentary system also embodies an advance for the people. It affords certain opportunities to them to defend their interests, intervene in the affairs of the state to a certain extent , and mobilise them to carry forward the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress." (Para - 71).

"The threat to the parliamentary system and to democracy comes not from the working people and the parties which represent their interests. The threat comes from the exploiting classes. It is they who undermine the parliamentary system both from within and without by making to an instrument it advance their narrow interests and repress the toiling masses. When the people begin to use parliamentary institutions for advancing their cause and they fall away

from the influence of the reactionary bourgeoisie and landlords, these classes do not hesitate to trample underfoot parliamentary democracy as was done in Kerala in 1959. When their interest demands they do not hesitate to replace parliamentary democracy by military dictatorship. It will be a serious error and a dangerous illusion to imagine that our country is free from all such threats. It is of utmost importance that parliamentary and democratic institutions are defended in the interest of the people against such threats, and that such institutions are skilfully utilised in combination with extra-parliamentary activities.” (Para 72).

In this connection, it is also appropriate to mention how Stalin, while discussing the question of tactical leadership, in his *Problems of Leninism*, points out “tactical leadership, is a part of strategic leadership, subordinate to the tasks and the requirements of the latter,” and elaborates thus:

“What is meant by making proper use of the forms of struggle and organisations of the proletariat?

“It means fulfilling certain necessary conditions, of which the following must be regarded as the principal ones.

“First. To put in the forefront precisely those forms of struggle and organisation which are best suited to the conditions prevailing during the flow and ebb of the movement at a given moment, and which therefore can facilitate and ensure the bringing of the masses to the revolutionary positions, the bringing of the millions to the revolutionary front, and their disposition at the revolutionary front.”

“The point here is not that the vanguard shall realise the impossibility of preserving the old order of things and the inevitability of its overthrow. The point is that the masses the millions shall understand this inevitability and display their readiness to support the vanguard. But the masses can understand this only from their own experience.”

Such are the Marxist-Leninist principles regarding the art of tactical leadership, and they need no farther explanation.

We are at a loss to understand how the comrades of the Chinese Communist Party, in utter violation of every Marxist-Leninist tenet of the question of assessing a given political situation and the tactics to be adopted, are advocating armed struggle, as seen in the case of Naxalbari peasantry. This stand of theirs is neither theoretically correct nor tallies with our experience in our movement in our country.

### **No Code of Fraternal Relations Observed**

The question of proper fraternal relations between different Communist Parties of the world is always considered as the most important question, inextricably linked with the cherished principle of proletarian internationalism. In the recent past when modern revisionism under the late-lamented leadership of Khrushchov began to violate this principle right and left, trampling underfoot the equality and independence of fraternal parties, attempting to dictate its revisionist line to every other party, several parties rightly revolted against it and the Chinese Communist Party stood in the forefront. Later, after a prolonged debate and discussion over the issue, the Moscow Statement of 81 Parties incorporated the following guideline on the matter :

“All the Marxist-Leninist Parties are independent and have equal rights; they shape their policies according to the specific conditions in their respective countries and in keeping with Marxist-Leninist principles, and support each other. The success or the working class cause in any country is unthinkable without the internationalist solidarity of all Marxist-Leninist parties. Every party is responsible to the working class, to the working people of its country, to the international working class and Communist movement as a whole.

“The Communist and Workers’ Parties hold meetings whenever necessary to discuss urgent problems, to exchange experience, acquaint themselves with each other’s views and positions, work out common views through consultation and co-ordinated joint actions in the struggle for common goals.



“Whenever a Party wants to clear up questions relating to the activities of another fraternal Party, its leadership approaches the leadership of the Party concerned; if necessary, they hold meetings and consultations.” (Pp. 45-46)

But subsequently when the leadership of the CPSU, contrary to the lines laid down, was trying to behave in a high and mighty manner and dictating its political line to other fraternal parties to follow, the CPC came out sharply against it. The Chinese Communist Party, in its letter of June 14, 1963 to the CPSU, dealt with this topic in a forceful and polemical manner. It would be instructive to quote the pertinent parts at length.

“In short, the question of how handle relations with fraternal parties and countries must be taken seriously. Strict adherence to the principles building relations among fraternal parties and countries is the only way to forcefully rebuff slanders such as those spread by the imperialists and reactionaries about the ‘hand of Moscow’.”

“Proletarian internationalism is demanded of all parties without exception, whether large or small, and whether in power or not. However, the larger parties and the parties in power bear a particularly heavy responsibility in this respect. The series of distressing developments which have occurred in the socialist camp in the past period have harmed the interests not only of the fraternal parties concerned but also of the masses of the people in their countries. This convincingly demonstrate that the larger countries and parties need to keep in mind Lenin’s behest never to commit the error of great-power chauvinism.”

“If the principle of independence and equality is accepted in relations among fraternal parties, then it is impermissible for any party to place itself above others, to interfere in their internal affairs and to adopt patriarchal ways in relations with them.”

“If it is accepted that there are no ‘superiors’ and ‘subordinates’ in relations among fraternal parties, then it is impermissible to impose the programme, resolutions and line of one’s own Party on other

fraternal parties as the 'common programme' of the internal communist movement."

"On the other hand, it is always necessary to proceed from reality, maintain close contact with the masses, constantly sum up the experience of mass struggles, and independently work out and apply policies and tactics suited to the conditions of one's own country. Errors of dogmatism will be committed if one fails to do so, if one mechanically copies the policies and tactics of another Communist Party, submits blindly to the will of others or accepts without analysis the programme and resolutions of another Communist Party as one's own line."

"If it is not a party that can use its brains to think for itself and acquire an accurate knowledge of the trends of the different classes in its own country through serious investigation and study, and knows how to apply the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and intergrate it with the concrete practice of its own country, but instead is a party that parrots the words of others, copies foreign experience without analysis, runs hither and thither in response to the baton of certain persons abroad, and had become a hodgepodge of revisionism, dogmatism and everything but Marxist-Leninist principles;

"Then such a party is absolutely incapable of leading the proletariat and the masses in revolutionary struggle, absolutely incapable of winning the revolution and absolutely incapable of full filling the great historical mission of the proletariat.

"This is a question all Marxist-Leninist, all class-conscious workers and all progressive people everywhere need to ponder deeply."

Now, the comrades of the CPC, contrary to everything so eloquently expanded as regards the equality and independence among the fraternal Communist Parties have chosen to openly denounce our Party and its political line through their Press and radio. These comrades, who vehemently protested against the interference of any party in the internal affairs of another brother party and detested the

impositions of one's own political line on other parties against their will and all attempts at dictating to others, have thought it proper to grossly interfere in our Party's internal affairs and to dictate to and impose on us a programme and political line which they have worked out for our country and Party.

Strangely enough, the very same comrades, who rightly point out to the leaders of the CPSU that the only way to rebuff the imperialist slanders about the 'hand of Moscow' is to strictly observe the principle of non-interference in the affairs of fraternal parties, are providing ample grist to the mill of reaction and counter-revolution in our country to their slanders of the 'hand of Peking' by their radio broadcasts and writings which state that Indian revolutionaries of Darjeeling district are carrying out armed struggle under the leadership of Mao's thought etc.

The point to be specially noted in this connection is that the Chinese comrades did not deem it their elementary duty to take up their differences with our Party on a party-to-party level before they openly comment in their Press and radio. What led them to this extraordinary procedure is difficult to discern, and yet the facts are such as to stun any Communist.

Further, it is amazing to learn that the Chinese Communist Press and radio go for an all out attack on our Party leadership calling them "revisionist chieftains of the Indian Communist Party" and choose some of our C.C. and P.B. leaders to denounce them by names. Such methods strike at the very roots of fraternal relations between Communist Parties and no party can allow its leaders to be denounced by other parties if it were to continue its independent existence.

Similarly, the practice of upholding and encouraging certain individuals and groups against whom disciplinary actions are taken for their anti-Party activities, is highly objectionable and disruptive. Chinese comrades are applauding the expelled extremists of Naxalbari as real revolutionaries belonging to our Party and thus lend their support to their activities against our Party. Such support

to the splinter groups and the reliance placed on them for leading the Indian revolution cannot be justified in terms of any Marxist-Leninist organisational principles.

On our part, our Party has kept its fraternal attitude towards the Chinese Communist Party, despite all the stupendous difficulties that stand in the way, befitting any Party which pledges to be Marxist-Leninist. In fact, we have been extremely cautious and highly restrained in frankly expressing our views on several issues, even when we could not see eye to eye and strongly differed with them.

We are here concerned with issues that are immediately and directly affecting our Party and the revolutionary movement in the country, But the Chinese comrades, for reasons only known to them, have forced on us this harmful discussion, at this stage of our development, which is doubly detrimental for the growth and development of the revolutionary movement in our country.

This development, no doubt, is very serious as far as our Party is concerned. Ours is a very small Party compared to the bigness of the country in which it is operating and the tasks it is confronted with. After the tremendous disruption at the hands of the revisionist leadership in the once-united Communist Party of India and our breaking away with them in November 1964, our Party is yet to fully consolidate politically, ideologically and organisationally. It is under constant attacks by the right C.P., backed by all their revisionist allies in the international Communist movement with every possible support they can render.

The Congress Government is also making our Party in the country its principal target of attack and taking every opportunity to hurl police repression against it, as seen in 1962-63 and again in 1964-65. The extreme reactionary leaders of several political parties, whether they go by the right or left label, are demanding an outright ban on our Party and its total destruction, if possible. Our Party is unable to cope with the growing demands of the rising mass movement in the wake of the deepening crisis and it finds itself too

weak to shoulder the stupendous political responsibility that history is thrusting on its shoulders. And yet, ever-increasing numbers of people are eagerly looking to it for giving them leadership. *It is at this very critical juncture that a dangerous attack comes against it, from the CPC.*

At any rate, our Party is duty-bound to defend itself its Programme, and its political line against every attack, from whichever quarter it comes. Our C.C. made it clear that, "The Central Committee takes into consideration that in the eighteen months since our Party Congress adopted the Programme, divergent views have been expressed by some fraternal communist Parties of various countries on the Indian situation and reiterate that what has been said in the Programme about the Indian situation has been amply proved to be correct and sound. The Committee, therefore, directs that the Party should be guided by the Programme as the only correct application of Marxism-Leninism to the Indian situation while rejecting all views expressed either divergent to or deviating from it." (Resolution of the C. C., June 1966)

The most important and fundamental factor which a Communist Party can ignore only at its peril is the principle of proletarian internationalism based on Marxism-Leninism. The fact that one fraternal party or the other violates this principle, in certain respects or other, should not lead our Party to the fatal conclusion that this principle no more holds good, since it is being violated by some other fraternal party or parties and our Party should also discard the principle in its struggle with them in defence of its Programme and political line. Such a course would land our Party, in the particular case, in the dangerous position of becoming the camp-follower of rabid anti-China, national and social chauvinist forces, the fate to which the revisionist party of the Dangeites was reduced. If such a course is followed, the edge of our struggle against domestic reactionaries and U S imperialists will get totally blunted, and, in fact, provide grist to the mill of reaction and counter-revolution.

In this connection, we cannot but emphasise the fact that, despite all our differences with the CPC and certain harmful consequences that inevitable accompany them, no Marxist-Leninist should fail to grasp the great and historic contribution made by the Chinese Revolution to the cause of the world working class and its struggle for peace, democracy and socialism. The victory of the Chinese Revolution not only radically altered the world balance of forces in favour of socialism and against capitalism but has particularly opened new inspiring chapter in the life of the oppressed and dependent peoples of Asia in their struggle against imperialism for national liberation and social emancipation.

The tremendous victories scored by the Chinese Republic in the fields of industry and agriculture, the big successes registered in the education, health and well-being of seven hundred million people of People's China, and all this, in face of stiff opposition at the hands of international imperialists and reactionaries and mainly depending on its own resources and efforts, stand as a shining example before the whole world, and in particular, before all the backward and dependent nations. Above all, the yeoman's service the CPC has rendered to the world working class and the Communist movement in fighting against and exposing the menace of modern revisionism and in defence of Marxism-Leninism cannot but be gratefully acknowledged by every Communist in the world.

Under these circumstances, the struggle in defence of our Party, its Programme and political line will have to be carried out with great care, caution and circumspection. In the first place, the struggle against modern revisionism in all its manifestation, as the main danger in the world Communist movement as well as the Indian working class movement, will have to be continued, and any failure on this score is totally impermissible. Secondly, the attacks on our Party Programme and political line from sectarian and dogmatic positions will have to be repulsed from which ever quarters they come, as we are firmly convinced that one deviation inside the Communist movement cannot be fought out with the aid of another deviation,

and both have to be repulsed with the aid of Marxism-Leninism and its concrete application to the conditions in India. Thirdly, no quarter is to be given to the unprincipled concept of equidistance between modern revisionism and sectarianism as it would virtually disorientate our Party from Marxist-Leninist moorings and reduce it to the baneful practices of pragmatism and centrism.

Lastly, we should strictly adhere to the principle of maintenance of fraternal relations between all Communist and Workers' Parties of the world any criticism that has to be made should, under no circumstances, overstep the stand taken by the C.C. and P. B. No individual comrade or Party Committee, other than the C. C. and P. B., should be permitted to express their own views *publicly* criticising other brother parties' views or actions on which the C. C. or P. B. has not yet opined. All such views are to be kept inside the Party and conveyed to the P. B. or C. C.

Our Party, placed as it is in a highly complicated and extremely difficult national and international situation, will have to boldly and confidently face it and carry on the struggle with full faith in Marxism-Leninism and in the hope that healthy fraternal relations between different world Communist contingents are restored before long, and that Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism will surely triumph, defeating the menace of modern revisionism as well as the trends of dogmatism and sectarianism in certain parties, including ours.

## Political And Economic Developments In The Country And Our Tasks \*

*Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the  
C.P.I. (M) at Madurai, August 18-27, 1967*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) discussed the economic and political situation in the country as they have developed during the last four months since its last meeting in Calcutta in April last. These developments confirm the analysis of the situation made by the last meeting of the C. C. and embodied in the resolution "New Situation and Party's Tasks."

Under conditions of further deepening of the world capitalist crisis, the imperialists are making the utmost efforts to transfer the burdens of the crisis to underdeveloped countries. The recent war of aggression that Israel launched against the UAR and other Arab countries, in which it was aided and abetted by the USA and Britain, was a serious attempt to change the balance of forces in this oil-rich area, and to stem the tide of Arab nationalism, so that imperialist grip over the economy of their area could be tightened.

### **Deepening of the Crisis in India**

The economic crisis has further intensified during the last four months. This is seen most glaringly in the food situation. Millions of people in Kerala, West Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are on the verge of starvation. Rationing in Kerala has often broken down and rice ration in West Bengal was cut. Many more engineering, textile and other factories have closed down. Coal, steel and many other industries have slowed down. The handloom and powerloom industries, as well as coir, cashew and other small-scale industries have been hit hard throughout the country. All this has resulted in hundreds of thousands of workers being thrown out of work. Even engineers and technicians are facing unemployment.

\* Published as a booklet



Price rise in this period has been the highest the country has seen in the post-Independence period.

The Congress Government at the Centre, which holds in its hands all the levers of political and economic power, despite the rejection by the people of its policies at the Fourth General Elections—policies which have brought starvation, unemployment to the working people and taken the country to the verge of starvation—refuses to break with the basic policies.

The Central Government's budget clearly proclaims that the Government is determined to continue the same old policies.

The Government refuses to enforce monopoly compulsory procurement of foodgrains from the big producers in all States, and especially in Congress-governed States, and assure equitable distribution of foodgrains to vast masses of urban population and guaranteed supply to rural masses. The abject dependence on PL 480 imports of foodgrains from the USA continues.

The Government has learnt nothing from the experience of the last twenty years' attempt at development with foreign aid and in collaboration with foreign monopolists. The terrible pressures that the country has been subjected to both politically and economically, the fact that 40 per cent of the current loans are used up for servicing past loans—all these have meant nothing to the Government.

The Finance Minister declared in his Budget Speech that the only way out of the crisis for this country is by getting more and more heavy doles of loans from the imperialists and more and more of their massive investments in the private sector.

As a result, the door has been thrown wide open for further economic and political pressure by the imperialists. The Second Bell Mission Report and the acknowledged armtwisting, using food aid as a powerful weapon, by President Johnson are the direct result of these policies. The danger of the Government of India surrendering to these demands grows apace.

The Minister for Oil and Chemicals is feverishly wooing foreign monopolists to put up fertilizer factories, and extends concession after concession. The acknowledged Indian technical know-how, and Indian

talent and capacity to design, build and put up fertilizer factories is put on the cold storage under pressure of the imperialists. It is a further step in selling the American policy of 'containment of China'.

The latest begging mission of Morarji Desai to Japan and the joint communique he issued with the Japanese Government which revives the Jap imperialists' dream of a "co-prosperity sphere in Asia", and seeks to continue the policy of permanent hostility to China, confirms that the Government of India is bent upon continuing its basic policies.

The attack on the people continues and is intensified. More taxes are heaped. Railway fares and freight charges are increased. Dearness Allowance to the Central and State Government employees is sought to be denied. Wages are sought to be frozen.

The Central Government has not spared the State Governments. Devoid of the power to influence the economy of the country, starved of financial resources, these Governments have had to foot the bill of increased D. A. to their employees, and other expenditure due to soaring prices, for which the Government of India's policies are responsible. But far from coming to their aid, the Central Government cut Central assistance to States by over a hundred crores of rupees. And on top of it the Central Government has put a total ban on overdrafts. As a result, the finances of the States are in an extremely precarious position, and with continuing rise in prices, the position will further deteriorate.

It is in this background that the C. C. reviewed the functioning of the U. F. ministries in West Bengal and Kerala.

In West Bengal, where there is a concentration of engineering and other industries, the impact of the industrial recession has been very great.

Despite these difficulties, the U. F. Government immediately increased the D. A. to the employees of the State Government, Local Boards as well as of teachers, incurring an annual expenditure of about Rs. 15 crores. More than half the State Government employees numbering over one lakh, who had been kept for years as temporary employees by the Congress Government, were made permanent. Score of leaders of Government employees' organisations, who had been

victimised by the Congress Government for trade union activities and alleged political activities since 1947, were ordered to be reinstated. The U. F. Government gave recognition to the State Government employees' unions—a thing denied by the Congress Government all these years. It reinstated over 600 workers of the State Transport who had been victimised by the Congress Government for participation in strike.

The employers launched a very big attack of large-scale retrenchment and also refused to implement awards of Industrial Tribunals and Wage Boards. This was answered by a series of gheraos and strikes.

The Central Committee is happy to note that despite tremendous pressure from the Central Government and vested interests, the U. F. Government stood firm on the side of the workers and refused to use the police to suppress the legitimate struggles of the workers and peasants. It had publicly pledged that the D. I. R., P. D. Act, and the State Security Act shall not be used to suppress these legitimate struggles. The State Security Act was allowed to lapse and not renewed.

On the other hand, when the British Tramway Company increased the tramfare, the Government came out with an Ordinance prohibiting it, and when the Company threatened the Government by holding the six million people to ransom, the Government speedily took over its management, in record time, undaunted by the threats of the Government of Great Britain.

Our Party, and our ministers played an important role in getting these progressive policies accepted by the Government and in their implementation.

The Congress Government, which could easily procure 2½ lakh tons in the three months—January, February and March— immediately following the harvest, as they have been doing in the previous years, deliberately slowed down procurement because of the elections and procured only 40,000 tons. This, together with the shortfall in Central supplies, had accentuated the food crisis. However, the State Government's record of procurement was far from creditable. It had

failed to procure from the big landholders the surpluses it could have done even at that stage with courage and determination.

In the beginning, instead of calling upon the big landholders to compulsorily deliver all their surpluses to the Government, it depended upon voluntary deliveries primarily relying on increased procurement price. As a result, only 65,000 tons had been procured as against the target of 1½ lakh tons. Later when it decided upon compulsory procurement, measures of deterrent action against hoarders were not decided upon. These were decided upon only recently and some hoarders and profiteers have been detained under the P. D. Act. But by then, it was too late for these measures to make any real impact on procurement.

The C. C. is of the opinion that although our Party outside had campaigned for correct measures on the food question, and although our ministers had taken correct stand from April, they should have taken a firmer stand to overcome the resistance of the Food Minister and others inside the Ministry, who were virtually advocating free trade. It calls upon our Party to be vigilant and ensure that these decisions are not sabotaged by vested interests and their supporters in the administration.

On occasions, the directives of the Cabinet on the use of police in popular struggles have been violated, as in Naxalbari; on every such occasion, the Party came out in protest. However, the policies of the Government which have made it impossible for the capitalists and jotdars to have the police at their beck and call for suppression of the legitimate struggles of the workers and peasants have enabled them to carry on their legitimate struggles. The one-day general strike of the jute and engineering workers, the successful struggle of peasants in many districts to foil the attempt of jotdars to take possession of peasants' lands illegally—have all been facilitated by the policies of the Government of ensuring civil liberties.

It is the heightened consciousness of the common people and their continuous mobilisation by the U. F., in which our Party played a leading role, that has so far foiled the attempt of the vested interests and the Central Government to topple the U. F. Government.

The C. C. regrets to note that the all-India and State leaders of certain parties in the U. F. like the PSP and SSP, contrary to the pledges they gave to the people through the commonly accepted programme of the United Front, often take up positions which serve the interests of the capitalists and jotdars. Their attitudes and activities play into the hands of the Congress, which is always plotting to topple the United Front Government.

The C. C. is confident that our Party will continue to expose all machinations against the U. F. Government and mobilise the people and with their help strengthen the United Front.

Kerala, with the highest density of population and with no industrial development, has been hard hit by the economic crisis. Cottage and small-scale industries of the State like handloom, which employ lakhs of workers, have virtually collapsed. Further, the State, growing cash crops for export, has been deficit in foodgrains to the tune of 60 per cent although its cash crops earn valuable foreign exchange for the whole country.

The Central Government aggravated the situation by withdrawing the subsidy of 11 paise per kilo of rice that it had agreed to pay in June 1966 following devaluation. Nevertheless, the U. F. Government refused to increase the price of rice in the ration shops. The State Government had to bear the burden of subsidising rice prices to the tune of Rs. seven crores per annum.

It immediately increased the D. A. of the State Government employees, teachers etc. to the level of Central Government employees. This cost the State another Rs. seven crores.

It did away with the pernicious system of police verification which was used as a weapon by the Congress Government to threaten people for their political opinions. The Government reinstated hundreds of policemen and others who had been victimised by the Congress Government under this system.

All the other problems were, however, overshadowed by the food problem. The State, which is deficit to the tune of 60 per cent of foodgrains, depends entirely on the Central supplies to keep its rationing system under the system of single State food zones. Its food problem

cannot be solved without outside supplies. The continued failure of the Central Government to fulfil its commitments of supplies of rice had accentuated the food situation, and often brought the rationing system on the verge of breakdown, and created difficulties for the State Government.

It must be admitted that the Party in Kerala was not alive to its responsibilities to independently mobilise the people for correct solutions of problems. Our Party's representatives in the United Front have been putting forward from time to time only such proposals as are likely to be immediately accepted by other partners. This was seen in the fact that they did not raise the question of State monopoly trade in foodgrains and put forward concrete proposals to implement it for a long time. Neither did the Party independently campaign for it.

On the other hand, they contented themselves with proposing an improved version of the graded system of levy, which had been in vogue since long. It was necessary to keep check-posts around the surplus districts and prevent the flight of foodgrains from those districts if even this levy system was to be effectively implemented. And our Party firmly fought for this. But almost all other parties demanded the removal of check-posts; in face of this, we had to agree to this demand.

The price of rice selling outside the ration shops has risen phenomenally. It is this that has given courage to the Congress party to attempt to rouse the people against the U. F. Government, concealing the Central Government's failure to supply committed grains. The revisionists, who had demanded only the levy system and not monopoly procurement, but who by demanding the removal of check-posts virtually advocated free trade, joined this chorus. They, too, sought to screen the main culprit, namely the Central Government, and to blame the State Government for aggravation of the food situation.

Although it is true that the marketable surpluses that can be procured in the State would hardly give two months requirements, the C. C. wants to emphasise that only by taking firm measures against the bigger landlords of the State and by preventing their supply being blackmarketed that people can be mobilised fully and effectively against the policies of the Central Government.

Lack of vigilance led our Ministers to agreeing to the Industrial Policy Resolution, drafted by the Industries Ministry, which has no relation to the actual situation in Kerala, which has no relation to the economic crisis and the policies of the Central Government, and which contains provisions which, if implemented, would be highly detrimental to the interests of the working class.

The C. C. is happy to note that the State Committee has realised these mistakes and is taking steps to overcome the results of a mistaken outlook. Only recently, after bitter experience of the last five months, new concrete proposals for the compulsory procurement of the entire surpluses of big landholders have been decided upon by the U. F. Government. Already, the big landholders of Kuttanad are threatening to lay their lands follow and force the Government to retreat.

The C. C. calls upon the U. F. to unitedly mobilise the people and frustrate these attempts. It calls upon the Party units in Kerala to rise to the occasion and immediately mobilise both independently and jointly with the other partners in the coalition in this struggle against the vested interests.

The Congress Government at the Centre, despite the reverses it suffered in the General Elections, was constantly manoeuvring to upset the non-Congress Governments in the States, by inducements to legislators belonging to the parties in the coalition. If it had not so far succeeded, but on the other hand Congress Governments had been toppled in Uttar Pradesh, Hariana and Madhya Pradesh, it was primarily because of the anti-Congress feeling among the mass of people.

It naturally singled out the Communist Party of India (Marxist) for its attack and has been striving its utmost to isolate it from the other parties in the United Front. It used the gherao movement and the Naxalbari peasant struggle to raise the cry that law and order had broken down and to create a political climate suitable for the Central Government's intervention.

The Home Minister's speech at the conclusion of the East Zone Conference of Chief Ministers, a number of speeches in Parliament, the West Bengal Governor's talks with top police and other officials were all designed to create a feeling of insecurity in the officials and

paralyse the implementation of the popular policies of the State Government.

The Central Committee regrets that certain all-India and State leaders of certain parties such as the SSP and PSP are taking positions which objectively help the Congress and the vested interests, which are constantly plotting to topple the State Governments.

However, the continuous mobilisation of the people, in which our Party played the leading role, and the heightened consciousness and vigilance of the people have so far foiled these machinations of the Central Government.

The imposition of President's Rule in Rajasthan to enable the Congress to come back to power, and the prorogation of the Madhya Pradesh Assembly in the midst of voting on the Budget show that the Central Government and the Congress party will not hesitate to misuse its constitutional powers in order to subvert the democratic process, in order to continue its rule.

The Government's refusal to lift the emergency despite its earlier undertaking to do so and the continuation of the emergency, the introduction of the Unlawful Activities Bill, which seeks to arm the Central Government with arbitrary powers to declare any organisation an "Unlawful Assembly" and the Industrial Security Forces Bill, which is a serious inroad into the autonomy of the States, in the teeth of the entire opposition parties, many of whom have formed the State Governments in nine States, show that the Government is preparing for suppressing democracy and continuing its rule.

This challenge to democracy must be met and firmly rebuffed. It is the unity of the democratic parties and the united fronts that they forged during and after the Elections which made it possible to break the Congress monopoly of power. Any weakening of this unity will be playing the Congress game. It is therefore of utmost importance that the united fronts must be further strengthened and steeled. It must be realised that anti-Communism is the specific weapon that the Congress wields to break the united fronts. Falling a prey to it will be helping the reversal of the verdict of the people against Congress misrule.

The Central Committee, in the April Resolution, had sharply underlined the difficulties our Party faces in the coalition Governments.



Apart from the difficulties due to the deepening economic crisis and the food crisis, difficulties due to the depleted resources and lack of legislative power, the Committee had also pointed out to the difficult and formidable nature of the problem our Party faces in running the Kerala and West Bengal Governments in coalition with other parties who do not see eye to eye with us on a number of pressing issues.

Many such occasions had arisen during the last five months, and are bound to arise in future. It is necessary that our Party's representatives firmly put forward our Party's proposals on all important issues and try to get the United Front agree to them. It is equally necessary to make them issues of public debate, so that they are resolved with the help of the people. All this must be done without acrimony and must go to strengthen the U. F.

The independent role of the Party, its independent role in mobilising the people for the correct solution of problems, for the implementation of the decisions of the Government, overcoming the lethargy and sometimes the obstruction and sabotage by the bureaucracy, and for the struggle against the policies of the Central Government assumes supreme importance.

The Central Committee once again emphasises the fact that the economic crisis is very deep and if the basic policies of the Central Government are not reversed, it would lead to still greater disaster to the whole country. And with no power to reverse these policies, and with their resources completely deplete, they will be a prey to these policies of the Central Government and will be unable to relieve the distress of the people. The fact that the assent of the President has not yet been given to the two Labour Bills of the West Bengal Government—Bills which entail no expenditure and which only increase retrenchment and lay-off compensations and bring contract labour under some regulation—make a total mockery of States' autonomy.

So, the struggle for totally alternative radical policies assumes supreme importance, a struggle for which all democratic opposition parties and non-Congress State Governments must be mobilised, for the following demands :

1. A National Food Policy providing for—
  - a) Monopoly procurement of the surpluses from big landholders constituting not more than 10 per cent in all States.
  - b) More or less uniform procurement prices throughout India.
  - c) State monopoly of wholesale trade in foodgrains.
  - d) Ensure equitable distribution by statutory rationing in all urban areas and industrial centres and by assuring adequate supplies in rural areas.
  - e) Root out blackmarketing, hoarding and profiteering by deterrent punishments.
  - f) People's Committees for dehoarding and for equitable distribution.

These alone will put an end to the abject and humiliating dependence on PL 480 foodgrains imports.

2. Stop all eviction of peasants immediately; legislation to break land concentration; distribute all land in illegal possession of landlords by *benami* and malafide transfers to poor peasants and agricultural labourers. Distribute all cultivable waste lands vested with the Government or private landlords, and also all cultivable waste land in Government and private forests to landless labourers and poor peasants; debt relief to agricultural labourers and poor peasants; adequate wages to agricultural labourers; facilities to peasants to increase food production by way of supply of water, distribution of better seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, etc.

3. Firm measures to hold the price line, including nationalisation of Banks, and foreign trade, ceiling on income at Rs. 2000 per month, ceiling on corporate profits.

4. Declaration of moratorium on all foreign debts and service charges and on repatriation of capital by foreign investors.

5. Ensure employment and minimum wages to the working class; Central Government to assist the State Governments to take over factories closed or threatening closure and for interim relief to unemployed workers and employees; no wage freeze or deferred payment; full neutralisation for increase in cost of living.

6. Break up of monopolies.
7. Reduction of military expenditure.
8. Reduction of excise duties and other taxes falling on the common people.

9. Firm steps to prevent U. S. penetration into our economy and political and social life; demand immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U. S. from Vietnam.

10. Widest autonomy and greater resources for the States; to begin with (a) 75 per cent share of all the taxes Centrally collected should go to the States, (b) most of the subjects in the concurrent list of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution should be transferred to the States, and (c) all officials belonging to all-India Service like the IAS, IPS etc. should be completely under the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Governments of the States in which they serve.

The C. C. calls upon the entire Party members to arm themselves with this understanding; it calls upon all Party units to reorientate their activities to the task of mobilising the people for the realisation of these demands.

It must be realised that the working class and other sections of our people are already on the march. The strike of the Central Government employees scheduled for September 11, the one day protest general strike of the jute and engineering workers in West Bengal, the general strike of the textile workers of Coimbatore and the innumerable strikes and struggles of workers, peasants and agricultural labourers in various parts of the country presage bigger struggles in the days to come, with continued deterioration of the living conditions.

The Party must forge the unity of the trade unions and other mass organisations for and through these struggles, come forward as their unifier, and give direction to them so that they may all coalesce and become part of the struggle for the defeat of the basic policies of the Central Government and for alternative democratic policies.

It reiterates what it had stated in the April Resolution, viz., "The U. F. Governments that we have now are to be treated as instruments of struggle in the hands of our people, more than as Governments that

actually possess adequate power, that can substantially and materially give relief to the people.”

The activities of the entire Party, including its representatives must be guided by a firm grasp of the full implications of this statement and the realities of the Indian situation. The Party must come forward as the mobiliser of all patriotic sections to stave the danger of increasing surrender by the Government of India to the dictates of the imperialists thereby facilitating their designs to impose neo-colonialism on our country.

## Central Committee's Draft For The Ideological Discussion \*

*Adopted by the Central Committee of the C.P.I.(M) at Madurai session, August 18-27, 1967.*

### **On Inner-Party Discussion on Ideological Controversies in the International Communist Movement.**

While the Seventh Party Congress registered a decisive break with the Indian revisionists by successfully fulfilling the tasks of adopting a Programme, a Report on Fight Against Revisionism, a Declaration and a Resolution on Tasks, it directed the new Central Committee to organise inner-Party discussions on the ideological question. The resolution of the Congress on this subject stated :

“This Congress hereby directs the Central Committee to organise a discussion on the ideological questions, which must be conducted in a dispassionate manner. It is on this basis that the Communist Party of India can come to its independent conclusions and thereby make its own contribution to the restoration of unity in the international Communist movement”.

This important directive of the Party Congress remained unfulfilled because of various unavoidable reasons and the Central Committee has decided to fulfil it now. Having adopted the document on ideological differences, the Central Committee decides that this document forms the basis of our approach on the ideological question, while there will be freedom for all units and members to criticise it during the inner-Party discussions. At the same time the Central Committee wants to make it clear that the Programme of the Party and its tactical line enunciated in various resolutions are not open to discussion. Further, the Central Committee decides that the inner-Party discussions be conducted in the following manner.

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\* *Published as a booklet.*

1. This document will be discussed at all levels of Party organisation and each member will be free to express his or her views in his unit on the document frankly. Any member of a higher committee will not express his differing views in the lower committee.

2. All units will send their opinion to the next higher unit. They will have the right to send their criticism to the Central Committee by hand through their State Committee.

3. All the discussions should be over by middle of December. The discussions will be clinched in a Plenum of the C.C. to be called by about the middle of January, 1968.

### **Central Committee's Draft For The Ideological Discussion**

The Seventh Congress of our Party, which has gone on record as the Congress of Revolt against Revisionism inside the Indian Communist movement, directed the newly elected Central Committee to organise inner-Party discussion on the ideological questions, so that our party might be enabled to come to its independent conclusions on the ideological issues under debate in the Communist movement of the world. This directive of the Party Congress could not be implemented so far because of the wholesale repression let loose by the Congress Government under the Defence of India Rules immediately after the Congress and also due to the preoccupation of the entire Party with mass struggles and the country's fourth general elections after the release of Communist detenus in the middle of the year 1966. The first C. C. meeting held after the general elections were over instructed the P.B. to take immediate and necessary steps to organise the inner-Party discussion as enjoined by the Seventh Congress. It is in pursuance of this decision that the present draft has been made.

The new Party Programme, the Resolution on Tasks and the Political-Organisational Report adopted by the Seventh Congress represent the new class strategy and tactics of our Party, which strategy and tactics have squarely settled accounts with the right-opportunist

socialist camp, its economic, political, military might and its all-round development, and its unrelenting struggle against imperialism on every front. How else can it be characterised except as the crassest right-opportunism and revisionism?

### **Peaceful Coexistence Of States With Different Social Systems**

The very concept of peaceful coexistence between the capitalist and socialist states arose only after the victory of the first socialist revolution in Russia. It is true that Lenin, as early as 1916, visualised the possibility of accomplishing the socialist revolution in one or several countries while in the rest of the countries, for a period, the rule of the bourgeoisie and other propertied classes would exist, and the world socialist revolution would not triumph, simultaneously, all at once, in all the countries. Life and history have confirmed the correctness of this proposition during the last half a century.

It is evident that the coming into existence of the first socialist state and its continued existence along with the capitalist states of the world are made possible through the arduous struggle against imperialism, a struggle covering all the economic, political, ideological and military aspects. The Soviet state, through its armed might, had to struggle to live in peace with the imperialist countries. There were repeated trails of strength between the imperialist countries and the Soviet Union and as a result of it, the Soviet Union could impose the right to coexistence on the imperialists.

Lenin made it abundantly clear that "International imperialism . . . could not, under any circumstances, on any conditons, live side by side with the Soviet Republic both because of its objective position and because of the economic interests of the capitalist class". "In this sphere the conflict is inevitable. Therein lies the greatest difficulty of the Russian revolution, its greatest historical problem : the necessity of solving international problems, the necessity of calling forth an international revolution, of effecting this transition from our strictly national revolution to the world revolution."

He also stated that "....the existence of the Soviet Republic side by side with imperialist states for a long time is unthinkable. One or the

other must triumph in the end. And before that end supervenes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states will be inevitable”.

Further, answering the advocates of a revolutionary war with the aim of overthrowing the bourgeoisie in imperialist countries, he asserted that, “however, we obviously cannot set ourselves this aim at the *given* moment”, and “the interests of the international revolution demand that the Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength”, while, of course, characterising the “Soviet Republic as a *detachment* of the world army of socialism”.

Lenin made it clear that, “So long as capitalism and socialism remain, they cannot live at peace, in the long run either one or the other will be victorious, the funeral dirge will be sounded either over the Soviet Republic or over world capitalism. It will be a respite in the war”.

Thus it is clear that Lenin’s concept of peaceful coexistence is a fighting and revolutionary concept, a concept which permits no breeding of pacifist and utopian illusions about imperialism, a concept that has nothing in common with the concept of a status quo, i.e., imperialism and socialism living side by side peacefully. It is a concept of ‘respite’ to be correctly utilised to consolidate the socialist state economically, politically and militarily so that imperialist aggression might be successfully met and the imperialists of the world vanquished.

It is this correct policy that was made one of the important components of the foreign policy of the Soviet state by Lenin, and faithfully followed and implemented by Stalin, subsequent to Lenin’s deparature.

But the modern revisionists who embolden themselves to discard Lenin’s thesis on imperialism and wars several others of his propositions and revise them on the pretext that they were made decades ago when imperialism was all-powerful and the determining force, etc., shout



from the housetops their alleged fidelity to the Leninist concept of peaceful coexistence while actually so distorting the entire concept as to deprive it of its revolutionary content. They lay exclusive emphasis on certain aspects of the concept of peaceful coexistence, while conveniently ignoring and suppressing the other equally, if not more, important aspects of the entire concept.

They go to the length of exaggerating the concept of peaceful coexistence describing it as the highest form of class struggle, and as one which forms the axis of the entire foreign policy of every proletarian state. They tend to reduce the concept of peaceful coexistence to the opportunist meaning of 'peacefully' putting up with the blatant aggressive actions of world imperialism when they shamelessly extend this concept to the relations between the inherently aggressive states of the imperialists and the victim states. Instead of boldly exposing how the world imperialists, particularly the U. S., through their frenzied drive for colonial and neo-colonial domination of the world, are making peace and peaceful coexistence on earth impossible, the revisionists tend to shield the imperialist aggressors as though they are reconciled to peace and peaceful coexistence. The absurd limits to which this well-known revolutionary concept of Lenin is reduced can be seen when the modern revisionist who, in words, agree that U. S. imperialism today has become "the biggest international exploiter", "the chief bulwark of world reaction", and "international gendarme and the chief enemy of the peoples of the world", in practice treat the U. S. imperialist rulers as those with whom real and lasting peaceful coexistence is possible and with whom the socialist states can collaborate in the struggle for peace and amity among nations.

The interpretation of the concept of peaceful coexistence between the socialist and imperialist states is reduced by the revisionists to mean that the chief struggle between the two systems is in the main peaceful economic competition and thus conceal the truth that the struggle between the two systems comprises every field of economic, political, ideological and military nature.

No Marxist-Leninist can accept such an opportunist interpretation and practice of the concept of peaceful coexistence, since it seeks to conceal the constant imperialist aggression and to appease the aggressor, and it disarms the revolutionary proletariat of the world in its uncompromising fight against imperialism—economic, political, ideological and military.

The principle of peaceful coexistence which is obligatory to socialist states and which is strictly adhered to by them alone, is never acceptable to the imperialists as the striving for violence, aggression and subjugation of other is the inherent characteristic of monopoly capitalism. To the extent this principle is enforced in the relations between states with differing social systems, it is imposed upon the bourgeois states in bitter and frontal struggle against them. The struggle for enforcing the principle on capitalist states is a continuation of war against capitalism in different forms. To import any other non-class meaning into this concept means to monstrously distort it, with the facile notion of making it willingly acceptable to the imperialists and with the opportunist idea of purchasing peace with them, even at the cost of revolution, which, in the final analysis, would not defend peace or peaceful coexistence of states but would only invite disaster to both and the world revolution.

Peaceful coexistence is, of course, an essential part of the Leninist foreign policy obligatory to every socialist state. It helps them to mobilise all the forces of peace throughout the world and thus to isolate the war-mongers. It becomes the rallying slogan around which all the forces of peace and freedom can be mobilised.

It is, however, idle to hope, as the modern revisionists want the people to do, that just because the imperialist powers mouth the slogan of peaceful coexistence, a new era of peace will dawn on the world. The reality is that behind the very slogan of peaceful coexistence which they are forced to subscribe to in words, the imperialists are hatching and executing new plans of aggression against the people; ever so many new forms of neo-colonialism are being imposed; and wherever the

people are vigilant, united and strong enough, their revolutionary movements are sought to be drawn in blood.

That is why every real revolutionary, every Marxist-Leninist, has to combine the strictest and most loyal adherence to the principle of peaceful coexistence as between states having different social systems with (a) the perfection of such a united and vigilant armed force of the socialist camp that any aggressive act of the imperialists can be met with a devastating counter-blow; and (b) the rendering of such concrete assistance—economic, political and other—to the national revolutionary movements.

### **On The Forms of Transition to Socialism**

Marxism-Leninism proceeds to examine the question of forms of transition to socialism on the basis of the scientific analysis made regarding the origin of state and its evolution, and its present and future in the era of socialist revolution.

What is the state, according to Marxism-Leninism? In short, “the state is a special organisation of force; it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class”.

The bourgeois states may vary in form but their essence is the same, i.e., in the final analysis they are nothing but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Similarly, the proletarian states may assume different forms, but their essence can be nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In view of this irrefutably established scientific truth, the modern working class, in its fight for political power and social emancipation, at every stage of its development, is inevitably confronted with the bourgeois state, i.e., the special organisation of violence to suppress the working class. Thus, the problem of how to meet this bourgeois violence with a view to putting an end to all violence in the relations of men is one of the key problems of the socialist revolution.

It is a fact that violence is alien to the Marxist-Leninist ideals. The foremost thinkers, founders and leaders of Marxism-Leninism were

always eager to find out ways and means to restrict, minimise and, if possible, to avoid the bourgeois violence in the way of effecting the socialist revolution, since peaceful transition is advantageous to the proletariat. Any number of instances from the history of the working class movement can be cited to substantiate this proposition of ours.

However, Marxism-Leninism, as Lenin has pointed out, while decisively rejecting the theory “that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions” as totally alien to its science, and while making it obligatory for proletarian revolutions to seize every opportunity that history offers for effecting peaceful transition, takes serious note of the realities of how the international bourgeoisie is increasingly resorting to brutal violence and terror and how it is bent upon barring the road to peaceful transition. Lenin, noting this phenomenon as early as October 1916, observed, “However, it cannot be denied that in individual cases, by way of exception, some small country, for instance, after the socialist revolution had been accomplished in a neighbouring big country, peaceful surrender of power by the bourgeoisie is *possible*, if it is convinced that resistance is hopeless and if it prefers to save its skin. It is much more likely, of course, that even in small states socialism will not be achieved without civil war, and for that reason the only programme of international social democracy must be recognition of civil war, though violence is, of course, alien to our ideals. The same, *mutatis mutandis*—with necessary alterations—is applicable to nations”. (Lenin, *A Caricature of Marxism*)

Our Party, keeping all these precepts of Marxism-Leninism in view and also taking note of the revolutionary changes that have taken place in the correlation of class forces in the world during the last half a century since the above pronouncements of Lenin, and particularly the developments following the socialist victory in the anti-fascist war, states in its programme :

“The Communist Party of India strives to achieve the establishment of People’s Democracy and socialist transformation through peaceful means. By developing powerful mass revolutionary movement, by

combining parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles, the working class and its allies will try their utmost to overcome the resistance of the forces of reaction and to bring about these transformations through peaceful means". Of course, it is also simultaneously pointed out that it needs "always to be borne in mind that the ruling classes never relinquish their power voluntarily", and that "they seek to defy the will of the people and seek to reverse it by lawlessness and violence".

But the modern revisionists maintain that in view of the changed correlation of forces on an international scale as well as in each country in favour of the proletariat and its cause of socialism, and in view of the ever-increasing grip of the ideas of socialism on the minds of wide masses of the people, the universal law of violent revolution as propounded by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, forced on the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, and as universally accepted by all the Marxist-Leninists has become out-moded and hence to be discarded. In its place, they argue, the law of peaceful transition and parliamentary path is to be substituted; they even expound the thesis that socialist transformation can be effected by a state of so-called National Democracy where the bourgeoisie and the proletariat hold joint hegemony of the National Democratic Revolution and the National Democratic state; thus they seek to revise Marxism-Leninism on certain basic and fundamental issues of the proletarian revolution, issues such as the Marxist-Leninist concept of state and revolution and the concept of proletarian hegemony in the revolutions of the present era.

The basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism proceed on the assumption that the fundamental question of every revolution is that of state power.

Lenin commenting on the opportunist distortion of the concept of state and revolution observed : "The distortion and hushing up of the *question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state* could not but play an immense role at a time *when states, which possess a military apparatus expanded as a consequence of imperialist rivalry, have turned into monsters* which are exterminating millions of people

in order to settle the issue as to whether England or Germany—this or that finance capital—is to rule the world”. (Emphasis added.)

These observations were made some fifty years ago, and during this period not only ‘as a consequence of imperialist rivalry’ but also due to the mortal conflict between the forces of world socialism and capitalism, the capitalist states have come to build and expand a thousand times more monstrous military apparatuses. The bourgeois states which are, in essence, nothing but a special organisation of force and violence for the suppression of the proletariat and the people, have perfected this engine of suppression to such a monstrous degree in the present period that even the smallest democratic and class struggle of the proletariat has to encounter brutal force—nay, the very existence and functioning of the revolutionary parties and organisations are confronted at every stage with terrific violence and repression at the hands of the huge police and the military machine of the state. This state of affairs has today become a rule rather than an exception. The entire course of history in the post-second world war period confirms this truth and no revolution in any of the continents of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe was allowed by the bourgeoisie to take to the peaceful path, and lakhs of freedom-fighters and proletarian revolutionaries in several countries are being butchered by the bourgeois police and military.

In the face of these facts, the first question that obviously arises is, whether it is permissible for any Marxist-Leninist to examine the question of forms of transition of socialist revolution and national liberation revolution in isolation from the monopoly capitalist state or states in question.

Our answer should be clear and categorical, that it is utterly un-Marxian to discuss the issue of revolution in isolation from the state. If Marxism-Leninism has come to the conclusion that the capitalist class by resorting to violence on the working class compels the latter to resort to the use of counter-violence it is precisely after a thorough and penetrating analysis of the role of the state in general, and the bourgeois state in particular, and not otherwise.

If Marx and Engels during the 1870's made exceptions of the USA and Britain from this universal law, they did so only after a concrete examination of the two bourgeois states in question, where militarism had not yet developed to high proportions, where standing armies were not built and hence there was possibility of the workers reaching their goal of socialism by peaceful means.

If Lenin after studying the development of capitalism to the stage of monopoly capitalism and imperialism asserted that the above exceptions conceived by Marx and Engels in 1870 to the USA and Britain would no more hold valid, it was precisely based on the concrete study and analysis of the state apparatuses of the USA and Britain which had developed militarism to enormous proportions.

Similarly, if Lenin visualised the possibility of a peaceful transition of the revolution in Russia as an exception during the period between April and July 1917, it was done only after the concrete analysis of the state and revolution at that stage, when the arms were in the hands of the masses, when the state was not in a position to use armed force against the proletariat, and when a 'dual power' came to exist in the process of revolution in the form of armed workers, peasants and soldiers' soviet and the bourgeois provisional government.

The thesis of peaceful transition advocated by the modern revisionists has nothing in common with either Marxism-Leninism or its tested method of examining the question concretely, i.e., in relation to the state and its police-military apparatus, The enunciation and advocacy of this utterly revisionist thesis is nothing but giving encomiums to the bourgeoisie and its peace loving and democratic character, intended to ideologically disarm and disorientate the revolutionary proletariat, and a down-right betrayal of Marxist-Leninist teachings on the state and revolution.

To conclude, there is no denying the fact that the proletariat would prefer to achieve the revolution and win power by peaceful means. Marx, Engels and Lenin, as the foremost leaders of the world proletariat, did strive to achieve the socialist revolution by peaceful means wherever

and whenever such an opportunity did open before them without allowing it to be missed.

Guided by their great teachings and their practice, our Party, as correctly incorporated in our Party Programme, “strives to achieve the establishment of People’s Democracy and socialist transformation through peaceful means”, while, of course, not forgetting for a moment that the ruling classes seek to bar this road at every turn by resorting to violence and terror and hence the need to be ever vigilant and prepared to meet all such exigencies.

### **The Concept Of National Democracy And Non-Capitalist Path**

Equally revisionist and avowedly right-opportunist is the thesis of the so-called non-capitalist path and National Democracy that is being advocated and practised by the modern revisionists as a new transitional form for socialist revolution, a thesis that negates the concept of proletarian hegemony and advocates joint hegemony along with the bourgeoisie to effect socialist transition, a thesis that distorts the Leninist concept regarding the new possibilities of skipping the stage of capitalist relations for backward countries, to reach socialism.

It is true that the issue—whether the capitalist stage of development is inevitable for the backward nations which are liberating themselves after the first world war and the victorious October socialist revolution, to march to socialist development—was seriously debated at the Second Congress of the third International, held in the middle of 1920. Lenin answered this question and the Second Congress had endorsed his thesis on the subject. He argued “that the proletariat of the advanced countries can and should assist *the labouring masses of the backward countries* and the backward countries can develop an emerge from their present state when the victorious proletariat of the Soviet Republics extends a helping hand *to these masses* and is in a position to give them support”; he observed that, “if the victorious revolutionary proletariat conduct systematic propaganda among them [meaning the masses of the backward countries—C. C.] while the Soviet Government comes to *their assistance with all the means at their command*” then it would be



possible to avoid the stage of capitalist development before reaching socialism. He summed up his thesis saying that “the Communist International should advance and theoretically substantiate the proposition that these backward countries can, with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, go over to the Soviet system and, through definite stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage” (Lenin : *Report on the Commission of the National and Colonial question*).

This thesis of the Communist International is totally distorted and vulgarised by the modern revisionists and is sought to be interpreted as the so-called “non-capitalist path” opened up for almost all the newly liberated countries of the world. Instead of “assisting the labouring masses of these countries”, the assistance to the Capitalists of these countries to develop capitalism is painted as Soviet aid for non-capitalist path; instead of emphasising the need for proletarian hegemony it seeks to compromise the principle and advocate the opportunist concept of the joint hegemony of the workers and the capitalists— sometimes even the hegemony of the capitalists; and, in short, it seeks to abandon the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

Our Party, as enunciated clearly in our Party Programme, very correctly rejected the applicability of this thesis to our country, and in view of the experience demonstrated throughout the world since this infamous thesis was evolved a decade ago, it will have to unhesitatingly reject this entire thesis as a gross right-opportunist and class-collaborationist one.

### **The Trio That Works Out Into a Full fledged Line of Class Collaboration**

The concepts of peaceful coexistence, peaceful economic competition and peaceful transition as propounded by Khrushchov at the 20th Congress of the CPSU and as interpreted, elaborated and practised by the modern revisionists are, with every passing day, being rendered into a fully worked out line of class conciliation and

collaboration on a global plane. Since these revisionist concepts are advanced, advocated and practised by the leadership of a Communist Party which is heading the first socialist state which has grown economically, politically and militarily into a mighty and formidable force, its repercussions on the worldwide struggle for peace, democracy and socialism are really devastating.

While stating that the main and decisive content of the new epoch is the struggle between the two opposite social systems of the world, the system of socialism and imperialism, and while also accepting that the U. S. imperialists, heading the camp of world reaction, have become the chief aggressor, exploiter and main enemy of the world people at this stage, the leaders of the CPSU, in utter contradiction to these propositions, are seeking amity and peace with the U.S., striving for cooperation and collaboration in the maintenance of so-called world peace, in the functioning of UNO to transform it into a real world people's tribune, in the struggle for banning of nuclear weapons, for their non-proliferation and disarmament, in the programme for space research, in eliminating and weeding out all seedbeds of 'local wars', and in assisting the dependent and backward countries in overcoming their poverty and misery, and so on and so forth. Thus instead of an irreconcilable struggle—economic, political, ideological, military—as the main form and content of struggle between the two systems, a regular hunt for discovering areas of ever-wider cooperation and collaboration with the U.S. is on by the revisionist leadership of the Soviet Union. The fundamental aspect is sought to be relegated to a subordinate and secondary position while the cooperation and collaboration aspect is being thrust to the forefront. Today, this bankrupt revisionist line of the Soviet leaders has assumed such absurd proportions that it is glaringly seen and understood by every intelligent student of politics in the world, let alone the Marxist-Leninists, as more and more a line of conciliation, compromise and collaboration between the two great powers, the USSR and the USA, a line which objectively preserves and perpetuates the international status quo and as a line which summarily abandons the revolutionary class struggle of the

international proletariat. No amount of sophistry and use of high-flown phrases such as "world peace" and the "averting of the danger of nuclear war", and that in pursuit of it they are fighting for the success of the line of peaceful coexistence, peaceful economic competition and for peaceful transition to socialism, etc., can hide the ugly truth that it is appeasement of imperialism all along the line and objectively abetting it at every step.

However, our criticism of the compromising and collaborationist policies pursued by the revisionist leadership of the CPSU and the Soviet state does in no way imply the totally erroneous idea that the Soviet Union has become an ally of U.S. imperialism or is working for sharing world hegemony with American imperialism and for the division of spheres of influence in the world, as this is tantamount to nothing short of placing the Soviet Union outside the socialist camp.

The sum total of this right-opportunist line pursued by the Soviet leaders is that the aggressive propensities and expansionist activities of U. S. imperialism are more and more increasing, that the danger to world peace, peaceful coexistence of states at the hands of the imperialists is daily growing and the worldwide revolutionary struggle against imperialism, for peace, democracy, independence and socialism, is disrupted and disorganised.

Marxism-Leninism and the interests of the world proletarian struggle for socialism and enduring peace of earth demand that these revisionist concepts are decisively rejected as pernicious concepts, that seek to substitute the class struggle with that of class conciliation and collaboration.

Modern revisionism led by Khrushchov and pursued by the present CPSU leaders has done the greatest damage to the cause of the working class and Communist movement in the world. It should be said that the Communist Party of China has rendered yeoman service to the world working class and Communist movement in fighting against this

menace of modern revisionism and in defence of marxism-Leninism.

### **On The Issue of People's State And People's Party in the Soviet Union**

The 22nd Congress of the CPSU, basing on the assumption that socialism had triumphed completely and finally in the Soviet Union, came to the conclusion that the conditions which necessitated the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union had disappeared and its domestic purposes fulfilled. It proceeded to announce that the working class of the Soviet Union had "*transformed the state of proletarian dictatorship into a state of the whole people*".

At the outset, it is to be categorically stated that the entire outlook governing this decision, the language used for describing the new concept and the non-class and unMarxian analysis of the Soviet society in the present international background that forms the content of the new concept have nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism.

The dictatorship of the proletariat as conceived by Marx and Engels and developed by Lenin is a phenomenon visualised for the entire historical period of transition from capitalism to socialism, since this period after the capture of power by the proletariat to that of complete abolition of the bourgeoisie is a "period of an unpercedented violent class struggle in unprecedented acute form". As Lenin puts it, "classes remain and will remain in the era of the dictarship of the proletariat and when classes disappear the dictatortorship will become unnecessary".

Every student of Marxism-Leninism is fully aware of the fact how the founders of this science contemptuously rejected the terminology of a 'people's state', and pointed out that every state is a class state and there is not, nor can there be, a non-class state. And yet the Soviet leaders have chosen the term 'people's state'.

Similarly the soviet leaders say that they have 'transformed the proletarian state into a 'state of the whole people'. Marxist-Leninist science speaks of the proletarian state withereing away' in the course

of the fulfilment of its class tasks and the building of socialism and communism but does not talk of 'transformation' by decrees from the rostrums of Party Congress.

When does the proletarian state begin to wither away? "When *all* have learned to administer and actually do independently administer social production, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the idlers, the gentlefolk, the swindlers and such like 'guardians of capitalist traditions', the escape from this popular accounting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment, that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of human intercourse will very soon become a habit", "then the door will be wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.'

Can the leaders of the CPSU dare say that the above stage of development has been reached in Soviet society? At any rate the reports we read and the developments we understand regarding the state of affairs in the Soviet Union cannot convince us that such a degree of development has already taken place, that it is far from that.

The hollowness of the propounders of this new thesis is exposed when they themselves again say that the present, so-called, state of the people "is being retained because the tasks which society can solve only with the aid of the state are not yet consummated". It reduces itself to simple jugglery with phrases to plead for the retention of the state to fulfil certain social tasks and in the same breath argue that those 'tasks' are non-class tasks!

The revisionist maintain that the dictatorship of the proletariat is dissolved since "its domestic (internal) purposes were fulfilled", and the state of the whole people is called upon the discharge of its external task, the task of defending against capitalist and imperialist aggression. It is not correct even to maintain that the tasks of the dictatorship for internal purposes have completely been fulfilled. May we ask the

question, what are these external tasks except the class tasks of the proletariat to fight the international bourgeoisie for the defence and completion of the world proletarian revolution? How can a state of the whole people, which is neither fish nor fowl, cope with strictly proletarian international tasks? It is impermissible that the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat and its tasks are mechanically divided into what is known as national and international, erecting a Chinese wall between the two, reducing it into purely national confines, while depriving it of its revolutionary definition that it "is a *detachment* of the world army of socialism." To do so would be to depart from Marxist-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

To conclude, to indulge in the talk of transforming the dictatorship of the proletariat into a state of the whole people or in other words the abolition of the proletarian state, would be a betrayal of Marxism-Leninism and treachery to the working class. Until and unless the "whole society will have become a single office and single factory, with equality of labour and equality of pay", until the difference between mental and manual labour disappears, until the difference of conditions of work for the workers in factories and peasants in farms cease and until the worldwide victory of the proletarian revolution is assured, no question can arise of abandoning the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Closely connected with the non-class revisionist concept of a people's state is the concept of characterising the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as the "party of the whole people". It is needless to reiterate that the Communist Party as the revolutionary political organisation of the proletariat is indispensable for the victory of the socialist revolution and for the entire historical stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The dictatorship of the proletariat has to carry on the struggle against all the overthrown capitalist class enemies, to remould the whole of society, to eliminate the last remnants of capitalism, to build the classless socialist society and to fulfil the tasks of building fullscale communism. These tasks can neither be discharged without the leadership of the Communist Party, nor is it permissible to dissolve the class party into an amorphous so-called non-class "party of the

and revisionist ideological-political positions, as far as they cover the Indian situation. Similarly, the Declaration of the party, putting the revisionists outside the pale of the genuine communist movement in India, while carrying with it the heritage of the revolutionary working class movement in the country, the adoption of an ammended Party Constitution and the election of the new central Party bodies, had settled accounts with the revisionists in the matter of organisation. Let it be emphasised that these are not small victories in our struggle against revisionism, as they constitute the bedrock of our Marxist-Leninist ideological-political unity, and go a long way in asisting the entire Party in its further struggle to clear the confusion prevailing on certain other key ideological issues connected with the international Communist movement, of which, it goes without saying, ours is an integral part.

What does it mean when we assert that the conclusions arrived at and incorporated in our Party Programme, the Resolution on Tasks, the Political-Organisational Report and other resolutions of the Seventh Congress constitute the bedrock of the Party's ideological unity? On a series of pivotal theoretical and ideological issues connected with the Indian revolution we sharply demarcated ourselves from the crassest class-collaborationist and utterly revisionist line propounded by the Dangeites, while firmly adhering to the Marxist-Leninist ideological-political standpoint. To put it sharply, there is not one single basic question connected with the Indian revolution on which we and the revisionists do not stand diametrically opposed to each other. Their class characterisation of the post-independence Indian state and government, their assessment of the internal and external policies of the new government, their critique of the capitalist path of development and the advocacy of a non-capitalist path and National Democracy, their study of the prevailing class contradictions in the country and their understanding of the present stage and strategy of our revolution, their estimation regarding the role of the non-monopoly national bourgeoisie in the struggle against the capitalist path and for a non-capitalist path, their understanding of the Marxist-Leninist concept of

proletarian hegemony over the democratic revolution, their interpretation of the peaceful and non-peaceful paths of development and their possibilities, their assessment of the role of foreign monopoly capital in the Indian economy on the one hand and the role and place of socialist aid in influencing the economic development of our country, their estimation of the state sector and its character and, above all, their assessment of Congress agrarian reforms have nothing in common with our Party's analysis and understanding. In this connection, it is very pertinent to note that the positions taken by the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on all the fundamental questions connected with the Indian Communist movement completely coincide with those of the Dangeite revisionists; and this is corroborated by a spate of statements, articles and writings in the Soviet press which are widely distributed in India, by a series of steps and actions of the Soviet government regarding Indian affairs, by the massive and demonstrative support displayed at the revisionist Party Congress by a host of fraternal delegates from abroad under the leadership of the CPSU, and by their wholehearted endorsement of the Dangeite Party programme and policy resolutions as Marxist-Leninist and proletarian internationalist. Under the circumstances the ideological-theoretical understanding and unity that have enabled our Party to evolve its own Party Programme, that aided it to settle the questions of strategy and tactics of the Indian revolution, and that gave courage and confidence to break with the Indian revisionists, do certainly stand in good stead to project this correct understanding to the remaining ideological issues still under debate and to arrive at correct independent conclusions. It is such faith and confidence that should guide us in conducting the present inner-Party discussion on the ideological issues.

Then, what are the still remaining theoretical-ideological questions round which controversy is centered in the international Communist movement and on which our party is called upon to organise the inner-Party discussion? They, in our opinion, besides the issues already clinched in our Party Programme, concern the questions of the class assessment and evaluation of the New Epoch, the issue of war and



peace in the present period, the concept of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, the forms of transition to socialism, the assessment of the different fundamental contradictions of our epoch and the place and role of the contradiction between imperialism and the national liberation movements at the present stage, the assessment of Stalin and his leading role in the building up of the socialist Soviet Union after Lenin and in guiding the world Communist movement, the attitude towards Titoism and Tito's Yugoslavia, the substitution of the concept of a people's state and a Party of the whole people in place of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the party of the working class in the Soviet Union, the added emphasis on material incentives in the Soviet Union, and the correctness or otherwise of the concept of unity in action against imperialism between different socialist states whose state and Party leaders have come to hold diametrically opposed views on a series of ideological-political issues of the day. Together with these ideological issues, there have arisen serious differences on a series of organisational concepts and practices such as inter-Party relations between different contingents of the international Communist movement, the inter-state relations between different states of the socialist world and also the relations between the Communist Parties in state power and those which are not in state power. Such in brief are the basic ideological issues around which furious controversies and conflicts have arisen in the world Communist movement, and our Party, as a Marxist-Leninist party, is duty-bound called upon to express its opinions and take a clear-cut stand on them.

At the outset, the Central Committee wishes to unequivocally state that after a careful study of the developments in the international Communist movement and the world socialist camp during the last ten years and more and viewing them from its own direct experience of the Indian Communist movement during the same period, it is firmly convinced that modern revisionism had been and does still remain the main danger to the world Communist movement, notwithstanding the fact that there have been certain dogmatic manifestations in individual Parties and on individual propositions, precepts and actions. A look at

the present world Communist movement and the socialist camp would convince anybody that it is sharply divided, its unity disrupted, and it is plunged into a serious crisis—a crisis that has virtually paralysed the initiative of the world Communist forces in successfully resisting and rebuffing the offensive let loose by the world imperialists—chiefly the U.S. The root cause and the main reason for this sad state of affairs cannot but directly traced to modern revisionist theories as advocated and practised by the leadership of the CPSU. The consolidation and further rapid advance of the world Communist movement is inconceivable without waging a principled and determined fight against this menace of revisionism in all its manifestations, and conducting a sustained struggle in defence of Marxism-Leninism and the principled unity of the international Communist movement.

### **New Epoch**

It was more than half a century ago that Lenin, analysing the growth and development of free capitalism into monopoly capitalism, observed that “Imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat”. Since then mighty changes have taken place, and a totally altered correlation of class forces has come to exist now. Two world wars, socialist revolutions in a number of countries comprising more than a third of the world’s population and the formation of a formidable socialist camp, the rapid disintegration of the old colonial system and attainment of political independence by the overwhelming majority of the former colonial countries, the growth of powerful Communist and Workers’ Parties in Several countries, etc., have taken place. All this took place after Lenin’s thesis that “the era of socialist revolution is beginning”. The present epoch certainly needs to be reassessed and redefined in the light of the tremendous changes that have taken place and will, of course, have to be redefined in strict conformity with Marxist-Leninist analysis.

Ours is certainly a new epoch, an epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism, an epoch when the international socialist system is becoming the decisive factor determining the course of world

development, an epoch of national liberation and socialist revolutions, an epoch of rapid decay and disintegration of colonialism, and epoch of titanic class battles between the forces of moribund capitalism and of socialism and national liberation revolutions, and an epoch of the collapse of imperialism and the final victory of socialism and communism on a world scale.

Modern revisionism while pretending fidelity to this new definition of the epoch conveniently and deliberately underplays certain salient features of the epoch while exaggerating and laying lopsided emphasis on certain other aspects of the same. It paints a picture as though colonialism is more or less dead, that imperialism, more or less, is rendered ineffective and a period of more or less peaceful transition to socialism has set in. The fact that imperialism, despite its immense weakening on a world scale, remains a formidable force to be reckoned with, that monopoly capitalist rule continues to exist in almost all traditionally developed capitalist states of the world such as the USA, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, Italy and the like, that colossal and unheard-of militarisation of social life is taking place, and the fact that imperialism is waging its desperate, last ditch battles to escape its destined doom, is deliberately underplayed by them. It is this erroneous outlook that emboldened people like Khrushchov, the father of modern revisionism, to go into demagogic descriptions of imperialism as “a button fastened on a coat”. and “a wolf to encounter and render harmless easier”. It is the same outlook, again, that emboldens the modern revisionists to discard some vital aspects of Lenin's thesis on imperialism and wars as obsolete and distort several other propositions of Lenin—of course, all in the name of the new epoch and the ‘creative application’ of Marxism-Leninism to new conditions.

The correct Marxist-Leninist definition of the epoch should be based on the sum total of the concrete class relations existing at the time, a definition that guides the proletarian revolutionaries in the struggle against world capitalism, but should never be one of oversimplified formulas, subjectively drawn, presenting utopian and false perspectives. Such an erroneous definition of the new epoch or its lopsided and

distorted interpretation immensely harms the cause of the proletariat rather than assisting it in its struggle for emancipation.

No Marxist would dispute the fact that imperialism, today, has been tremendously weakened on a world scale. Forces of revolution—the countries that have already come under the socialist system, the proletarian revolutionary movements in the advanced capitalist countries, the national liberation movements and forces in the newly-liberated and colonial countries, the widespread popular movements against war and in defence of world peace—are today so powerful that they can unitedly inflict defeat after defeat on imperialism and its allies.

However, the process of mobilising and uniting these revolutionary forces is no simple task. It involves a *revolutionary combination of socialist diplomacy*, calculated to isolate the most reactionary imperialist groups, *with the use of the armed might of the socialist camp* against such reactionary powers as resort to aggression on peace-loving countries, or try to drown the national liberation movements in blood. This requires the *ever-growing unity of the international Communist movement*—a unity in which the ruling Parties of the socialist countries render all forms of practical aid, including direct military intervention against imperialist aggression and intervention, to the revolutionary proletarian movement in the capitalist countries as well as the national liberation movements in underdeveloped countries. This struggle for unity against imperialism is inseparable from the struggle against modern revisionism.

Instead of making such a militant use of the new possibilities in the new epoch that did open out in the post-second world war years, modern revisionism builds a new dreamworld in which imperialism has ceased to be the monster which has to be annihilated to achieve freedom and lasting world peace ; on the other hand, it is disrupting the unity of the world socialist system, and the unity of the international Communist movement, is undermining the national liberation struggle and the revolutionary working class.

## **On The Issue Of Contradictions**

All Communists who are guided by the theory of scientific socialism and Marxism-Leninism accept that in the present era there exist four fundamental social contradictions. They are the contradiction between the camps of world socialism and capitalism; the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in capitalist countries; the contradiction between the imperialist states and the oppressed countries; and the contradictions among the different imperialist states and among monopoly capitalist groups.

The modern revisionists, too, accept this statement as correct. Then, what is the ideological dispute between the revisionists and Marxist-Leninists over the issue of contradictions? A critical study of the entire controversy in the world Communist movement, centering round this issue, convinces us that it mainly covers two points, namely, first, the un-Marxian and opportunist tendency to treat the contradiction between the socialist camp and imperialism as almost the only contradiction which determines the course of world development while neglecting or underestimating the other fundamental contradictions as of either no consequence or less consequence, and secondly, the advocacy of pet, ready-made and stereotyped methods of solving different fundamental contradictions, i.e., the method of peaceful economic competition to solve the contradiction between the socialist and imperialist camps, the method of peaceful transition to resolve the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and the like.

Lenin, analysing the development of capitalism into what is known as monopoly or imperialist stage, came to the conclusion in that 'imperialism is the eve of world socialist revolution'. What does it mean in terms of analysing the class contradictions obtaining in the epoch of imperialism? It means, first and foremost, to state in the clearest terms possible that the contradiction between the world bourgeoisie and world proletariat is the central and strongest contradiction of the epoch. Does it ignore or neglect the other fundamental contradictions obtaining in the then prevailing situation?

Not in the least. He also make abundantly clear the existence and growth of inter-imperialist contradictions and the contradiction between the imperialist states and the colonial and dependent countries. But a dialectical study of all these contradictions enabled Lenin to correctly foresee, first, the extreme accentuation of the inter-imperialist contradiction leading to imperialist war for the redivision of the world between different imperialist states, and secondly, the imperialist war in turn accentuating the contradiction between the workers and capitalists in the capitalist states and also the sharpening of the contradiction between oppressor and oppressed nations, leading to the breaking out of socialist and national liberation revolutions. Life proved the absolute correctness of Lenin's analysis of the world contradictions, and also proved how, despite the fact that the strongest and central contradiction of the epoch was one between the world proletariat and the bourgeoisie, another contradiction, namely, inter-imperialist contradiction did develop to the point of an imperialist war. The salient point that emerges out of this is that it is wrong in theory and harmful to practice to hold the view that the central or dominant contradiction alone gets accentuated and matures all the time, while all other contradictions remain either static or dormant, and do not get aggravated in the process.

To illustrate the point further, let us take the post-October Revolution era, when a new form of contradiction, the contradiction between the socialist Soviet Union and the imperialist camp emerged and stood as the central and dominant contradiction of all the fundamental contradictions of the period. The interventionist war of the international imperialists against the Soviet Union and the revolutionary war of the Soviet Union in defence of socialist revolution, during the years 1918-20, were the clearest manifestation of the nature of the new strong and central contradiction. But, did it preclude the possibility of other contradictions, such as inter-imperialist contradictions, the contradiction between the oppressor and oppressed nations and the contradiction between the proletariat and bourgeoisie getting sharper and acuter, and in a way somewhat easing for a time the antagonism

between the socialist Soviet Union and the imperialist camp? Life and history again demonstrated that inter-imperialist contradiction and the contradiction between the imperialists and colonial and dependent countries had become very acute, rendered the united front of the imperialists against Soviet Union impossible for a period, and even led to the second imperialist war between the Anglo-American and French imperialists on the one side and the German, Italian and Japanese monopolists on the other, during 1939-41.

Then, following the victory in the anti-fascist war and the formation of a powerful camp of socialist states, the contradiction between the camp of socialism and the camp of imperialism remains as the central one among the fundamental contradictions of our time. Notwithstanding the fact that it is so, do we not find that another contradiction, namely, the one between the imperialists and oppressed nations has got accentuated and assumed the acutest form, culminating in the outburst of national liberation revolutions in a series of countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the intensification of this contradiction is, of course, influencing the course of all other contradictions, their growth and development. This is exactly what is meant by the world Marxist-Leninists when they say that the contradiction between the oppressor states and oppressed countries, at this stage of development of world history, has become the focus of all the contradictions of our times.

But the modern revisionists refuse to accept this characterisation and thus fail to orientate their work to this new inevitable development, while *ad nauseam*, repeating that in the present epoch, the contradiction between the world system of socialism and imperialism is the central contradiction, that the solution of all other contradictions depends upon the solution of this central contradiction, and that the chosen method of resolving it is peaceful economic competition, etc.

This totally erroneous and undialectical understanding, study and assessment of the contradictions has landed the revisionists in the following serious opportunist mistakes, which should be discarded :

- (i) in the actual recognition of only one contradiction, namely, the one between the socialist and imperialist camps and virtually discounting and underestimating the rest of the contradictions;

(ii) in the dogmatic advocacy of peaceful transition as a method to resolve the contradictions between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and between the oppressor and oppressed nations;

(iii) in the facile conception that in the new epoch, inter-imperialist contradictions can either be mitigated or eliminated by international agreements among the monopolists; and

(iv) in the advocacy of 'peaceful economic competition' as the exclusive method of resolving the contradiction between the socialist and imperialist camps.

### **On The Issue Of War And Peace And Lenin's Thesis On Imperialism**

War is a constant companion of monopoly capitalism and imperialism. The history of monopoly capitalism and imperialism, its existence and growth during the last half a century and more, is replete with violence, war and bloodshed, on a scale and bitterness unknown to history. In the short span of twenty five years, the world bourgeoisie plunged humanity into two world wars, and slaughtered forty million men while maiming another eighty million, apart from the colossal destruction of wealth accumulated through the toil and sweat of billions of men for ages. Add to this ghastly list, the scores of wars of aggression on several small and weaker states by different imperialist states, in which millions of men were butchered in order to impose upon them colonial, semi-colonial or neo-colonial slavery. Today, the imperialists are once again feverishly preparing to plunge the world into another global war, a war with the most destructive and savage military technique of atomic and hydrogen weapons.

Let it be again noted that it is no other class in modern society than the working class guided by Marxism-Leninism that has hoisted the banner of revolt against capitalism and imperialism, a system that inevitably breeds violence and war. The Great October Revolution in Russia, as Lenin aptly put it, was fought with the slogan of "an immediate peace at all costs", and it was "the first victory to abolish



war and to unite workers of all countries against the united bourgeoisie of various nations, against the bourgeoisie that makes peace and war at the expense of the slaves of capital, the wage-workers, the working people". Further, he observed, that "the first Bolshevik revolution has wrested the first hundred million people of this earth from the clutches of imperialist war and the imperialist world. Subsequent revolutions will save the rest of mankind from such wars and from such world". (Lenin's speech at the Fourth Anniversary of October Revolution)

Such in brief is the Marxist-Leninist outlook on the issue of war and peace. It is precisely this outlook that guided the Soviet Union, the first socialist state, which stood as the principal bulwark in defence of world peace and against world war. It was the socialist Soviet Union that stood in the forefront in the anti-fascist war, rescued the world from the clutches of fascism and fascist war, and paved the way for the emergence of the powerful world socialist camp. The victory of national liberation and socialist revolutions in a number of countries in the wake of the anti-fascist war and the victory of the mighty Chinese revolution in particular, have tremendously altered the international balance of class forces in favour of peace, democracy and socialism, and against war and imperialism. There certainly have arisen new possibilities of averting a new world war and preventing and outlawing a nuclear war. But none can ignore the fact that these possibilities can be translated into realities only if the Communist Parties and the Socialist states of the world keep on uniting and strengthening all the forces of peace and democracy that can be united, and the Communist Parties and the socialist camp conduct the revolutionary struggle for peace on strict Marxist-Leninist lines, and they do not fall victims to either pacifist illusions fostered by the imperialists or to the class collaborationist utopias of social democracy. If the imperialists succeed in deceiving the leaders of the revolutionary proletariat in different countries by their peace manoeuvres and tricks, the danger for world peace and the real threat of war comes nearer, notwithstanding the loud clamour and great protestations for world peace and against war.

It is in this background that we have to examine the ideological controversy regarding the thesis of Lenin on imperialism and wars.

Lenin, with his masterly and penetrating analysis of the development of capitalism had described “imperialism as the monopoly stage of capitalism”, and observed that “imperialism is, in general, striving towards violence and reaction”. Further, he stated that “the characteristic feature of imperialism is precisely that it strives to annex not *only* agrarian territories, but even most highly industrialised regions, because, the fact that the world is already divided up obliges those contemplating a *redivision* to reach out for *every kind* of territory; and an essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several great powers in striving for hegemony, i.e., for the conquest of territory, not so much directly for themselves as to weaken the adversary and undermine his hegemony”. He had summed up, “That imperialist wars are absolutely inevitable under *such* an economic system *as long as* private property in the means of production exists”; “also the possibility and the inevitability first of revolutionary national rebellions and wars; second, of proletarian wars and rebellions *against* the bourgeoisie; and, third, of a combination both kinds of revolutionary wars, etc.”

Life during these years has demonstrated how every syllable of this thesis on imperialism and wars by the great Lenin, a thesis propounded half a century ago, is absolutely correct to its last detail and what yeomen service it has rendered to the cause of the international proletariat and its emancipatory mission in the world.

The modern revisionists vainly claiming to be creative Marxists seriously challenge the thesis of Lenin on imperialism and wars under the pretext of applying Marxism-Leninism to the conditions obtaining in the present new epoch, and assert that the “Marxist-Leninist precept that wars are inevitable as long as imperialism exists” is outmoded and no more valid, since imperialism, today, has ceased to be an all-embracing world system as it once used to be, and also because strong social and political forces which oppose war have emerged to compel the imperialists to renounce war. They advance the new thesis that “war is not fatalistically inevitable”, a thesis that clumsily clubs different types of wars—wars between socialist and imperialist states, inter-imperialist wars, wars of national liberation, civil wars, etc.—and seek to discard the Marxist-Leninist thesis on imperialism and wars.

The authors and adherents of this new revised thesis on imperialism and wars argue that the new technological developments in warfare and the possession of the most destructive nuclear weapons by the principal contending forces of the day—imperialism and socialism, is the key factor that decisively influences the thesis of Lenin on imperialism and wars. Marxism-Leninism can never agree that the growth and development of military technique can alter the fundamental social laws of classes, class contradictions, class struggle and class war. As Lenin puts it. “Military tactics are determined by the level of military technique,” but it would be a grave departure from Marxism to maintain that military technique can determine the fate of man, social laws and social development.

Since the world capitalist and imperialist social order is still in existence over three-fourths of the globe's surface covering two-thirds of humanity, since almost all the traditional capitalist and imperialist state such as the USA, Britain, France, West Germany, Japan, Italy, etc., still remain under the powerful grip of monopoly capital, and since the capitalist encirclement of the socialist states is not yet replaced by the socialist encirclement of capitalist states, the thesis of Lenin on imperialism and wars remain valid, and to treat it as having become obsolete is to fundamentally depart from Marxism-Leninism.

The radically changed correlation of forces on a world plane in favour of socialism and against imperialism in the present epoch certainly has opened the possibilities of preventing, averting and postponing a particular war, or a war with particularly destructive technique and preserving the peace to that extent. But wars can be eliminated and lasting peace secured only when imperialism is eliminated; as long as imperialism exists, there will be soil for wars of aggression.

Lastly, as Lenin pointed out, “When assessing any given situation, a Marxist must proceed not from the possible, but from the actual.” If, instead of proceeding on the basis of the actual and existing realities, i.e., the existence of powerful imperialist forces in terms of their

economic, political and military resources, one were to proceed on several possibilities of averting war and establishing durable and enduring peace, and on that basis weave out theories and work out tactics, one is bound to end in grief.

### **On Disarmament And Banning Of Nuclear Weapons**

The feverish armament race, the invention, manufacture and huge stockpiling of nuclear bombs, the setting up of thousands of military bases all over the globe, the forging of aggressive military alliances and blocs and the rapid militarisation of the economies in the present era are the products of monopoly capitalism in its desperate bid to escape its destined and impending doom.

In the face of this ever-growing menace of arms drive of the imperialists, the socialist states are duty bound to develop their armed might to defend their states against any imperialist aggression and to defend the cause of world socialist revolution and peace. It is also the duty of the world socialist and peace forces to fight against the imperialists' arms expansion and war drive and raise the demand for general disarmament. While not forgetting the fact that the imperialists would not agree to such a total and general disarmament since carrying it out would tantamount to voluntary liquidation of imperialism, the international Communist movement and the world socialist camp will have to carry on the campaign for disarmament in order to mobilise world public opinion against the menace, to expose the imperialists and also to compel the imperialists either to restrain their arms drive or even to accept some partial agreements.

But the socialist campaign for general and total disarmament should guard itself against sowing any illusions on this score, illusions that the imperialists have been weakened to such an extent that they would be willing to accept general disarmament and to abandon the arms drive and military build-up. The modern revisionists, contrary to this correct concept, carry on the disarmament campaign in so pacifist a manner as to breed the worst illusions about the imperialists; they paint the picture of total and general disarmament being an immediate

and practical possibility; they do not hesitate to make absurd statements such as that even the USA's escalation of war against Vietnam does not come in the way of continuation of talks for disarmament; and they, instead of exposing the imperialists and their armaments drive, tend to disarm the people ideologically and politically by dulling their vigilance against imperialism and its menacing preparations for war.

The ridiculous length to which this pacifist, non-class and revisionist concept of disarmament has reached can be clearly seen in how the Soviet leaders have been dealing with the issue of test-ban treaty and of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the banning of nuclear weapons. It is true that there exists a possibility of banning nuclear weapons and a sustained struggle to achieve the same will have to be conducted. Such a struggle against the imperialists can be conducted effectively, only when the socialist camp possesses adequate atomic equipment and technical know-how and is capable of rebuffing the atomic blackmail of the imperialists, and then only the possibilities of preventing an atomic war and the banning of nuclear weapons can have a chance of becoming a reality. Otherwise the imperialists have no reason to accept the proposal and lose the advantage of blackmailing the weaker states and the socialist camp. It is exactly on these premises that the Soviet Union was compelled to embark upon the manufacture of atomic and hydrogen weapons, and the adequate atomic defence and offence capacity at the disposal of the Soviet Union has resulted in the exercising of certain restraint, circumspection and care on the part of the imperialists in withholding the actual use of these weapons unlike what they did in 1945 during the war against Japan.

But the Soviet leaders, under the pretext of the struggle they are waging for disarmament, non-proliferation and banning of atomic weapons, tore off the agreement concluded with socialist China to provide it with atomic technical know-how, and thus sought to prevent People's China from acquiring atomic weapons. Strange arguments are advanced in defence of this perfidious act of one socialist state against another fraternal socialist state, that such a sharing of technical

know-how would facilitate the U.S. monopolists in equipping the West German militarists and other imperialists, that it would give a fillip to the atomic race, that it would place unbearable and heavy burdens on the Chinese people, and that it is unnecessary for any other socialist state to possess atomic weapons since the Soviet Union has got more than enough in its possession not only to defend itself but also to defend every country in the world which is threatened with U.S. atomic attack

Further, the Soviet leaders, in open conflict with and opposition to socialist China, concluded a test-ban treaty and is proceeding to conclude a so-called treaty of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons along with the U.S. and British imperialists. They did everything in their power to mobilise the signatures of the states in the world, and tom-tomed their conclusion of the test-ban treaty in 1963 as a great victory in the struggle for the non-proliferation and banning of nuclear weapons. The Soviet leaders risked a rift and even split in the socialist camp over the issue.

Life and experience have demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that this entire line and outlook emanates from a non-class and right-opportunist understanding of the entire disarmament issue, springs from impermissible illusions about the imperialists on the question of preserving peace and banning of atomic weapons, and arises from, not fraternal, but a patronising attitude to other socialist states.

What is the sum total of all this? Neither do atomic technical know-how and manufacturing and stockpiling of bombs remain any more the monopoly of the USA, USSR and Britain, nor is proliferation of atomic weapons prevented. No sovereign and self-respecting nation, whose economy is viable, would ever reconcile itself to the idea of its independence being guarded by either a nuclear USA or nuclear USSR.

Objectively speaking, the attitude of the Soviet leaders on the entire issue is based on the unwarranted premise that their collaboration with the Anglo-American imperialists is a greater guarantee for the preservation of peace, for the outlawing of the use of atomic weapons, and for averting a thermo-nuclear war, than the unity of the entire

whole people." But the leadership of the CPSU has discarded this Marxist-Leninist concept, just as it discarded the concept of proletarian dictatorship.

### **On the Issue of Material Incentives in Soviet Union**

There is a serious controversy on the issue of material incentives and its meaning in a socialist state. The question is not, as some people try to distortedly present it, one of 'material incentives versus spiritual incentives, or whether there is place or not for material incentives in the process of socialist and communist construction. The real question is, why is it that special stress and emphasis on material incentives for work have become necessary during the phase of building communism after half a century of socialist construction, and whether it squares with the expected socialist and communist consciousness of the Soviet citizen.

It would be highly instructive to recall to our minds the penetrating observations of Lenin regarding the nature of real communist manner of work. He exhorts, "First show that you are capable of working without remuneration in the interest of society, in the interest of all the working people"; characterises the communist spirit of work as one "constituting the labour of individuals on an extensive scale for *the public good*"; and says that "*communism begins when the rank and file workers display an enthusiastic concern*" to "production of goods, which do not accrue to the workers personally, or their 'close' kith and kin, but to their 'distant' kith and kin, i.e. to the society as a whole, to tens of hundreds of millions of people united first in one socialist state, and then in a union of Soviet Republics".

But the present drive by the present leaders of the Soviet state on the materialist incentives aspect, contrary to one emphasised by Lenin, raises the legitimate question whether this would not lead to the moulding of working class consciousness on the bourgeois basis of personal profit, individual and selfish interests, etc. Theoretically speaking, either proletarian communist ideas and consciousness would grow stronger and stronger defeat and eliminate bourgeois habits, ideas

and consciousness, or in its absence, the latter would invade the former and stifle its growth and development. The resort to capitalist incentives and ideas of personal profit, in the final analysis, paves the way for the restoration of a new type of capitalism, and harms the cause of socialism and communism. This danger is all the more so when the concept of material incentives is unduly emphasised in a socialist society at a stage which they claim to be full-scale construction of communism.

### **On the Issue of Stalin and the So-Called Cult of Personality**

It is not our endeavour now to assess Stalin, his role and contribution, his omissions and commissions, his failures and successes and his unique contribution to the theory and practice of socialism and communism. Nor is it our contention that there did not occur lapses and mistakes on his part as the head of the first socialist state and the leader of the world Communist movement for nearly thirty years after the death of Lenin. The CPSU was perfectly entitled to self-critically examine its past work and correct what ever shortcomings and mistakes that had crept into its work of building socialism in the Soviet Union and discharging its responsibilities towards the world communist movement. But what was done, in the so-called secret report of Khrushchov on Stalin at the 20th Congress and the subsequent period following it, is something far different from it. The fact that the report was enthusiastically seized upon by the U. S. imperialists and widely circulated by the different anti-communist and reactionary agencies all over the world, the fact that the leadership of the CPSU while formally refuting the authenticity of such a report on the one hand made a piecemeal corroboration of its contents through speeches and writings in the Soviet press on the other, the fact that no authoritative person has yet seen the light of day even a decade after the 20th Congress and, above all, the fact that this 'secret report' on Stalin became more a weapon in the hands of avowed enemies of communism in their effort to tarnish the image of communism and to undermine the faith of the people in the cause of Marxism Leninism, than an instrument in the hands of the world communists to learn from the mistakes and to confidently march forward, speak volumes against this notorious piece



of work by Khrushchov. The entire question of Stalin was dealt with as a question simply connected with the Soviet Union, as a 'private affair' of the CPSU and as an issue concerning the individual of Stalin and his merits and demerits. The biggest fact of history—that he was destined to act as the spokesman of the CPSU and the Communist International for decades following the death of Lenin, to defend Marxism-Leninism from the attacks of right and left opportunist trends, to head the building of socialism in the Soviet Union and transform it into a mighty world power, to lead the historic anti-fascist war to victory, to rebuild rapidly the war—ravaged economy and industrial might of the Soviet Union, and to lead the formation and functioning of the world socialist camp was sought to be simply ignored, and a one-sided, distorted and subjective assessment was made. To put it sharp, it was nothing short of an attempt to deliberately tear off pages covering thirty years of history of the world Communist movement, and in a way world history, which cannot be substituted with the rag of a so-called 'secret report' by Khrushchov. No true Leninist can succeed in the effort to carry forward the mantle of Leninism if its steadfast and acknowledged defender for three decades after Lenin is damagingly denigrated and depicted almost as a megalomaniac, a job that Khrushchov undertook in vain and with disastrous results. In the name of fighting the 'cult of personality', an anarchic trend of denouncing the authority of men and their place in revolutionary movements was freely fostered. Had there been adequate concern for the world Communist movement and the possible results of such a scandalous report on Stalin, there would have been prior consultations and discussions with, at least the leading fraternal communist parties of the world on the subject, and much of the mess created over the issue could have been entirely avoided.

The total negation of Stalin by the leaders of modern revisionism, we have to state, is closely linked with their assaults on a series of Marxist-Leninist theories and propositions on imperialism, on war and peace, on the concepts of proletarian hegemony and dictatorship of the proletariat, on the strategy and tactics of the revolutions in colonial and dependent countries, and on the nature, character and role of the Communist Party.

### **On Yugoslav Revisionism**

The anti-Marxist-Leninist views of the Yugoslav revisionists were subjected to thorough criticism by the world Communist movement when they came with their fullfledged revisionist programme in 1958. They had earlier refused to accept the 1957 Moscow Declaration. Eightyone Communist and Workers' Parties in their Moscow Conference in 1960 discussed the situation and while reiterating the position taken in the Declaration they nailed down Yugoslav revisionism in the following words.

“The Communist Parties have unanimously condemned the Yugoslav variety of international opportunism, a variety of modern revisionist ‘theories’ in concentrated form. After betraying Marxism-Leninism, which they termed obsolete, the leaders of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia opposed their anti-Leninist, revisionist programme to the Declaration of 1957; they set the LCY against the international Communist movement as a whole, severed their country from the socialist camp, made it dependent on so called ‘aid’ from the U. S. and other imperialists, and thereby exposed the Yugoslav people to the danger of losing the revolutionary gains achieved through heroic struggle. The Yugoslav revisionists carry on subversive work against the socialist camp and the world Communist movement. Under the pretext of an extra-bloc policy they engage in activities which prejudice the unity of all peace-loving forces and countries. Further exposure of the leaders of Yugoslav revisionists and active struggle to safeguard the communist movement and the working class movement from the anti-Leninist ideas of the Yugoslav revisionists remains an essential task of the Marxist-Leninist Parties.”

It is not for nothing that the Soviet leadership has gone back from this understanding of the international Communist movement.

### **On the Slogan of Unity in Action**

The slogan of unity in action emanates from the Soviet leaders in the particular situation when the world socialist camp is seriously divided and disunited on several ideological-political issues and was

brought to the forefront in connection with the U.S. aggression on Vietnam and the grave concern voiced by the communists and revolutionaries all over the world for the effective and active defence of Vietnam against U.S. aggression and war.

To be more clear and precise, it is a call by the Soviet leader to the Chinese Communist Party and government leaders, that the two big socialist states, the USSR and the People's Republic of China, should work out a plan of united action against American aggression on Vietnam, notwithstanding the sharp division on several ideological-political issues between them.

The Chinese Communist Party rejected this proposal on the following grounds : (a) that the attitude taken by the Soviet leaders to the U.S. aggression in Vietnam over a number of years in the past as well as the present is dubious; (b) that the Soviet leadership has been conspiring to impose a humiliating peace on Vietnam and thus betray the national liberation revolution of the Vietnamese people; (c) that the material help rendered by the Soviet Union to Vietnam is nominal and is not commensurate with the strength of the Soviet state; (d) that the Soviet leaders have been following a dual policy of nominal help to Vietnam and collaboration with the U.S. ; (e) and, finally, that it is in principle wrong and impermissible to agree to united action with the Soviet revisionist leaders, because the line that divides the Soviet leaders and the Chinese is the line between modern revisionism and Marxism-Leninism. "On the question of handling our relations with the enemies and friends, whether to oppose or unite with U.S. imperialism"; "and there are things that divide us and nothing that unites us, things that are antagonistic and nothing that is common" and as such the contradiction between the two is an antagonistic contradiction, and hence unity in action with them is ruled out.

A serious debate is on in the world Communist movement as to the correctness or otherwise of the stand taken by the Chinese Communist Party on this issue of proposed united action.

A careful analysis of the developments of Vietnams' liberation war against the U.S. imperialists during the last several years clearly

demonstrates the truth that the attitude adopted to it by the Soviet Union and the role it played is certainly disappointing and is not what is rightly expected of a leading and mighty socialist state, i.e., the Soviet Union. For a long time, there has been neither forthright condemnation of U.S. aggression nor was timely and effective intervention forthcoming. Things, at a stage, went so far as Khrushchov publicly announcing the intention of the Soviet Government to resign from the presidency of the 1954 Geneva Conference and 'disentangling' itself from the whole of Southeast Asia, thereby objectively encouraging the U.S. imperialists to proceed with the aggressive plans against Vietnam, with impunity. Even after the acceptance of the five-point programme of the South Vietnam national Front of Liberation and the agreement with the North Vietnam Government for increased material assistance by the Soviet Union, a sort of 'sitting on the fence' policy is pursued, and the statements issued, assistance rendered and the action proposed by Soviet statesmen are not so unequivocal as to serve a stern warning to the U.S. imperialists and to force the U.S. to desist from its aggression. An examination of the entire course of developments leading to the present escalation of the war against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam by the U.S. cannot but compel one to conclude that the Soviet Government is guided by the thesis of 'local wars in danger of growing into a world war' and consequently takes hesitant, halting and compromising steps, and makes repeated attempts at restoring some kind of peace in Vietnam in compliance with the U.S. aggressors—all of which has gone only to abet and encourage the American expansionists rather than in restoring real peace in Vietnam.

The stark reality, today, is that the small socialist republic of North Vietnam, together with its patriotic fighters in South Vietnam, is fighting alone against U.S. aggression and is making unheard of sacrifices, notwithstanding the fact that she is a member of the world socialist camp which has become a formidable force in the present era. Of course, it is true that it is getting enormous material assistance and moral support from the countries of the socialist camp, but not its direct and united intervention to drive out the aggressor.

The North Vietnamese Government and its ruling Workers' Party, taking into account the great ideological-political gulf that divides the two mighty socialist states of the world, the Soviet Union and People's China, do not think it prudent to raise the slogan of unity in action as an *immediate and practicable one* and, instead, is appealing to both Soviet and China and all other socialist states to render independently maximum material and political assistance in the war of liberation against American imperialism. But the freedom-lovers and proletarian revolutionaries of the whole world are extremely concerned and agitated over the brutal, fascist war on the Vietnamese people and desire united action by the socialist states, particularly the Soviet Union and China, so that the aggressors might be speedily driven out and peace restored in Vietnam. Our Party cannot but share this legitimate urge of the people, all over the world, and eagerly look for such a heartening development as soon as possible.

While passionately desiring united action against imperialist aggression, it cannot but take serious note of the fact that the unity in action proposed in this concrete case is nothing short of military action with its own serious consequences, and such a united military action demands minimum mutual confidence between the states and parties which are participants in the united action. Nobody in his senses who is following the developments in the international Communist movement and Sino-Soviet relations in particular can imagine that such minimum mutual confidence exists between the Soviet and Chinese leaders.

In this connection one cannot but recall to memory a chain of events that have embittered Sino-Soviet relations to the point of a serious split between the two. The high-handed manner in which the leadership of the CPSU revised a series of Marxist-Leninist propositions at the 20th Congress and sought to arbitrarily impose its understanding on fraternal parties, the open denunciation of the Chinese C.P. by Khrushchov at Bucharest in 1960 after it expressed its serious ideological differences with the CPSU, the blatant violations of fraternal

socialist relations by the Soviet leaders through the stoppage of aid, annulling agreements mutually entered into, and sudden withdrawal of the Soviet technicians from China, the unashamed backing out from the Sino-Soviet agreement to share the technical know-how of atomic weapons, the test-ban treaty that was signed and the proposed treaty of non-proliferation to be signed by the Soviet leaders with the USA and Britain bypassing China and in the teeth of its opposition, the Soviet leaders' refusal to help China to acquire the latest military techniques and to develop its military capability to meet the American atomic and rocket menace, the most vicious international campaign organised by the Soviet Party and Government to isolate it and pressurise into submission and a host of similar steps and actions deliberately perpetrated by them to damn the Chinese Communists as warmongers and traitors to the cause of socialism, cannot be wiped out with the stroke of a pen by issuing the slogan, "let us unite in action" against U.S. aggression.

The Soviet leaders, if they are really earnest and serious about Sino-Soviet united action against U.S. imperialist will have to resort to bilateral talks with the Chinese leaders in order to clear up the mess that has been created, will have to abandon the facile notion of maintaining world peace in collaboration with the most aggressive U.S. imperialists, and will have to realise that their struggle for so-called peace, freedom and socialism in the world without socialist China is more unreal and absurd than the stupid U.S. concept of UNO and world politics bypassing People's China, a fourth of the world's population.

A series of initial steps are required to prepare the ground for such unity in action, let alone the restoration of the principled unity of the socialist camp and the international Communist movement. Without the preliminary necessary steps and preparations for unity in action, the slogan of united action, as a slogan of immediate action, loses its meaning and significance and reduces itself to one of scoring points and deceiving the gullible.

Notwithstanding this, acceptance of the proposal for a meeting of representatives of North Vietnam, Soviet Union and China and

participation in such a meeting would have helped the process of putting to test the Soviet proposals of joint action, to test the Soviet professions for helping Vietnam and served to enlighten the peoples of all countries.

However, our Party cannot subscribe to the view that the slogan of unity in action in principle is wrong, since it advocates unity in action between the revisionist leaders of the CPSU and the Marxist-Leninist leaders of the CPC, since the contradiction between revisionism and Marxism-Leninism is by nature antagonistic, and such united action is impermissible. The very concepts of united front, united action, etc., advocated by communists presuppose action against a common enemy, at a particular stage of development, together with several other classes and parties with whom the proletariat has its contradictions, including antagonistic contradictions, at times. Communists in pursuing the political line of united front and united action do not address themselves only to the leaders of political parties and organisations but principally to the masses behind them. It is wrong not to distinguish between the leaders and masses following them, and to identify the views of the leaders with those of the classes and masses behind them. Hence to rule out in principle the slogan of unity in action with political parties or states on the ground that those parties or states in question are headed by revisionists restricts the scope of unity with all those with whom it is possible to unite, while singling out and isolating the most immediate and hated enemy.

In this particular case, i.e., the Soviet leaders whom we, too, consider as the advocates of modern revisionism, the question of unity in action is interwoven with the Soviet state and its people, as these leaders happen to head that state at present. The outright rejection of the slogan of united action as unprincipled, on the ground that such unity implies unity between revisionists and Marxist-Leninists is, objectively, tantamount to making a present of that state and its people to the revisionists, instead of isolating the revisionists. While appreciating the innumerable obstacles that stand in the way at present, for the immediate realisation of the slogan of united action between the Soviet

and Chinese governments, and while entertaining no such illusions that such united action can materialise if the struggle to realise it is carried on in the manner the Soviet leaders are at present carrying on, we do cherish this concept and eagerly work for its materialisation, so that the bleeding Vietnamese people might in their just war of national liberation together with the states of the socialist camp rout the armies of imperialist intervention.

### **On the Issue of Correct Relations between Fraternal Communist Parties.**

The relations between fraternal Communist Parties and the Marxist-Leninist principle that should guide these relations are a very important question. In theory all appear to accept that all Communist Parties are independent and equal, that there should be no false idea of so-called high ranking and subordinate parties, that there can be no interference in the internal affairs of other Parties and that they should build their Party-to-Party relations on the basis of proletarian internationalism and mutual assistance. But in actual life and experience this salutary principle is often violated, and such violations, when they take place, from big Parties and Parties in state power, become all the more grave, striking hard at the very principle of independence and equality of fraternal Communist Parties.

The second important question, of course, closely connected with the first as stated above, is regarding the relation between the foreign policy of socialist states in regard to one or the other capitalist state and the internal policy of the Communist Party operating in the concerned capitalist state.

It is an accepted Marxist-Leninist dictum that notwithstanding the identity of aim between the different Communist Parties of the world, the tactical positions of all these Parties need not necessarily be identical, even on the same concrete question. Any number of examples from the history of the world Communist movement can be cited to show the absolute correctness of this proposition. All attempts to



disregard such exigencies and dub these tactics as the tactics of the 'dualists' and as tactics of defeating the 'monist' action of the world working class were ridiculed by Lenin, while showing the inner consistency in the pursuing of different tactics by different proletarian Parties, based on the concrete conditions of the arena of their operation.

This issue of divergence in the tactical positions of different Communist Parties gets all the more complex and emphasised when it becomes a question of tactic to be pursued by the Communist Parties in state power and the Parties still struggling for power. Proletarian internationalism makes it obligatory for all the contingents of the world Communist movement to support each other in the struggle for socialism and against imperialism, and it applies equally to the Parties in power as well as the Parties without power. But, as aptly put in the report of the Seventh Congress of the Third International, "this identity of aim by no means signifies that at every given moment there must be a complete coincidence in all acts and on all questions between the tactics of the proletariat and Communist Parties that are still struggling for power and the concrete measures of the Soviet proletariat and the CPSU which already have power in their hands in the Soviet Union".

All communists should bear this in mind during their work while, of course, guarding against the opportunist and class-collaborationist distortion of this dictum, distortion with a view to rallying behind one's own bourgeois government and in opposition to one or the other socialist state and thus adopt a national-chauvinist outlook outright abandoning proletarian internationalism.

Here, again, all this is admitted in theory while in actual practice an irresistible tendency is frequently manifested—the tendency of subordinating the internal class policy of the Party without power to that of the needs of the foreign policy relations of one or the other big socialist state and its ruling Communist Party.

Unless and until these two serious errors are rectified, real, durable and lasting fraternal relations and unity between the world's Communist Parties, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, is inconceivable.

A working class party can play the role of revolutionary party only if it is firmly based on Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, only if it can, as correctly put by the CPC, “use its brains to think for itself and acquire an accurate knowledge of the trends of the different classes in its own country through serious investigation and study, and know how to apply the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and integrate it with the concrete practice of its own country”, and does not “parrot the words of others, copies foreign experience without analysis, runs hither and thither in response to the baton of certain persons abroad”, and “becomes a hotch-potch of revisionism and dogmatism and everything but marxist-Leninist principles”.

It should be emphasised that if certain individual contingents of the international Communist movement prove immature or weak in discharging the tasks as described above, they can get over these weaknesses by learning from thier own mistakes and through their own experience, in the main, and no outside Party, however big and experienced, can substitute itself for this task, and hence it is extremely harmful to try to dictate and guide the work of another Party. It is all the more so in the case of big Parties in power, as it would, first, subject the Parties in question to the reactionary slander of being ‘led’ by either Peking or Moscow, and, secondly, such attempts prove harmful as the political-tactical line thus imposed, more often, is not based on the concrete study and painstaking investigation of concrete class relations obtaining in the country in question. Such interference may be permissible in extraordinary circumstances, when a Party and its political line goes completely on to the wrong track, when friendly fraternal criticism is rejected and when there is no other alternative left except to openly express criticism. However, this should be an exception.

Our Party notes with extreme regret, that this sound proletarian internationalist principle which should guide the relations between Parties is violated by big Parties, of course, either under the pretext of

some creative Marxism of theirs or under the totally erroneous notion that they alone can think, not only for themselves, but for all other Parties of the world. The glaring example is the leadership of the CPSU, after its 20th Congress, which began to assert that its thesis is the programme for the entire world Communist movement, and used and is using all its might to force it on every other Party in the world. Another big Communist Party, the CPC, which correctly pointed out and fought against this dangerous tendency on the part of the CPSU leaders and is bearing the main brunt of fighting modern revisionism, is also, sometimes, found to disregard this principle. Our Party, while modest enough to learn from the achievements and mistakes of all other fraternal Parties of the world, should guard itself against any such outside interference and zealously defend its independence and its independent political line. Any departure from this sound principle and practice would prove disastrous to the unity, growth and progress of our Party.

### **Carry On The Fight Against Revisionism, Guard Against Left Sectarian Deviation**

Before closing the present document dealing with modern revisionism as the main danger in the international Communist movement at the present juncture, our Party cannot be oblivious of the fact that there also exist certain dogmatic and left-sectarian trends in some Parties on certain issues connected with the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. While fighting against modern revisionism as the main danger facing the world Communist movement as well as our Party, it cannot but seriously warn itself against slipping into left-opportunism and sectarian errors.

What does it mean when we say that revisionism and right-opportunism constitute the main danger in our Party?

Though our Party has decisively broken with the revisionists, it cannot be said that we have shed everything of revisionism. The legacies of the past decade or more of our Party activity which was dominated

by revisionism both in theory and practice still persist in our Party too. It is true that we discarded revisionism in our strategy and tactics in the Programme we adopted at the Seventh Party Congress and the line we chalked out in the “New Situation and Party’s Tasks”, “The tasks on the Kisan Front” and “The Tasks on the Trade Union Front”. But in practice as we go on implementing these documents, we find ourselves repeatedly coming across revisionist tendencies that come in the way of class orientation, outlook, and class struggles and reformist illusions in elections and alien methods in Party organisational activity. This has to be seriously taken note of and the present effort of ours to settle accounts with modern revisionism on other ideological issues should be availed of for a complete working class orientation in the matter of our day-to-day thinking and activity.

While tracing and liquidating the hated legacies of reformism and revisionism in all its manifestations, a fight still far from complete in our Party and without carrying which it becomes doubly difficult to fight against the rising left-dogmatic trends, and while not minimising the possible recurrence of reformist mistakes in our united front tactics and in running of the coalition ministries in some states, we cannot ignore or treat lightly certain sectarian, dogmatic and adventurist tendencies manifesting in some Party circles. They express in the form of challenging the Party Programme, in opposing the political-tactical line of the Party, in advancing infantile and adventurist forms of struggle and, finally, in the open defiance of Party norms and forms, its discipline and democratic centralism. Some of the advocates of the sectarian line have even embarked upon slandering the Party’s ideological-political line as a line of neo-revisionism, as another substitution for the “old revisionists” of the Dangeites school, and have hoisted the banner of revolt against our Party in league with several shady characters and agents-provocateurs. Merciless exposure and ruthless fight against these tendencies and in defence of the Party’s programme, political line and organisation are the elementary duty of every conscious communist and the entire Party.

In fighting against the evils of right-opportunism or left-dogmatism, and in defending Marxism-Leninism one has to be clearly aware of the truth that right-reformism and left-dogmatism are not antipodes but are twins, and often go hand in hand with each other. As Lenin sharply puts it, "anarchism was not infrequently a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working class movement; the two monsters complemented each other".

While analysing the basic sources of revisionism, whether of the right category or the left variety, Marxist-Leninists maintain that, "bourgeois influence is the inner source revisionism, and capitulation under imperialist pressure is its external source". Not content with this generalisation, we should also address ourselves to the concrete examination of the phenomenon in our own country and our Party. Ours is a country with a predominant petty-bourgeois class composition. Petty-bourgeois ideas, conceptions and illusions, in no small way, invade and influence the working class of our country, since ever-growing new entrants into the ranks of the working class would carry these prejudices along with them, besides the insufficient political consciousness of the organised working class. Lastly the class composition of our Party, and particularly of its leadership at different levels, is still predominantly of petty-bourgeois origin, and its schooling and tempering in Marxist-Leninist theory and ideology are deplorably inadequate. For these reasons our Party remains under the constant threat of being easily swayed into extremes, either right-reformist or left-adventurist errors. This should never be lost sight of, and the entire experience of our past history completely confirms this truth. Not only our experience, but the experience of several other fraternal Parties also proves that left errors are liable to crop up in the course of liquidating right mistakes, and right errors are liable to crop up while correcting left mistakes. Our Party will have to be doubly vigilant and guard against these dangers.

## **On Left Deviation Or Left Opportunism \***

Adopted by the Central Committee of the C.P.I. (M) at Madurai,  
August 18-27, 1967

1. While our Party considers Revisionism as the main danger which has to be fought and eradicated, it has also to take into account manifestation of left opportunism in our midst. If this is not done it might derail the Party from the pursuit of its aim of mobilising and winning over its class and masses in general for building the popular democratic front.

The Party in its recent document—New Situation and Party's Tasks—has underlined the gravity of the situation and summed up the period as one in which the growing economic crisis is passing into a political crisis. Anyone conversant with Marxism-Leninism will understand the revolutionary import of the formulation and will know that what we are envisaging in the near future is a period of huge mass struggles which will not fail to leave that imprint on the political developments, which, in fact, if pursued by the Party, will shape political developments, and upset the neat political calculations of the ruling classes.

The deep economic crisis that the country has been passing through for the last few years, defies all the attempts of the Government to solve it and, in fact, is leading to the stage of total breakdown of the entire economy. This only underlines the deeper fundamental causes of the crisis and shows that it can neither be resolved by the bourgeois-landlord Government nor is a solution possible within the framework

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\* *Published as a booklet*

of bourgeois-landlord policies. In other words, the democratic revolution delayed, sabotaged and suppressed by the bourgeoisie and its class allies is bursting before our eyes with a vengeance.

This is seen in the rising militancy and desperation of the people, by their total participation in mass struggles, by the reckless abandon with which they throw themselves in the struggles whether spontaneous or organised. At the same time, our Central Committee has noted the grave shortcomings and weaknesses of the situation : namely, compared with the distress of the people and the magnitude of the economic crisis, the consciousness and organisation of the people, the strength of the class organisations, the strength of the Party—all are at a low level. It is this that creates the danger that the spontaneous mass anger expressing itself in heroic day to day resistance, may fail to get a centralised political experience, may fail to get a revolutionary expression—the direct slogan of state power—and may be side-tracked, or dispersed after heroic battles. Taking into consideration the influence of the national big bourgeoisie, of the parties of the bourgeoisie and the existing level of class consciousness, our Party is developing a line which enables it to come closer to the masses, wean them away from the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie and its parties, create a firm base for the Party in our own class and the democratic masses so that the Party develops the required authority and strength to guide the movement into revolutionary channels.

In this connection, our Party also notes the extremely uneven conditions of organisation and struggle in different States. It has noted that in the recent elections in some States the discontent of the people was exploited by the other reactionary parties of the same class and that the fighting masses were not able to see the real face of these parties.

Our Party has therefore taken several steps to overcome these weaknesses. In the first place, in order to effect a complete break with revisionist outlook and rescue the daily movement from the rut of economism and bring it to the high road of political movement, our Party has produced two documents on the Kisan and T. U. movements.

The former gives a correct understanding of the basic classes on whom we must rely for the agrarian revolution, and for forging worker-peasant alliance. The latter arms the Party to unite the working class in the daily battles, politicalise it so that as a class it moves towards discharging its leading role in the revolutionary movement. Besides this, taking into consideration the variegated pattern of consciousness, our Party has decided to use every form of struggle suited to take the masses forward. Demonstrations, partial struggles, strikes, along with our work in legislatures and parliament and formation of united front ministries—in fact, all our activities are directed to quicken the process of heightening mass consciousness and organisation. The united front with other left and democratic political parties in the formation of ministries, as well as united front for struggles are essential parts of the Party's tactical line. All these help in strengthening our ties with the masses, in broadening the sweep of the mass struggles and enable the masses to see in practice the role of bourgeois parties. The parliamentary activity of the Party including its participation in ministry is also aimed at helping the development of the mass struggle and at enabling the masses realise through their own actual experience the class character of the state and the need to replace it by a People's Democratic State.

The basic part of these tactics is to enable the working class to move rapidly towards an understanding of its responsibilities, prepare it for the role of assuming the hegemony in the struggle for People's Democracy and to win over the peasant masses for this struggle. Without discharging these tasks, all talk of struggle for power must end in dust.

2. The left deviationists precisely attack this class line on the Party.

The alternative line they advocate will only divert the Party from the task of developing close ties with the masses, delink the Party from them when they are moving in their lakhs, and leave them to the logic of spontaneity. It will neither train the class to assume its own responsibility, nor enable the Party to develop as the vanguard closely



linked with the masses. In short, it will behead the movement keeping it imprisoned within the framework of bourgeois influence and ideology.

*The left opportunists challenge the Party Programme itself. They challenge the basic current line including the Party's participation in ministries. They also challenge the basic principles of the Marxist-Leninist Party, viz., its unity, discipline and democratic centralism.*

Our Programme states : “The present Indian State is the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords, led by the big bourgeoisie who are increasingly collaborating with foreign finance capital in pursuit of the capitalist path of development. This class character essentially determines the role and functions of the State in the life of the country.” “On the other hand, it [the big bourgeoisie] seeks to utilise its hold over the State and the new opportunities to strengthen its position by attacking the people on the one hand and on the other, to resolve the conflicts and contradictions with imperialism and feudalism by pressure, bargain and compromise.”

3. The left opportunists attack the Programme as revisionist mainly because, in their opinion, the state in India is a neo-colonial state, a state of neo-colonial powers, the government is a puppet and stooge government. They state : “In this situation, fearing revolution, the big bourgeoisie (representing the monopoly and big capitalists) of the country established Congress rule in 1947 on the basis of collaboration with imperialism so as to preserve intact the interests of imperialism and to exploit jointly with imperialism Indian labour and resources.”

This understanding was debated and discarded at the Party Congress at Calcutta in 1964, after a thorough pre-Party Congress discussion in the entire Party. It is noteworthy that this characterisation of the state does not talk about the landlords sharing power in the Indian state.

4. In the first place, this formulation, by denying that it is a state of the bourgeoisie and landlords, by implication exaggerates the role of the bourgeoisie in the struggle and is likely to lead to opportunist errors.

It equally leads to left sectarian and adventurist errors, and overestimation of the situation. What is the implication of a stooge government, a neo-colonial state or a state run in collaboration with imperialism in a period when imperialism is collapsing all over the world? It implies that the state and government is already completely isolated, universally hated and armed struggle is the only form left to the people; it has only to be called for to be started. This formulation ignores the existing class realities and underestimates the ideological and organisational hold of the ruling classes and their parties on the people, the illusions nurtured and undermines the preparations for the requisite class alignment for building the People's Democratic Front.

It is no wonder that with this wrong understanding of the class realities and the present situation in India they make no distinction between parliamentary institutions and fascism. They understand participation in parliament as parliamentarism and openly repudiate Lenin's teachings on the use of parliamentary institutions as weapons of struggle.

Arguing against the opponents of participation in bourgeois parliaments Lenin says : "You say that parliament is an instrument with the aid of which the bourgeoisie deceive the masses. But this argument should be turned against you, and it does turn against your theses. How will you reveal the true character of parliament to the really backward masses, who are deceived by the bourgeoisie? How will you expose the various parties, if you are not in parliament, if you remain outside parliament? If you are Marxists, you must admit that, in capitalist society, there is a close link between the relations of classes and the relations of parties. How, I repeat, will you show all this if you are not members of parliament, and if you renounce parliamentary action? The history of the Russian revolution has clearly shown that the masses of the working class, the peasantry, and petty office employees could not have been convinced by any arguments, unless their own experience had convinced them.

"It has been claimed here that it is a waste of time to participate in the parliamentary struggle. Can one conceive of any other institution

in which all classes are as interested as they are in parliament ? They cannot be created artificially. If all classes are drawn into the parliamentary struggle, it is because the class interests and conflicts are reflected in parliament. If it were possible everywhere and immediately to bring about, let us say, a decisive general strike so as to overthrow capitalism at a single stroke, the revolution would have already taken place in a number of countries. But we must reckon with the facts, and parliament is a scene of the class struggle.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 255-56)

It is obvious that while participating in legislatures the Party must be vigilant about the objectives and not get into opportunist errors. The Party has to make a revolutionary use of legislatures. The boycott of bourgeois legislatures as a matter of principle is anti-Leninist and deprives the Party of this form to organise its class, the masses and expose bourgeois democracy.

In contrast, the “Committee for Struggle Against Revisionism” writes : “The Indian Parliament and democracy, it can be said, is an expanded edition of what was introduced by British imperialism.”

They also attack the slogan of non-Congress ministries as revisionist and demanded that the Party should have nothing to do with the elections themselves nor should it have any understanding with other parties.

A section argues : “Marx taught us that ‘force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one’. And Com. Mao Tse-tung teaches us that ‘political power grows out of the barrel of a gun’. But are you not teaching us the path of ‘peaceful transition’ to the New Democratic State by the parliamentary means through actual practice of forming electoral bloc and alliances with bourgeois social reformists, with the serious intention of forming ‘coalition governments at state levels, in Bengal, Kerala and other States’ ?” “We apprehend that you are again preparing to throw the entire party into the coming general election, thus exposing our best cadres to face bourgeois repression (which inevitably follows as our own historical experience has taught

us) instead of exposing through our legal struggles the real nature of bourgeois parliamentary democracy i.e. fascism—to the masses. You have formed in West Bengal a United Left Front Bloc (and you are planning to do the same in Kerala and other States) an alliance of the proletarian party with socialist revolutionaries and bourgeois-social reformists with the serious intention of forming a coalition government by means of a parliamentary majority.” (Letter to the PB)

The United Front in elections is rejected; the formation of alternate government is rejected; the entire tactic is attacked as parliamentarism, as an attempt to seize power through parliament—i.e., the line to use parliament as an auxiliary form of struggle, as a forum for exposure is rejected.

Another group declares : “The present leadership of the Party is pursuing the same political line though they are using apparently revolutionary language. It is an extremely difficult task to eradicate the tradition of parliamentary opportunism, which has struck deep roots inside different sections of the leadership and restore Communist tradition and outlook. An opportunist coterie of seekers of seats in parliament and the assembly has firmly entrenched itself in the Party and as a very strong group is influencing this Party people, because the roots of this kind of politics and outlook in seen in the political slogans like “Government of democratic unity”, the Kerala way (after the formation of our government there) etc. and activities corresponding to these slogans.” (“The Committee for Struggle Against Revisionism”.)

Our Party Programme says :

“The Party will obviously have to work out various interim slogans in order to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing political situation. Even while keeping before the people the task of dislodging the present ruling classes and establishing a new democratic state and government based on the firm alliance of the working class and peasantry, the Party will utilise all the opportunities that present themselves of bringing into existence governments pledged to carry out a modest programme of giving immediate relief to the people. The

formation of such governments will give great fillip to the revolutionary movement of the working people and thus help the process of building the democratic front. It, however, would not solve the economic and political problems of the nation in any fundamental manner. The Party, therefore, will continue to educate the mass of the people on the need for replacing the present bourgeois-landlord state and government headed by the big bourgeoisie even while utilising all opportunities for forming such governments of a transitional character which give immediate relief to the people and thus strengthen the mass movement.” (Para 112)

Basing itself on this understanding of the Programme the Central Committee, analysing the post-election situation in the country, unanimously adopted a document which states :

“Above all, governmental power in the States has got to be understood in clear class terms and with all its limitations. The essence of state power, we know, lies in the army, police, bureaucracy, judiciary and jails, and all this machinery belongs to the bourgeois-landlord state. In class outlook, composition and in several other respects it is not an instrument that is suitable even for the implementation of a consistently democratic administration, let alone any class policies decisively directed against the vested interests. A good and essential part of state power resides in the Union Centre and the Congress Central Government and whatever small share of power the State Governments possess, under the provisions of the country’s Constitution, will have to be exercised within the confines of this over-all central power. Naturally, under these circumstances, to speak of real political power for the State Governments, that, too, of non-Congress comprising of different opposition parties, is unreal and devoid of substance.” (New Situation and Party’s Tasks, pp. 62-63.)

The Central Committee had further warned about the limitations of these ministries and stated :

“Finally, there is one point to be constantly borne in mind by our comrades working in the UF Cabinets. We cannot forecast the actual

lifespan of these Governments and all the possible vicissitudes they will have to undergo during the tenure of their ministries. We cannot also definitely say how much relief can be given to the people and what actual possibilities are opened up for these Governments to do so. Our ministries, without either entertaining undue illusions about giving relief in a big way, or courting despair that nothing can be done under the present set-up, should bear in mind that they, as the Party's representatives, should strive to tender our bonafides to the people. Any failure on this score compromises the Party's political line in the eyes of the people; adversely affects the independent mobilisation of the people and their activities, and all this in turn, will not help us to resist and overcome the vacillations, wobbings and sometimes even possible backsliding of some democratic parties in the UFs and their respective Governments. In a word, the UF Governments that we have now are to be treated and understood as instruments of struggle in the hands of our people, more than as Governments that actually possess adequate power, that can materially and substantially give relief to the people. In clear terms, our Party's participation in such Governments is one specific form of struggle to win more and more people, and more and more allies for the proletariat and its allies in the struggle for the cause of People's Democracy and at a later stage for Socialism." (Ibid, pp. 69-70.)

In the face of this revolutionary line based on concrete analysis of the situation, any attempt to dub it as revisionist is futile.

What then is the tactical line of the left opportunists ?

"The Committee for Struggle" argues that it would have been possible "to persuade the masses to boycott the elections if conscious efforts were made to bring to its natural culmination the form which the mass movements displayed in the different states, especially in West Bengal, and to raise the movements to a higher stage." Elections should have been boycotted, and the mass struggles could have been carried out to a still higher pitch.

They again stress the same in the following words : "Besides, bourgeois democracy can no longer flourish as it did in the nineteenth

century. [What they really mean is : it is 'obsolete'.] So in connection with elections we should pay special attention to this aspect and it should also be marked that from their experience of the way Parliament and Assembly etc. have functioned and have been run for the last twenty years under Congress rule, the illusion of the masses for the said institutions has worn off comparatively. Class war is the best weapon to complete the disillusionment of the masses..... So to remain bogged at the level of mass consciousness on the pretext that the masses are thinking on this line, instead of actively carrying forward the struggle is nothing but opportunism.”

Using parliamentary institutions, according to them, is remaining bogged at the level of mass consciousness; class-war i.e., direct revolutionary struggle is the only weapon to complete the education of the masses. The added argument is that parliaments are obsolete and hence participation in them is no good. Thus in the name of a revolutionary struggle this important forum is rejected in principle. This is nothing but an anarchist deviation which underestimates the fight against the state in the concrete. This has nothing to do with Leninism. It seeks to reduce the working class and the masses to impotent spectators in the elections; bypasses the stage of their consciousness; advances slogans which delink the Party from vast sections particularly in the elections and hands them over to the tender mercies of the Congress and the other bourgeois parties.

The fight during the elections and after to educate the working class and vast masses of peasantry on the character of the state; the exposure of other bourgeois parties and the ideological fight carried on against them; the mobilisation of the people after formation of ministries; the great impetus following the electoral reverses of the Congress—all are rejected in the name of revolutionary struggle. Acceptance of this line will completely sabotage all efforts of the Party to overcome the organisational shortcomings and weaknesses, of the low level of consciousness and to link itself with the masses for carrying forward the struggle for People’s Democracy. It is a line for increasing the isolation of the Party and not for its advance; it is a line which condemns

mass consciousness to its present level and makes no effort to fight illusions among the people about the character of the state and its organs.

5. The same sectarian attitude is adopted towards other forms of mass activity – the daily partial struggles of the masses. In their document they have hardly anything to say how to organise them; how to overcome the present weaknesses so that a united resistance of the working class is organised to the economic offensive against the workers; how to overcome economism and accelerate the process of political awakening. Similarly, they have hardly anything to say about the partial peasant struggles, on whom they should be based, how they should be organised. While occasionally paying lip-sympathy to them, they virtually argue as if the possibilities of these struggles are exhausted because of the repression and all that has to be done is to organise force. While the Party pays utmost attention to the class organisations, to the struggle as it actually develops and tries to link itself with the masses in these struggles to get the entire class into elementary action so that its political awakening begins to develop, the left deviationists declare that this struggle also is virtually outmoded. They think that in every struggle the question of state power is raised; that because of confrontation with the state's violence, organisation of force must be there before any struggle can start. To quote from *Chinta* in connection with lessons of tram-fare increase resistance movement in Calcutta in 1965, "Today if no organised force counter to the force of the ruling class is built up then a real mass movement cannot even be started – much less can it be carried forward. Because at the stage of national crisis the question of power comes before the movement even if the movement advances one or two steps. This thing has come out clearly through our experience. There is no way to live unless the government is removed."

Here once again under the guise of meeting state violence the task of organising and developing the class struggle is relegated to the background. In partial struggles, daily struggles they do not see the discipline and consciousness of the working class and the masses; that



the class is getting steeled, without which violence of the state cannot be paralysed. This can be done only on the basis of wide mass support, and building class organisations. To neglect this will lead to militant action by few divorced from the actual class struggle as it is developing.

The left opportunities reduce the hard task of unifying the masses, developing proper tactics for it, fighting against the disruption of the reformists and revisionists who undermine the morale of the working class and the peasant masses, paralysing their resistance to the state's policies including violence – to the organisation of force. Thus neglecting the main task of building mass organisations, by refusing to fight for every little relief for the workers and peasant, by not paying serious attention to the immediate demands and to simultaneously raising political consciousness, by a mere reliance on organisation of force once more leads to a band of select individuals indulging in militant actions, under the pretext of defending or revolutionising the struggles, and bringing disaster to the mass movement.

Paying lip-homage to working class leadership, they argue : “ The main condition for the establishment of a people's democratic revolution is the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry. Hence what is necessary is to arrange and concentrate all our plan of work keeping with this perspective. To achieve this objective, it is urgently necessary for us to win over as quickly as possible the masses in both urban and rural areas in support of revolution through systematic revolutionary plan of action, not to stage all- India uprising. But the key to victory in a revolution is the leadership of the proletariat. It is, therefore, our task to establish party bases among workers and in working class organisations, in all the main industrial centres etc. We must also build powerful working class movement and organisations.”

The idea is to win over the masses by systematic revolutionary plan of action – i.e, direct armed struggle, which is contrasted to an all-India uprising. For that purpose revolutionary groups are to be build in the working class. This is supposed to ensure working class leadership. Armed struggle replaces the actual class struggle as it is developing; the class is replaced by few party groups – and there is no

line how these groups will link themselves with the class and develop into a vanguard. Mark the words – the masses are to be won over by revolutionary plan of action. The mass organisations play no role. We must also develop them – that is all that is said. Marxism-Leninism emphasises the role of the mass organisations as the links which tie the Party with the class and enables the Party to move the entire class. But the left deviationsists reject this.

The line is a complete subservience to spontaneity. Everything is made dependent on the spontaneous development of the struggle; all that is necessary is to promote a particular form of struggle.

The left opportunists reject any struggle for class alignment, for People's Democratic Front, for fighting alien influences among the working class, for preparing the working class for the role of hegemony. Unhysterical, uncritical submission to one form of struggle replaces the entire science of Marxist leadership and reduces the tactics to individual terrorism.

The Party Programme points out :

“ The threat to parliamentary system and to democracy comes not from the working people and the parties which represent their interests. The threat comes from the exploiting classes ..... When the people begin to use parliamentary institutions to advance their cause and they fall away from the influence of the reactionary bourgeoisie and landlords, these classes do not hesitate to trample underfoot parliamentary democracy as was done in Kerala in 1959. When their interests demand they do not hesitate to replace parliamentary democracy by military dictatorship. It will be a dangerous illusion to imagine that our country is free from all such threats.”

In accordance with this understanding, the Party recognises that it is necessary to master all forms of all struggle. But the form to be chosen must be such as will take the masses and the mass movement forward, produce maximum result and make the slogans of the Party the slogans of the masses. The Party endorses the tactical line of 1952 and endorses the perspective of development as given there. The gross

error of the left opportunists consists in the fact that they are neglecting all the immediate tasks of mobilising the class and relying on spontaneity, waiting on events, are advocating forms of struggle which today hinder the process of mass movement, hinder the process of their release from bourgeois influence. That line only leads into the camp of the enemies of the Party and the working class. It is not accidental that in West Bengal the Congress and the left opportunists agree in considering the United Front ministry and our Party as the main enemies. It is a line which demobilises the working class in the interests of the big bourgeoisie. The Naxalbari events clearly show where all these end. Having boastfully declared that they had launched the peasant armed struggle for land, they only encouraged the reactionaries to launch an offensive against the peasantry. They made no attempt to profit from the Party's intervention which gave them two months to rectify their mistakes. In fact, the main aim was to sabotage the Party's line of utilising the ministerial forum for mobilising the people. In spite of tall talk against the Congress rule they directed their fire against the United Front ministry and the Party.

The organisational line of the left opportunists demands that the Party be reduced to a federation of autonomous groups each having complete liberty to advocate and practise its line. Proof of this is seen in what they did in Naxalbari. In utter defiance of the Party, without even informing it, they boasted of having launched the so-called armed struggle. They refused to meet the Party representatives, publicised statements contrary to the Party line, issued handbills condemning the Party. The aim and purpose of all these was not so much as to advance the struggle of the peasants, but to wreck the accepted line of the Party.

The Naxalbari incident was carefully prepared for months and bulletins were attacking the Party. The left opportunists did not want to discuss anything inside the Party units; they had started like the Trotskyite opposition in the USSR, functioning as a secret group, with its own press, its own factional directives and propaganda. Not on one occasion did they seriously raise their 'differences' inside any Party unit for discussions. They wanted to remain secret so that they could

not be identified. All the tactics of a factional group, secretly functioning, were adopted.

In their bulletins they claimed the right to challenge and attack the basic programme of the Party, though their amendments and understanding were rejected by the Party Congress. In the name of inner-Party democracy, in the name of inner polemics they demand the right to challenge the entire strategic concept of the revolution and for them the verdict of the majority, the Party Congress, all this is nothing. They thus openly defy the basic principle of democratic centralism and discipline based on it, and demand complete freedom for the faction to preach and act what they think fit and attack and undermine the Party and its leadership.

It is clear that their organisational outlook is that of petty-bourgeois individualists who find it impossible to accept the rigorous discipline of a proletarian party, that it has nothing in common with the Leninist conceptions of organisation and party.

Directing their fire against the Party, giving up all fight against reformist ideology, neglecting the basic developing struggles, the line only leads into the camp of the enemies of the Party and working class. It is not accidental that in West Bengal the Congress and the left agree in considering the United Front ministry and our Party as the main enemies. In the name of going on the offensive it wants the Party and the working class to give up participation in daily struggles, in daily politics, and helplessly wait on events. It is a line which demobilises the working class in the interests of the big bourgeoisie. The Naxalbari events clearly show where all these end. Having boastfully declared that they had launched the peasant armed struggle for land, they only encouraged the reactionaries to launch an offensive against the peasantry. They made no attempt to profit from the Party's intervention which gave them two months to rectify their mistakes. In fact, the main aim was to sabotage the Party's line of utilising the ministerial forum for mobilising the people. In spite of tall talk against the Congress rule they directed their fire against the United Front ministry and the Party.

The Party rejects this entire line as wrong, disruptive and anti-Marxist-Leninist. No party can tolerate a challenge to its programme, and its accepted line.

The Central Committee cannot but repulse the attempt of the left opportunists to challenge the entire line of the Party, its basic programmatic assumptions, its organisational principles and substitute in its place a federation of autonomous groups each having the right to advocate and start any form of struggle when it likes. The entire line is rejected as anti-Leninist.

The Central Committee re-endorses the line given in its documents and tactics about elections and functioning of ministry decided at Tenali and afterwards.

The left deviation is not just confined to a few cursed individuals. It is an ideological disease of frustrated individuals and it affects also young militants whose militancy is not tempered by the fire of class struggle and disciplined by Marxist-Leninist outlook. Inside our Party there are many militant honest young members who are drawn towards the pseudo-revolutionary line because it appears to be militant. Especially in the wake of our election reverse in many places, many turn with revulsion from patient and sustained mass work and find in armed struggle a new solace.

But the main cause of the attractions is that due to the growing economic crisis and desperation, impatience and frustrations are growing and the mass struggle as yet have not developed to that pitch where they could be seen as the effective means of fighting the present regime. Lack of Marxism-Leninism, failure of the Party to transform this militancy into revolutionary fervour – all create a situation in which the appeal of left doctrinairism remains.

Besides when the masses are moving quickly into action, when big battles are impending, there always arises a trend which seeks to impose its subjective slogans and forms of struggle instead of learning from the masses.

These groups are making hectic efforts to contact disgruntled elements in every State and district, who might fall a prey to their machinations.

Left deviation will thus be a constant source of danger in the coming period and it will have to be consistently fought. But just because of the situation and the factors mentioned above it cannot be fought only by taking organisational measures. In fact, the main fight against it must be conducted ideologically by patient explanation and propaganda.

We must remember the following words of Stalin. :

“Bolshevism grew in the fight against opportunism and petty bourgeois revolutionism. No Marxist-Leninist Party can escape this fight on two fronts. And though we regard the former as the main danger, the latter can no longer be neglected.”

### *The Growth of Adventurism in West Bengal*

#### **Central Committee Information Document**

To understand the growth of adventurism in West Bengal, we have to trace the history since 1962.

The ideological differences since the growth Congress of the Party at Palghat took a sharp turn in 1962 on the question of India-China border dispute, particularly at the National Council meeting in October-November, 1962.

After the National Council meeting, those of us differed with the majority decision decided to continue our struggle inside the Party with the understanding that it may ultimately force us to part with the revisionists. That is why we took some measures to set up an underground organisation in the State and at major district levels.

Parimal Das Gupta, who for a long time had been maintaining his own separate group opposing the Party line, did not join in this struggle against revisionism along with the rest of our comrades. He maintained an opportunist position mouthing extreme slogans while objectively helping collection of even defence fund. This can be understood from a leaflet that was issued at that time. The contents of the leaflet are given below :

**Union's Appeal For Contributing Freely  
To National Defence Fund.**

Friends,

The Chinese attack on India has threatened the independence of our country. With a view to fighting back the attackers, the Government of India has given a call for fund.

Since the Government is thinking of promulgating an Ordinance banning non-official organisations from collecting such funds due to various reasons, we are requesting all the members of the Union to contribute their mite to the fund sponsored by the Board Authorities. Along with this the Union is hereby issuing instructions to all Divisional Committees and stations to make up their mind and to become conscious of their duties at this hour of National Emergency.

No irresponsible rowdyism – it is only this awareness that will lead us out of this impasse.

On behalf of West Bengal State

Signatories –

Electricity Board Workers'  
Union, (Regd. No. 4170)

206, Cornwallis St.

Calcutta - 6

Date : 6th November, 1962

1) Kamakshya Prasad Dutta  
Majumder

2) Milan Chowdhury,

3) Kali Prasad Chatterjee

Asst Secretaries.

The first signatory is now a member of the so-called Naxalbari Krishak Sangram Sahayak Committee. Parimal Das Gupta was the General Secretary of the State Electricity Board Workers' Union as the time issuing this leaflet. (He is still the General Secretary). He was moving openly at that time, but did not record any protest whatsoever.

In the month of August 1963, “Desh Hitaishi”, the Bengali weekly, was published under the leadership of our comrade and Com. Benoy Chowdhury was put in charge of it. As the Party was still united it could not be published in the name of the party. It was published as an organ of the “Nirdaliya Parishad” (Non-Party Council) but people took it as the organ of our Party and soon became very popular. Its circulation shot upto 10 to 12 thousand within 3 to 4 weeks.

During the discussion on the Draft Programme, various trends were found and that was not always unwelcome. During the two years of the fight with the Dangeites, Party forms were not observed, and because of that it was found that the groups were forming on the basis of trends. We thought it would not last long and we would be able to get them to function within forms once the Programme was finalised.

In the Provincial Conference it was found that Sushital, Parimal, Latif and Kanai (known as Rahman) were moving in a factional way in pressing their point of view. They moved several amendments for which they could get only six votes. All their amendments cannot be reproduced, but their main points were :— On the stage of the revolution, they supported the 1951 Programme, emphatically asserting that India was a semi-colony – but strangely enough, their slogan was for almost a socialist revolution; the Government’s foreign policy is dictated by imperialism and so on.

A resolution was passed in the Conference that “Desh Hitaishi” be formally declared as the organ of the State Committee. Sushital, Niranjan Bose, Saroj Dutta and others did not like that. They wanted to keep it outside the control of the Party so that they could push their point of view.

As already stated, various groups had been formed on the basis of trends. One of these groups was called a Revolutionary Council, whose leaders were Parimal, Latif, Kanai, Subhas Bose, Azizul, Saibal and others. Sushital was not with this group. Sushital had his own followers among whom were Sudhir Bhattacharya (who was expelled from the Party in 1951 on a very serious charge) and Amulya Sen. These two



brought out a paper called “Chinta” (Thought) during the Party Congress, while it challenged the Party Programme as revisionist. In all they brought out 6 issues of this journal.

The leaders were arrested just before the Party Congress. Something was known about this Revolutionary Council before the arrests. But it was thought that many of these groups would cease to exist when the Programme was finalised.

After the Party Congress the Revolutionary Council began establishing its own contacts.

This matter was discussed in the State Committee meeting which took place between 5th to 8th December, 1964. A Commission was set up to investigate the matter. Sushital Roy Chowdhury was opposed to this because he thought the Party instead of fighting revisionism, was starting a witch-hunt thereby suppressing the militancy of the ranks.

Strangely enough, two of the Commission members who were in the know of these things, were arrested along with others on the 11th night. A full report from these comrades was received inside Dum Dum Jail and a message was sent that the Party should take prompt action without waiting for the formalities. But before the Party could move in this matter, the general round-up of 30th December, 1964 took place.

In the middle of 1964, an institution had been set up under the name “Marx-Engels Institute” for imparting Party education and bringing out information documents. Sushital was put in charge of this.

After the general round-up, these “Chinta”, “Revolutionary Council” and other groups became very active in bringing out various pamphlets, news-sheets and leaflets slandering the Party leadership and challenging the Party Programme.

The group of Siliguri brought out 6 cyclostyled leaflets in 1965 calling for adventurist actions which was quoted by Nanda against us. The leadership which was outside took the decision to expel him from

the Party, but the decision could not be served on him as he was then suffering from a heart attack. He was arrested during the Indo-Pak conflict.

Sushital Roy Chowdhury and his friends maintained their groups inside the jail and tried to contact comrades from districts who were at that time in jail. They were so unscrupulous in this matter that they formed their group even with those who showed weaknesses inside the jail. One cannot but doubt their honesty when they recruit persons who cannot stand the rigours of jail as the best cadre for their 'revolutionary' programme.

When the comrades were all released in May 1966, these groups co-ordinated their activities. In the name of running Party classes, they tried to consolidate their position inside the Party. In this matter, they fully utilised the "Marx-Engels Institute". This Institute occasionally brought out pamphlets on current problems. In one such pamphlet titled "Anasaner Darshan" (Philosophy of Hunger-strike), they wrote : "How long can one wait for the masses. It is not the masses who decided, it is the determined few who decide."

During the "Bangla Bandh" in March-April in 1966, a railway employee became very friendly with the then 'Deshhitaishi' staff, particularly with Saroj Dutta, Niranjan Bose and Santosh Bose. This man brought out two pamphlets and had a plan to bring out 21 pamphlets. He was using the name and money of a known M. R. A. man, and now an employee of an Advertising Agency, which is run and dominated by the rightists. These pamphlets advocated adventurist actions. The 'Desh Hitaishi' people knew that, but still encouraged him. Niranjan Bose even tried to push those pamphlets through N. B. A.' and Santosh Bose lent his name with "Desh Hitaishi" address as printer and publisher. These people used to distribute and sell their pamphlets in our big mass rallies and demonstrations.

In the month of June 1966, in the State Committee meeting where Comrade P. Sundarayya was present these matters were discussed in detail, both their political and organisational ramification inside our

Party. Charu Mazumder and other names were referred to in this matter and some suggested actions against them. But the S. C. thought the problem was more political than organisational. So the S. C., while recognising that revisionism still remains the main danger and because of it adventurists will get some sympathetic hearing, decided to run a political campaign against these adventurists through “Desh Hitaishi” and general body meeting. Sushital objected – putting forward the same argument that instead of fighting revisionism, the Party was fighting the militancy of the Party ranks. It was also decided that these people would be given a chance if they abided by the Party form. They were free to express and discuss their opinion even on the Programme which was passed unanimously in the Party Congress (Sushital voted for the Programme) but it should be done within the Party and opinions will not be allowed to be expressed openly.

The S. C. earnestly took up this task. It published a series of articles in “Desh Hitaishi” exposing their political position which was being propagated through “Chinta”, their mouth-piece. Their activities are confined to Siliguri town, Naxalbari kisan belt, Rly. employees, Central Bank employees, State electricity workers –particularly Jaldhaka Project, Jalpaiguri Town and Alipore Town. Peculiarly enough, they do not put their point of view in the Party meetings but in private talks, they professed to stand by the Party Programme but did not agree with the C. C.’s interpretation. During talks with them they agreed that they would abide by the Party decision, and would not express their differences, if any, publicly. But on 30th August, 1966, they issued a leaflet under the title, “Build real revolutionary Party by fighting uncompromisingly”, where they said that the present Party leadership was not their ally, leave alone colleagues. They opposed continuous general strike as it was a petty-bourgeois adventurist slogan. They called for breaking the Party form and by breaking the Party form a real revolutionary Party could be built. To observe the Party form means co-operating with the revisionists. They gave call for partisan war within six months, otherwise it would be too late, and through that liberated areas would be formed. They called the general election a hoax though they contested seats both in Siliguri and Phansidewa. They encouraged

and organised the setting up of Latif as an independent candidate against the Party candidate. During the election campaign they brought out several journals namely, (1) Commune, (2) Chhatra Fouj (Student militia), (3) Santrash (Terror), (4) Dakshin Desh (Southern country). When the election result was out, they brought two Party Letters over the signature of "Committee to Fight against Revisionism". In the first issue they put their general line and in the second they gave the slogan that the CPI (M) should not become a constituent of the U. F. Government in West Bengal. If it joined the Government then it would be betrayal. These were translated into English for the P. B. members and it was decided by the P. B. to refute their standpoint in "People's Democracy" so that it could be reproduced in the Party's language papers.

In the March S. G. meeting, Sushital placed his views in writing which were similar to those expressed in their Party Letter No. 2. By that time, we had received several other reports of their activities. For example, some S. S. B. (Special Security Branch – an organisation set up by the Central Government during the Indo-Pak conflict in border districts) people and some anti-social people are connected with them. The son of a very rich man, a rabid anti-Communist in his student days in Dacca, went to Columbia University for higher education, did not get any degree but posed to be a doctorate in sociology, married an American girl and came back to Jalpaiguri. There he introduced himself to this group as pro-Chinese and armed struggle-wala. He has a house in Calcutta which is rented out to the American Peace Corps. There is every reason to suspect him to be a CIA agent. He made contacts with all sorts of people in Jalpaiguri, Siliguri, Calcutta, Chandernagore and got into the confidence of the inner core of Charu Mazumder's group.

The State Committee discussed these developments in the month of May and took the organisational decision to charge-sheet some of the top leaders. On 6th June, Sushital was given a charge-sheet by the Secretariat, to be replied by 19th when a S. C. meeting was called.

When this charge-sheet was given they met and discussed their

reply. Further, they decided to capture “Desh Hitaishi” They planned to register the Nirdaliya Parishad making Sushital its Chairman.

Sushital was expelled on 19th June. They got their organisation registered on 20th June, 1967 with Sushital as their Chairman and tried to capture “Desh Hitaishi”. A letter was sent to them to hand over the charge of the paper to Sudhansu Das Gupta, the Chief Editor. They mobilised some 40 to 50 people along with some goondas, assaulted and drove out Sudhansu from the office. Sushital took charge along with Niranjan Bose and others.

This happened at noon. By the evening Party comrades got the news, drove them out and took possession of “Desh Hitaishi”.

Now they are running “Deshabrati”. It was a Party periodical but the printer is their man; so they got it. And probably they will keep amount of Rs. 4500 of “Desh Hitaishi” which is in their name. They are posing as if they are willing to hand over the money to Com. P. Sundarayya but not to Promode. They wrote a letter to Comrade Sundarayya to this effect. He replied to them to hand over the amount to the West Bengal Committee. But they have not responded to this.

This, in short, is the background of how the adventurists in West Bengal have been working since 1963. They took a line of lying low inside the Party while distributing all sorts of anti-Party literature.

### *Situation in Naxalbari Area*

#### **Siliguri Local Committee’s Report**

Here is the brief report on the situation prevailing in Naxalbari area. Since the commencement of police offensive last month, all the leaders have been dislodged from their bases. The leaders are now moving hither and thither isolated from each other.

We have noticed widespread panic and demoralisation amongst the peasants of Burraganj and Hatigshisa area. None of the leaders of second rank has been caught. They too are in hiding. Most of the persons numbering about 500 to 600 arrested through police offensive are

ordinary peasants. We have been able to get only 80/90 persons released on bail. I am writing on bail affairs later on.

In this areas many bighas of land remain uncultivated. We on behalf of our Party and local United Front gave representation to the S. P. and others against police excesses. We on behalf of the United Front made on-the-spot enquiry. We particularly enquired into the case of the death of Barka Majhi in police custody. The charge that Barka Majhi was beaten to death by the jotdars in the presence of police, has been proved to be true. Two jotdars have been arrested in this connection. After the enquiry regarding police excesses, officer-in-charge of Naxalbari Police Station has suspended two policemen. Nanda Goswami, the notorious Congressman of that area has been arrested. Besides this S. P. has arranged for personal enquiry into other allegations against the police.

It is true that the police, through indiscriminate arrests have committed excesses. But at the same time, the allegation of barbarous police atrocities (such as indiscriminate beating up of people etc.) is not wholly true.

The peasants inhabiting in our bases in Phansidewa area (who mainly belong to Rajbansi community) are now coming to us. They now admit that the path pursued by them was wrong and it has done harm to them. They are asking us to visit those areas.

The extremists managed to extend their influence in some of our tea gardens. They managed to get on their side a good section of the leadership of the tea garden workers. They held a meeting of tea garden cadres last month and formed a new Committee excluding three of our men viz., Biren Bose, Kanti and Lalshai. Somen Bose and Kamaskshya Bannerjee were respectively made President and Secretary of the new Committee. The extremists had a plan to murder Biren Bose in case of his visit to any tea garden.

On 24th July last they gave a one-day call for general strike in the tea gardens. In five gardens there was complete strike. In two gardens there was partial strike and in three gardens the strike call totally failed. They have been able to mobilise the tea garden leadership for them,

because of the following factors : (1) Seven gardens are situated in and around their bases or areas. After the last general election they concentrated in these gardens. They used to hold almost regular meetings in these gardens. They made arrangements for the tea garden cadres to attend Kisan Conventions and through their revolutionary phrase-mongering etc. They managed to establish influence over them. It is to be noted that the tea garden workers in general did not join hands with them. (2) At a later stage differences among the tea garden leadership cropped up on the question of movement. But apprehending that their opposition to the extremist leaders may invite trouble and danger for them they maintained silence. Because, during this period the extremist leadership was a force to be reckoned with, they used to take kisan demonstrations to the tea gardens. Sometimes demonstrations led by them consisted of one thousand kisans or more. They had in their possession some arms including a few guns.

Then the police offensive started. All “the revolutionary and liberated bases”, “impregnable fortresses” etc. collapsed. The process of disillusionment amongst the general tea garden workers became rapid. Each of the leaders of tea garden workers who joined hands with the extremist leaders have received a portion a looted goods including a good amount of cash money. Recently police raided three bustees of Phulbari Tea Garden and recovered huge amount of looted goods. That section of the tea garden leadership which did not subscribe to the views of the extremist leadership has now started coming to us.

North Bengal University is now the main centre of activities of the extremist leaders. Those who have been attracted recently towards the Party subscribe to their viewpoint and they are all actively working for them. Excepting a few none of the old Party members is with them. They are collecting money in the name of Naxalbari Shahayak Samity. They have convened a meeting next month.

We have expelled Bharadwaj from the Party. Siliguri Party Office has come in our hands. But a news is being circulated that a student battalion from North Bengal University is soon going to capture the Party Office.

The events that took place in Siliguri from 28th to 30th July have been published by "Deshabrati" under the caption – 'Police atrocities to suppress mass upsurge'. No doubt the demonstration on 28th July was a spontaneous one and it was directed against the blackmarketeers. But on the next day the same spontaneous mass discontent was diverted against the entire Marwari community. There were cases of setting shops on fire, looting, molestation of women, snatching away ornaments from women's bodies etc. The events on 20th July, though spontaneous, was utilised (at least an attempt was made to utilise) by the Congress to create widespread trouble. Congressmen were the main organisers of next day's incidents Anti-social elements of Siliguri town joined hands with the Congressmen. Not only that, the extremists including some students from North Bengal University under the leadership of Kisanlal Chatterjee have openly declared : This is a struggle against bourgeoisie etc. The detailed report of Siliguri incident is being sent separately. But strangely enough, Congress, extremists, Bangla Congress, SSP and Marwaris – all have joined hands to concentrate fire against the Communist Party (Marxist), Right CPI, and Bidhan Mullick of Bangla Congress. This Bidhan Mullick represents Bangla Congress in the local United Front. Through their paper, leaflets etc. they are laying the blame for incidents on 28th, 29th and 30th July upon us. Bangla Congress has sent a report to the Government charging us with giving provocations for starting riots. This is one side of the picture. There is another side also. After these incidents, in the name of rounding up of anti-social elements, the police have arrested many innocent persons. In the name of arrests police have entered the house and beaten up persons indiscriminately. Even womenfolk have not been spared. We on behalf of the Peace Committee gave representation to the police authorities on this issue. Now police excesses have stopped. The extremists by taking advantage of these incidents are trying to foment trouble. We called a mass meeting at Siliguri town. But the same had to be abandoned. At present, order under Section 144 is in force here.



## **About Thana Land Distribution Committees**

Siliguri Thana Committee alone has done some praiseworthy work. Siliguri Land Distribution Committee has settled eight eviction cases and it has undertaken work of distributing about 800 bighas of vested lands which were under the possession of jotdars. But the work of Kharibari and Naxalbari Committees is not advancing at all. Taking advantage of the lack of initiative on the part of the kisans, the notorious jotdars like Iswar Tirki and others are trying to distribute lands among their own men on the basis of false petitions. But our men have been able to prevent it. Similar was the situation in the Phansidewa Land Distribution Committee also. But our kisans in Phansidewa area have been greatly enthused by the success of the Siliguri Land Distribution Committee. They have promised to participate in the next meeting of the Committee. In Phansidewa also Sampat Rai submitted many false petitions for getting lands. But through the efforts of our men in the Land Distribution Committee those petitions have been rejected.

5th August, 1967

### ***Socio-Economic Situation In The Naxalbari Area***

Day after day the bourgeois newspapers, Congress and all reactionary forces including some other parties are circulating imaginary stories in connection with the kisan movement in the Naxalbari area. 'Yenan' on the Indian soil, new edition of the Telangana type of kisan struggles, vile conspiracy of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), armed struggle on the pattern of Naga and Mizos—all such incredible phrases are freely being used about what is happening in Naxalbari. By going through the bourgeois newspapers, one would feel that one is reading a fairy-tale. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has declared again and again in unmistakable terms its attitude towards this movement. By exposing the politically motivated propaganda of the reactionary forces, the Party has declared time and again that the problem of Naxalbari is basically social and economic and not of law and order only.

The bourgeois newspapers which day after day vilify the CPI (M) had to concede sometimes the objective facts. They, of course, draw

wrong conclusions from the objective realities for obvious reasons. The Special Representative of Dalmia's *Times of India* in his despatch of June 29 had to admit that there are real grievances regarding agricultural problems. The terrible economic plight of the bargadars is the main reason. The right of the bargadars on land is very much uncertain, very often the jotdars evict the bargadars from the lands, etc.

The basic character of the kisan movement (its economic character) cannot change simply because some "ultra" leaders have taken an adventurist line. One should know the background of the peasant movement there, if one wants to understand the real happenings in Naxalbari.

### Topography

Siliguri, Naxalbari, Kharibari and Phansidewa—the four police stations constitute the Siliguri sub-division of the Darjeeling district. Naxalbari police station came into existence only in 1960.

There are 44 tea gardens in the Siliguri sub-division. About 25,000 workers are employed in these tea gardens. Moreover, there are large number of East Bengal refugees. The total share of the refugee population is not negligible, they have purchased lands and have built their own houses.

The following is the division of population according to police stations :

|                        | Population | Number of villages |
|------------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Siliguri (except Town) | 27,654     | 66                 |
| Naxalbari              | 42,193     | 71                 |
| Phansidewa             | 58,573     | 90                 |
| Kharibari              | 25,953     | 70                 |
| TOTAL                  | 154,373    | 297                |

In 16 villages—2 Phansidewa, 3 in Kharibari, 6 in Naxalbari and 5 in Siliguri—there are no dwelling houses (Census Report, 1961).

## **Social and Economic Conditions**

It is to be noted from the Census Report of 1961 that 57.7%, 72.2% and 64.5% of the total population of Naxalbari, Kharibari and Phansidewa respectively are of scheduled caste and tribes. Part of this population are engaged in agriculture, another as agricultural labourer and still another part in tea gardens, forests and mines. As per 1961 Census, 53.2, 5.5 and 28 men in average are engaged in agriculture, as agricultural labourer and tea gardens, forests and mines respectively in those police stations. The peasants of Naxalbari, Kharibari and Phansidewa are mainly landless adivasis, Santhals, Oraons, Mundas and Rajbanshis and they are most oppressed and exploited in the society.

Among the scheduled castes and tribes the Rajbanshis and adivasis are 50% and 25% respectively, 2.05% to 5% are Nepalese and others about 25%. The influence of Kisan Sabha is limited mainly among the Adivasis.

Most of the peasants have no lands, so they till lands on barga system. 49.7% land of Naxalbari police station is cultivated in barga system, 37.1% is cultivated by owner-peasants (cultivated by the family members or by hiring agricultural labour) and 13.2% by both systems. Almost the same arrangement will be found in Kharibari or Phansidewa police stations. Large number of bargadars engaged in cultivation remain in constant threat of eviction and uncertainty, so the question of resisting the evictions remains the main question in this area.

## **Extreme Oppression and Exploitation of the Peasantry**

Earlier the entire area was under the Khasmahal (direct ownership of the state), so there was no accurate land records. Those lands which the peasants through their hard toil made cultivable were forcibly occupied by the jotdars. Similarly, large fallow lands in the area of the Mechi river were made cultivable and were later taken by the jotdars. A major portion of the Khasmahal lands had been on lease for 20 to 30 years to the tea garden owners on a very nominal rent. Of 2,278 acres of land in possession of a tea estate tea is planted only in 642 acres; another tea estate occupying 1,007 acres of land let for tea plantation uses only 356 acres. There are many other instances like the above.

The jotdars, usurers and tea garden owners had a paramount reign in this area, their oppression and exploitation of the common peasant reached its limit. The Congress and its governmental machinery always took sides with those vested interests against the interests of the peasantry.

The Estate Acquisition Act and Land Reform Act were passed in 1953 and 1955 respectively. A new situation arose after the enactment of these laws. As there were no land records, the jotdars taking advantage of this started a large number of malafide transfers of lands. It was found that sizeable lands vested in the Government were still in possession of the jotdars. Moreover, there are instances of jotdars selling lands which were actually vested in the Government. Alongside the mala fide transfers, large-scale evictions were made.

In this the Congress and the Governmental machinery aided the vested interests against the interests of the people and the peasantry. Due to malafide transfer of land, the land vested in the Government through the Estate Acquisition Act accounted for only 19,000 acres including 13,000 acres of cultivable lands. The total vested land should have been at least double of this.

Against the above background, a broad peasant movement was started in Naxalbari area in the year 1959 under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha for recovering the lands transferred malafide and against large-scale evictions.

### **Kisan Movement With Ample Possibilities Faces**

### **Disaster In The Hands Of Adventurist Leadership**

### **In Naxalbari Area**

The Kisan Sabha was organised in the Naxalbari area during 1952-53 and its influence was limited mainly amongst the Adivasis at the beginning. Later it spread to the Rajbansis to some extent.

The kisan movement for land which started in 1954-55 in 24 Parganas and Midnapore districts began later in 1959 in Naxalbari.

In 1959, under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha, the movement for one-third share (Tebhaga) of the crop, recovery of lands transferred mala fide by jotdars and against eviction was launched in four police stations of Naxalbari, Kharibari, Phansidewa and Siliguri. Many of the leaders and ordinary kisan workers were imprisoned, one hundred and fifty court cases were instituted against the kisans by the police during this movement. Recovery and possession of some lands transferred malafide from jotdars were possible through this movement. The influence of the Kisan Sabha and its organisation expanded due to this movement and the Kisan Sabha membership rose to 5,000.

The offensive of evictions of the peasants from land also decreased because of the broad movement of 1959. Then the India-China border dispute arose culminating in the border clashes in October-November 1962.

### **Background of the Peasant Movement**

During and after the India-China border clashes in 1962 the Congress Government let loose a reign of terror in this area. All the leaders of the kisan movement were arrested and detained under the Defence of India Rules and due to police repression, the Kisan Sabha organisation was weakened; the movement came to a stop and peasant masses were terrorised. Taking advantage of this situation, the jotdars started evictions with renewed vigour and hundreds of eviction cases were instituted against the share-croppers.

In the early part of 1964 the leaders and workers of the Siliguri sub-division were released along with the other detenus of West Bengal and other States. An attempt was made after the releases to restart the movement after reviving the organization but the Congress Government gave no such opportunity. In the last week of October 1964, the Seventh Congress of the Party was held in Calcutta. Most of the leadership of our State was arrested under the Defence of India Rules on the eve of the Party Congress. Barely one and a half month passed after the Seventh Congress concluded on 7th November, about two thousand leaders and workers of the Party were arrested under the Defence of India Rules throughout India. The whole leadership of Siliguri area

was also arrested. Jotdars again had their free hand in the Naxalbari area with the aid of the Congress and police. So no revival was possible.

The historic Statewide food struggle of March-April 1966 forced the Congress Government to release all the detenus. All the leaders of Siliguri were also released. But Kanu Sanyal and Jangal Santhal were again arrested during the 48-hour general strike in September 1966 and they were released again only on the eve of the general election. The primary task at that time was to strengthen the Kisan Sabha and to mobilise kisans against evictions and for the recovery of the transferred lands from the jotdars. Another task was to prepare the Party politically and organisationally for the Fourth General Election and take it as the greatest political battle. And at this stage the leadership of the kisan movement here planned to pursue an adventurist line in the whole peasant movement.

Had it been correctly led, this powerful kisan movement could have shown the way to the whole of West Bengal, but because of the ultra adventurist leadership, severe damage was inflicted on the entire movement to the advantage of the vested interests of the area. Before discussing how this adventurist leadership carried the movement on the wrong rails step by step, it is necessary to deal with the organisational position of the movement in Siliguri area.

### **Organisational Situation**

The total population of Siliguri, Phansidewa, Kharibari and Naxalbari, excepting Siliguri town, is more than one and a half lakh. If 25,000 tea garden workers employed in 44 gardens and 25,000 of forest workers—total 50,000—are excluded, then the rural population comes to about one lakh. They live in 281 villages. The strength and influence of the Kisan Sabha is limited mainly to some parts of Kharibari and Naxalbari police stations. Though the Kisan Sabha had some influence in a few areas of Phansidewa police station, never had there been any militant movement.

Out of the total rural population, 25% are Adivasis and the influence of the Kisan Sabha is mainly among these Adivasis; 50% are Rajbanshis

and Kisan Sabha organization and influence among them is very weak. Out of a total of 281 villages only in 45 villages with approximately 18,000 population have Kisan Sabha units and in 20 villages Kisan Sabha has its strongholds. The following villages may be considered as strongholds of the Kisan Sabha—Singhijora, Ramanjibi and J alas of Phansidewa P. S., Hatighisha and Tarabari of Naxalbari, and Buranganj of Kharibari P. S.

Out of the total Communist Party membership of 300 in Siliguri sub-division 100 are tea garden workers and of the 44 tea gardens we have trade union branches in 9 gardens. Those are Kharjora, Fulbari, Batashi, Naxalbari, Azamabad, Merryview, Gangaram and Marionbari.

The above is the organisational position before the movement in this area took the adventurist course. It is apparent that the Kisan Sabha has its movement and organisation in a very small part of this big area. But objective conditions existed for spreading this movement and organisation. The local leadership, after its release from jail, should have done this which they did not.

The State Kisan Conference was held in October 1966 at Satgachia of Burdwan district. After much discussion some important resolutions on the movement and organisation were adopted. Eight delegates of Siliguri sub-division attended the Conference. These delegates did not put forward any of their opinion in the Conference.

### **Adventurist Tactics**

These delegates after returning to Siliguri convened a local Kisan Convention and for convening such a convention they did not either discuss with the State Committee or with Darjeeling DC of the Party. From this Convention they issued the slogan “Share-croppers will not give paddy to the landowner”.

During the General Election the whole Party plunged into the election battle considering it as the biggest political battle. The Central and State Committees directed the Party members to take the entire policy and programme of the Party to the electorate. But the leadership

of the kisan movement of Siliguri took no political and organisational steps in this regard. The result was the forfeiture of the deposit of our Party candidate in Siliguri constituency and our candidate in Phansidewa was also defeated and polled less votes than in 1962, but other candidates improved their position in votes. The local leadership of the kisan movement, instead of taking lessons from this election defeat and intensifying the political propaganda and activity among the people, took an adventurist course of action.

After the formation of the United Front Government in the last week of February 1967, none of the leaders, against whom there were cases and were on bail, appeared before the court.

The local kisan leadership did not take advantage of the new possibilities opened up before the kisan movement. In March 1967 they reviewed the movement at a local Party Committee meeting and came to the wrong conclusion that the United Front cannot solve any of the land problems, this Government may give some relief to the workers only, so they issued a call to seize land and organise liberated areas.

### **Launching of the Movement and Strengthening of Reaction**

Hardly a month after the formation of the United Front Government they came to the above conclusions. It should be noted that they were ready to give time of the Congress Government for years together but were not ready to give even two months' time to the United Front Government. Within two months of the tenure of the United Front Ministry they characterised the United Front Government and even the CPI (M) members in the Government as agents of the jotdars. They started a slander campaign that the CPI (M) State leadership was anti-struggle and revisionist.

After the local committee meeting the kisan leadership here held Kisan Conference without even discussing with the Darjeeling District Committee. And in this Conference they decided to seize lands and organise liberated areas. They did not give any memorandum to the United Front Government about their demands. All cases against kisan



workers of all the districts were withdrawn after the formation of the United Front Government but the leadership of Siliguri did not send the list of cases to the Government and so the cases could not be withdrawn.

After the Kisan Conference, the so-called struggle for seizure of lands was launched under the leadership of the adventurists. They seized lands without discriminating between big or small landholders. There are instances that lands of big landowners were not seized in spite of the possibilities. Some hundreds of bighas of Government vested cultivable fallow lands in the village where jotdar Nagen Choudhury was killed, was not taken possession of in spite of the fact that this area is a stronghold of those fighters. Again there are instances where these people have seized lands of many small landowners. Small plots of lands of 25 workers of the Merryview tea garden were seized. Among those 25 workers, 20 are Communist Party members. "No land for non-cultivators"—on this slogan they have seized lands of many middle-employees and petty shop-keepers. They have not even spared share-croppers, many of whom have been evicted by them.

All these actions of the adventurist leadership has done extreme harm to the kisan movement. Possibilities of widening the kisan movement, opened up after the formation of the United Front Government, have been lost. While in other districts the Kisan Sabha is spreading to ever newer areas and the membership is increasing, the Kisan Sabha membership of Siliguri sub-division remained as it was. The activities of the adventurists have strengthened the hands of jotdars and reactionaries. Under the leadership of Sampat Rai of SSP the jotdars have organised resistance groups and have created terror in the entire area.

Objectively this adventurist leadership is acting as accomplices of those reactionary forces who are conspiring to oust the United Front Government.

To get an idea about the peasant movement in West Bengal the following facts should be noted :

The Estate Acquisition Act (ceiling 25 acres) was passed in 1953. In 1954 another law was passed stopping evictions. Eviction was allowed only in the months of Chaitra and Baishakh by court procedures only. Any eviction other than that was to be considered a cognizable offence. In 1956 the Land Reform Act was passed, i.e., distribution of land that was vested with the government to the peasants holding less than 2 acres of land without any premium.

The total surplus land vested in the State upto 1966 roughly estimated at 19,84,065.03 acres.

The total land legally taken possession of by the State is 16,50,201.32 acres (current figure) of which these are the categories :

|                  |              |       |
|------------------|--------------|-------|
| Agricultural     | 4,02,735.72  | acres |
| Non-agricultural | 2,29,751.76  | acres |
| Others —         | 10,17,713.84 | acres |
| <hr/>            |              |       |
| Total            | 16,50,201.32 | acres |

Possession by filing cases of 1,08,938.52 acres upto January 1967, i.e., these are still in the possession of jotdars.

Every year something like 1,50,000 acres of agricultural land is distributed among the peasants on yearly licence.

This year upto first week of July 1967, 1,54,191.83 acres of land has been distributed. Distribution for this year started from April 1967 and is still continuing. All licences of last year are being examined, because many jotdars have taken licences in the name of their henchmen.

Over and above these vested lands, peasants are taking possession of lands under the tea gardens, tank fisheries and malafide transfers. These will be roughly 10,000 to 12,000 acres. The ultras in Naxalbari could not take possession of more than 100 acres including the lands of small owners and tea garden workers. But that too remained uncultivated, whereas one comrade in Fukuri Tea Estate got more than 100 acres of land distributed among the peasants.

### **Activities Of The Adventurist Group**

The adventurists have compelled us to place some of the inner-Party facts of the Darjeeling Party since 1965 which they have concealed.

It is true that majority of the Party members of Darjeeling district are workers and peasants and we are proud of that, but it is equally true that the state of political consciousness of these members is very low and our failure to develop them politically (mainly due to language difficulty) has made these comrades easy victim of the politically developed middle-class Party members and specially of those who want to impose their own opinion on these comrades as Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung's thought. The political consciousness of the members of Darjeeling District and Siliguri Local Committees is also very limited. Majority of the Party members of Darjeeling district and the District and Local Committee members have not even read the Party Programme, let alone discussing it.

One of the senior comrades of this district started circulating printed material containing his own opinion in different districts of West Bengal and even outside West Bengal. Neither at the time of the Party Congress in 1964 nor to the Central or State leadership afterwards, did he put forward his own opinion in writing. During this period, the leaders of the hill who were not yet arrested, specially the District Committee Secretary, Com. Ratanlal Brahman, wanted to come to Siliguri area, and wanted to hold meeting, but the followers of this particular comrade prevented it. Moreover this comrade used to write to Siliguri comrades in jail making unbecoming remarks about the hill comrades. In July 1966 the State Committee Secretary went to Siliguri and requested this comrade to stop circulation of his opinion in that method. He urged him to place his opinion in a Party way. He agreed to this. But after one month, in August, he again circulated another printed document. It is to the knowledge of everybody what frenzied efforts were being made by the Congress to isolate our Party from the people and to destroy our Party after we rejected the Dangeites and organised our Party and were evolving our correct Party Programme for the first time, and when

in Parliament the Government was placing the so-called white paper maligning our Party, this particular comrade started the circulation of printed documents containing his own opinion.

After May 1966, a separate Party centre began functioning almost openly in this district. The meetings and the decisions of the elected District Committee became formal and superficial and these comrades of the separate centre used to meet separately, take decisions and execute those. They called meetings of Party members and sympathisers of different areas of this district and used to push forward their opinions. They did not inform the District Committee of these meetings. They took advantage of their position as District Committee members to run their separate centre and thereby circulate their opinions. Their objective was to capture the district Party and the mass organisations. As for their first attempt, they mobilised their whole strength for capturing the leadership of the Darjeeling District Chia Kaman Majdoor Union at the time of the Union Conference. As they were against participation in the bourgeois elections so they continued their preparations during the elections. They kept aloof from the elections and carried on their own politics and activities. This was the main reason why we polled low votes in elections. In the Union Conference, however, they were defeated miserably on their resolution on their adventurist line and they were also defeated in the Union executive elections.

The District and Local Committee members met frequently, took decisions and executed these decisions in the name of the Party. And for the present movement, known as the Naxalbari movement, the decision was taken neither in the District nor Local Committee. They took the decision in their own centre. It may be mentioned here that eight delegates who attended the State Kisan Conference in October 1966 neither put forward any different opinion of their own nor opposed the official resolutions. But after returning, they held one Kisan Convention in November and there they decided not to give any portion of paddy to the owner of the land, that is, they started confiscating the whole paddy.

After the formation of the United Front Government they placed a review report in the Siliguri Local Committee meeting. In that report they stressed upon the limited powers of the Government. Because they said this Government cannot give anything to the peasantry they decided to seize lands and build liberated areas through armed struggle. These ideas were expressed through leaflets styled as Maoists of CPI. But when challenged in the Party meetings they denied their links.

### **Tactics of the Adventurist Group**

They have a long background. It would be sufficient to recall that this adventurist group started the propaganda of their political line in writing from 1965. On April 9, 1965 they published one leaflet “What is the meaning of the spontaneous revolutionary outbursts in India”. Here they wrote : “It is necessary now to come forward powerfully and tell the people forcefully that capturing of power area-wise is our way”. And further, “on the other side let us lay the foundation of the new people’s democratic India by building liberated kisan areas through kisan revolution”.

They continued publishing such leaflets without informing the Party and without the knowledge of the Party. Even after their discussion with the State Committee Secretary, they continued publishing such leaflets.

On August 30, 1966 they issued another leaflet bearing the title “Main task at present is to build real revolutionary Party through uncompromising struggle against revisionism”. Issued in the name of CPI (Mao group) here they write— **“Party members should realise today that in the struggle against revisionism this leadership of the Party is not our comrades, they are not even our fellow travellers. (Emphasis ours)**

Criticising the Election Resolution of the State and Central Committees it says, “nowhere, in their resolution, it is stated that this election is being held for facilitating imperialist exploitation and **indirect imperialist rule.” (Emphasis ours)**

Then again, “The call for continued strike throughout the State is nothing but petty bourgeois ultra leftism, and on the other side on the political question, their craving for electoral unity means tailing behind the bourgeois class.”

They issue instructions to the Party members asking them to defy the Party’s organizational discipline. They write : “Only through the destruction of the present Party forms and constitutional structure that a revolutionary Party can be built. So to abide by the so-called ‘forms’ and ‘constitutional structure’ is to dull the activities of Marxist-Leninists and to cooperate with the revisionist leadership”. At the end of the leaflet it says, “It is the task today to organise partisan struggles. Not even six months’ time is left. If we cannot launch this struggle before then we will face difficulties in organizing ourselves in face of imperialist attack.” Then in another leaflet bearing the title “Lessons of the elections and the duties of the real Marxist-Leninists”, in the section on “our task”, they say, “the main duty of the working class and the other revolutionary classes is to build liberated areas in kisan villages.”

### **Susequent Activities**

Subsequent activities of the adventurist group is manifested in the Naxalbari movement.

They decided their course of action according to their line of thinking at Local Committee meeting held after the elections. Then they began open campaign through meetings (in villages and tea gardens) against the United Front Government and its Ministers. They advocated adventurist tactics, for seizure of power, building of liberated areas, etc.

Anonymous posters, containing the above views were distributed in the town. Afterwards they decided to seize lands of the non-cultivators in the sub-divisional Kisan Conference. No discussions were held on this decision either in District of in the Local Committee meetings. Earlier they tried to establish their leadership among the tea

garden workers union (Terai). They used to hold meetings with the local leaders of the tea garden workers without informing the Secretary of the Union (who is also a member of the District Committee and its Secretariat). They were campaigning against him and for his removal.

As a result of the formation of the United Front Government some new organisations came to our side in the area. As for example, workers of Dadapur garden joined our Union leaving the Congress Union and those of Marionbari garden joined our Union leaving the Gorkha League Union. But the activities of these people with big theoretical verbiage instead of strengthening our Party and mass organisations have strengthened the forces of reaction and disruption. Those who do not support them or who are critical of their adventurist and empty talk are dubbed as agents of the revisionists or neo-revisionists. One may ask, why they did not leave this Party and form their own Party, if all except themselves are revisionists ? They want democracy inside the Party without centralism, so that they can do whatever they like in the name of the Party to force the Party to toe their line and if this is opposed they shout about arbitrariness.

Comrades will understand the situation which has been created and which called for action by the State Committee to reconstitute the District and the Local Committees.

## Tasks on The Kisan Front

With a short Introduction by P. Sundarayya, General Secretary of the C.P.I.(M)\*

### Introduction

*At the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of India, held in Calcutta in October-November 1964, it had been decided that the tasks of the Party on the trade union and kisan fronts should be laid down. The arrests and detention of the leading comrades of the party soon after came in the way of drafting and finalising these documents.*

*After the releases, at the first meeting of the Central Committee in Tenali in June 1966, it was decided that the documents would be drafted for discussion at the next meeting of the Central Committee. Accordingly, the drafts were presented to the session of the Central Committee at Nurmahal in October 1966 and were discussed. The resolution "On Work Among The Peasantry", finalised with all the suggestions that had been made, is printed here.*

P. SUNDARAYYA

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\*Published as a booklet in April 1967.



## **On Work Among The Peasantry**

1. The biggest weakness in the present Indian situation is manifested in the extremely poor state of the kisan movement and its organisation at different levels. Considered from the point of the immense possibilities present in the urgent needs of the revolutionary struggle against the reactionary policies of the big bourgeois-landlord Government, there exists a big gap in the growth and consolidation of the peasant movement. This is glaringly seen from the relative absence of militant mass peasant struggles in the countryside compared to the mighty actions of the working class, middle class employees and other urban poor in the towns and cities during the recent period. Does it follow from this that the present economic crisis is hitting hard the urban centres more than is the case with the rural sector, covering the great mass of the rural poor?

No, on the contrary, the devastating effects of the crisis—rising prices, increasing tax burdens, growing unemployment and destitute wages for the rural labourers, the disintegration of the handicraft industry and the hunger, starvation and misery prevalent in the countryside are more telling and oppressive. And yet, the extremely low level of consciousness and the poor state of organisation of the peasantry prevent these helpless millions from fighting in defence of their demands in an organised manner and on a sufficiently wide scale. It is precisely this weakness on the peasant front that is sought to be exploited by the big bourgeois-landlord combine, so that the evil results of the capitalist path of development and the crisis inherent in it are shifted on to the shoulders of the peasant masses in the main and other working people in general.

Despite the proud role played by our Party in leading numerous kisan struggles over years and the building of the All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) as the single authoritative mass organisation of the Indian peasantry and despite the glorious record of our Party in leading the

Telangana peasant uprising, the Tebhaga movement of Bengal, the Worli peasant upheaval in Maharashtra and several other mighty mass struggles of the kisans all over the country, the agrarian revolutionary movement on the whole remains extremely weak and disorganised. In order to carry forward the best fighting traditions of the AIKS and liquidate the dangerous weakness in the movement due to a number of political, ideological and organisational factors, it is incumbent on our Party to subject our work among the peasantry to a correct and self-critical appraisal, and draw lessons from it for future guidance and work.

2. This, however, is not a new phenomenon. It is the continuation of a weakness which the Communist party has been striving to overcome for some time but has failed. Several years have passed since the Party raised the slogan : "Turn your face to the peasantry". The political resolution adopted by the Fifth Congress of the Party, held in Amritsar in 1958, said :

"The failure to organise and develop Kisan Sabhas and Agricultural labourers' Unions, in spite of most favourable conditions, constitute the greatest weakness of the entire democratic movement. Without resolute measures to overcome this weakness, the democratic movement will not get built and the Party will fail to become a decisive force in the political life of the country. This must be made a part of the consciousness of the entire party and the tendency to look upon the work among the peasantry and agricultural labourers as the specific job of only a few cadres, the tendency to look upon peasant work as the work of a particular 'front' and not the most important task of the Party, should be resolutely overcome."

3. Unfortunately, however, no improvement has since then been registered in the work of the Party among the peasants and agricultural labourers. The All-India Kisan Sabha has failed to function as the live mass organisation of the Indian peasantry. Those State or lower units of the Kisan Sabha and isolated agricultural labourers' associations which have in a way been functioning in some parts of the country are

exceptions to the general rule of the absence of an organised kisan and agricultural labour movement. The Amritsar Resolution of the Party did not lead to any change in its practice.

4. This was due mainly to the deep-rooted reformist understanding prevalent in the Party regarding the role of the kisan movement in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal struggle, and the part played by different strata of the peasantry in this revolutionary struggle. This Right deviation manifested in our work on the agrarian front in a number of ways. It expressed itself, in the countryside, in our failure to study the agrarian situation and evolve correct slogans regarding the specific features of feudal exploitation and the forms in which the feudal relations exist in our country, regarding the class differentiation that was taking place in the peasantry, the capitalist relations that were developing and the nature, extent and degree of capitalism that was penetrating our agriculture; it expressed itself in underestimating and underplaying the militant role of the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat in the anti-feudal struggle and in placing undue reliance on the middle and rich peasant sections; it expressed itself in the reluctance to champion the specific demands of the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants, demands that were conflicting with the upper section of the peasantry and capitalist farmers; it expressed itself in virtually distorting the correct concept of all-in peasant unity in the struggle against feudal landlordism and building that unity based upon the middle and rich peasantry instead of building it around the rural labour and the poor, and mainly based upon them ; it expressed itself in the Right opportunist fear that organising and leading agricultural labour struggles for better wages and service conditions, for land and other democratic demands might disrupt the all-in peasant unity and weaken the kisan movement. To put it sharply, the Party had failed in giving the correct class orientation to the work on the peasant front.

5. All this was done under the erroneous notion of bringing about "all-in peasant unity" against feudalism and imperialism, the type of unity that virtually relegates the mass of rural labourers and poor

peasants to play a secondary and subordinate role in the kisan movement, instead of organising these sections as the main backbone and driving force of the movement. Such a course, in the first place, leads the movement to mainly rely on the middle and the rich peasant, and secondly, it restricts the sweep and tempo of the very anti-feudal, anti-imperialist struggle of the peasantry. The peasant unity and organisation so built, obviously, was not based on the rural labour and the poor peasant, and around them, but, unity of the rural poor around the rich and middle sections of the peasantry. In short, it was a bourgeois-reformist understanding of the revolutionary concept of worker-peasant alliance and its significance in the struggle against feudalism and imperialism, and also in the struggle for socialism. Working class hegemony over the kisan movement can be ensured only if the proletarian party approaches the peasant question on correct class lines, and places its principal reliance on the rural labourers and poor peasants, who constitute seventy per cent of the peasantry, while, of course, not for a movement neglecting or ignoring the middle and rich peasantry, but by drawing them into the struggle for the agrarian revolution. But our party failed to undertake as its main task the work of organising the agricultural labourers and poor peasants on the basis of their specific demands; of uniting them with the rest of the peasantry and of consciously training active cadres from the ranks of agricultural labourers and rural poor in order to make them the militant vanguard of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution.

6. The basic weakness of the pre-Independence kisan movement got perpetuated and further accentuated in the post-Independence years. In this connection it would be fruitful if we recall to our mind the observations of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International as early as in 1928. While mentioning India as the most capitalistically developed of the colonies of the world, it drew attention to the fact how imperialism had drawn Indian agriculture into the vortex of the money market and how class differentiation among the peasantry was taking place, despite the fact that several pre-capitalist and feudal relations were prevailing in our countryside. It was some four decades

ago that these observations were made. We should take note that this trend was further accelerated during the years of the second world war and, more particularly, since the attainment of political independence. With the coming into existence of a new class state, the state of the bourgeoisie and landlords led by the big bourgeoisie, a number of agrarian legislations were enacted and three five-year plans of development were executed. It would be naive on the part of anybody to think that all this has not enabled capitalism to make further inroads into our agriculture and brought about greater class differentiation among our peasantry. Hence it is imperative that we study the present agrarian conditions more closely and carefully, so that our efforts to tackle the complex and difficult problem of peasant unity should succeed and the unity of the entire peasantry is forged anew on a new and correct class basis.

7. What is the class essence of the Congress agrarian reforms and what actually is the agrarian programme of the big bourgeois leadership of our state? There is a tendency among some of our Party circles to assess the Congress agrarian reforms as ultimately leading the country to solve its agrarian problems even in the capitalist way as had happened in America or Germany, and comparing and contrasting them with the classical 'American Peasant Path' or the 'Junker Prussian Path'. Strictly speaking, in terms of scientific analysis, these reforms cannot be characterised as reforms intended to accelerate the growth and development of capitalism in agriculture, either by following the historically well-known 'American Path' or the 'Junker Path'. Any attempt to mechanically fit them into one of these 'paths' and thus to assess them would, surely, land us in serious mistakes on the agrarian front. Besides a number of special peculiarities present in the agrarian relations of our country, it is incumbent on our part to take serious account of two very important factors that distinguish the assessment of the Congress agrarian reforms from that of the 'American Path' and of the 'Junker Path'. They are, firstly, taking the size of our country and the magnitude of the agrarian problem, the Indian big bourgeoisie does not possess such an industrial base or capital accumulation as

was the case with the American or German bourgeoisie in the latter half of the 19th century; Secondly, the Indian bourgeoisie is faced with the agrarian problem at a stage of the world development, not when the bourgeois order is in the ascendant but when it is rapidly collapsing and the new order of world socialism is in the ascendant. As such, irrespective of its aims and ambitions, the present world social conditions have set serious limitations for building a modern capitalist society in India, and it is all the more so with regard to its efforts to develop agriculture on modern capitalist lines. The Indian bourgeoisie as it is objectively placed is incapable of achieving such a capitalist transformation of Indian agriculture. On the contrary, its narrow class interests and its desire to perpetuate its class rule, compel it to compromise and ally with feudal and semi-feudal landlordism, and pit it against the urgently-needed radical agrarian reforms. There is no 'path' open to the Indian big bourgeoisie whether it is 'American' or 'Junker' type except its present reactionary path, which is plunging the country more and more into the crisis, with no way out within the narrow class framework of the bourgeois-landlord alliance.

8. However, the bourgeois agrarian programme aims at achieving certain limited objectives. It seeks, in the main to reform the old-type feudal landlordism by inducing the landlords to break up and partition their big estates among their kith and kin, to sell some of their 'surplus' lands to the peasants and to take to personal cultivation and supervision of their farms more and more through employing hired labour and farm servants, instead of unrestricted renting out of their lands to the tenants as practised earlier. It also attempts at creating a narrow stratum of the rich peasantry who, together with the new-type landlords, can become not only the new political base of the bourgeoisie in the countryside but also can produce the limited surpluses of foodgrains to supply the Government for feeding the urban centres. The advancing of taccavi loans for purchasing agricultural implements, for digging wells, sinking tubewells, etc., the plans for the so-called intensive cultivation and the supply of seed, fertilizer and several such schemes under the newly set-up panchayat samitis are essentially intended to

cater to the landlord and rich peasant base in the village. These pitiful attempts of the bourgeoisie for the limited expansion of the market to get their industries going, and to produce the minimum surpluses of foodgrains to meet the demand of the cities are neither aimed at smashing the feudal and semi-feudal fetters on agrarian relations, nor to unleash the productive forces in a big way. They are not aimed at transforming our agriculture into a modern capitalist enterprise, but are intended only to modify and reform the earlier forms of crude feudal exploitation, and superimpose on its capitalist forms and relations.

9. The surplus value the new-type-landlord and the well-to-do peasant is garnering today is determined mainly by virtue of their title to those lands, rather than as returns on the invested capital in farming as such. The rural wage-labourer, who can be more correctly described as pauperised peasant, is neither really a free wage-labourer in the strict economic sense of the term, nor is an overwhelming majority of them able to secure even subsistence wage for their work. Barring few centres around cities and towns or certain areas where commercial crops are grown and intensive cultivation is prevalent, the wage that the average agricultural labourer is getting today has no relation whatsoever with the wages of the industrial working class in the country. It is the ownership on land by a meagre five per cent of households over more than thirtyseven per cent of the total cultivated area at one end, and a vast mass of the peasantry—seventy percent of the agrarian population—with no land or tiny plots at the other, that enable the landlords to purchase rural labour at destitute wages ; while providing them with an army of tenants-at-will, with no legal standing whatsoever. The congress agrarian reforms had created and extended a new-type landlordism which combines in itself both the features of capitalism as well as feudalism; they created a ‘tenant’ who combines in himself the features of the serf and the wage-worker ; and they created a rural wage-labourer, who, as a pauperised peasant forced by circumstances, is tied to the village and farming and has no other go except to accept any miserable wage-rate his rural employer is willing to pay. His struggle for better wages is inseparably linked with the

struggle for the abolition of landlordism and land to the tiller, because no appreciable improvement in the way of securing better wages is possible without breaking the land monopoly and drastically reducing the huge number of the pauperised peasant army. All these aspects will have to be borne in mind while formulating the programme on the agrarian front and building the revolutionary kisan movement, which strives to unite the entire peasantry in the fight against landlordism.

10. As a result of the inroads made by capitalism into agriculture and the agrarian reforms carried out by the bourgeois-landlord Government, certain changes are brought about in the class structure of the rural areas. A small section of the former tenants who could purchase the proprietary rights on land transformed themselves into the middle and rich peasants, cultivating the lands which they had come to own; a big section of the former tenants is thrown into the army of the pauperised peasants, to swell the ranks of the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat, and live a miserable life as either wage-labourers or tenants-at-will; and still another section of them continues as tenants under former landlords with whatever meagre new rights the new tenancy legislations have conferred on them and with constant friction and struggle with their landlords who try to evict them and to extract exorbitant rents even bypassing the tenancy laws, laws which can in no way be said to have fixed any "fair rent". Different kinds of intermediary rights for the feudal-landlord estates were purchased by the state, and the ryotwari tenure was uniformly introduced. The former feudal landlords had sold some of their lands, partitioned the big estates to adjust themselves to the land ceiling legislations, and several among them had begun setting up so-called farms under personal cultivation through hiring wage-labour, while, of course, continuing tenant exploitation in different forms, depending upon various conditions prevailing in different areas and states. They combine in themselves features of capitalism and feudalism. This strata, with their social influence and close links with the rich peasantry, have become the base in the village and partners of the new bourgeois-landlord state, and stand as oppressors and exploiters of the great majority of



agricultural labour and other toiling peasants. Closely connected, as these are, with the bureaucracy, the ruling party, and controlling such organisations as the cooperatives, panchayats, block samitis, etc., they have become the dominant exploiters in the village, and the contradiction between them on the one hand and agricultural labourer and toiling peasants on the other is becoming acute.

11. The present countryside somewhat resembles, in a way, what was described by Lenin in the year 1901 regarding Russia. He observed that in the modern Russian countryside “two kinds of class antagonism exist side by side; first, antagonism between the rural workers and employers, and the second, between the peasantry as a whole and the landlord class as a whole. The first antagonism is developing and becoming more acute; the second to a considerable degree already belongs to the past. And yet in spite of this, it is the second antagonism that has the most vital and most practical significance for Russian social-democrats at the present time.” It is on these lines that our Party was called upon to make a concrete study of the class changes brought about in the countryside, assess them properly, and work out its agrarian strategy and tactics.

12. These changes in the class structure of the rural areas, however, were not taken into account when the Party outlined its tasks on the Kisan front. The then Central Committee did, of course, try to assess the extent to which “feudalism was being curbed” and the “development of capitalism” facilitated by the congress agrarian reforms and other governmental measures. The assessment made by it also led to the formulation of certain specific slogans and demands. These, however, failed to give a new orientation to the Party’s work among the peasantry, precisely because the essence of the Congress Government’s agrarian programme, a programme based on the forging and consolidating of the class alliance between the bourgeoisie and landlords, is missed and the bankruptcy of the capitalist path of development in collaboration with foreign monopoly capital is not properly understood.

13. The revisionists, as seen from their party programme and its

explanation, still continue this Right-opportunist approach and even carry it a step forward. They look upon the present Indian state as a class state of the national bourgeoisie, i.e., the non-big bourgeoisie which is objectively interested in the accomplishment of the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist tasks; they have resolutely rejected the earlier characterisation of the state as a bourgeois-landlord state, and thus removed the landlord class from its share in the state power. They characterise Congress agrarian reforms as genuinely aiming at abolishing feudal landlordism, and assess them as having succeeded in "breaking the back of feudalism", etc. According to them, these 'radical' reforms were not fully implemented because of bureaucratic sabotage, and due to the bourgeoisie including representatives of landlords in the Government at the states' level. They advocate supporting of this Government in its so-called anti-feudal agrarian reforms and thus assist in their genuine implementation. Some of the Right Communists go to the extent of openly asserting that basic land reforms are completed and the slogan of redistribution of the landlords' lands to the agricultural labourer and poor peasant has lost its validity. Their critique of the Congress agrarian reforms is shamelessly bourgeois-reformist, and has nothing in common with the Marxist-Leninist approach to the problem.

14. Our Party in its Programme adopted at its Seventh Congress has made a sharp break with the Right-reformist understanding of the agrarian question, an understanding that had come to prevail in the Party for a long time. After making a rapid survey of the Congress agrarian reforms and other measures adopted by the Government in the post-Independence years, we come to the following conclusion :

"Today, after two decades of Independence and Congress rule with all its multitude of agrarian reform laws, land concentration remains intact and five per cent of the top households in the rural side possess as much as 37.29 per cent of the total land under cultivation whereas seventy per cent of the peasant families hardly possess twenty per cent of the land. It is common knowledge that the breaking up of the land monopoly and the distribution of land gratis to the agricultural labourers

and poor peasant and the abolition of their heavy debt burdens are the pre-requisites for releasing the creative energy and labour enthusiasm of the millions of peasants. This alone can form the foundation for tremendous expansion in agricultural production. Moreover, with the present agrarian relations, over a thousand crores of rupees find their way annually into the hands of the landlords and money-lenders by way of rent and interest which again is used not for productive purposes but for speculative trading and usurious moneylending. The abolition of these relations would thus provide an important source of capital for our industries and agriculture.”

Further, emphasising the importance of the agrarian question and how the entire progress of our country is hinged on the correct and urgent solution of the issue, the Programme states that “the agricultural and peasant problems are of primary importance to the life of our country and stand as the foremost national question.”

It is also sharply pointed out, “It is evident that without dislodging the present big bourgeois leadership which has allied itself with landlordism from the leading positions of state power and in its place establishing the hegemony of the working class over the state, no radical agrarian reforms in the genuine interests of the peasantry can be carried out.”

Then coming to the concrete task of building the People’s Democratic Front and the role and place of the peasantry in general and its different sections in particular, the Programme lays down that, “The core and the basis of the People’s Democratic Front is the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry. It is this alliance that constitutes the most important force in defending national independence, accomplishing far-reaching democratic transformation and ensuring all-round social progress. Further, it should be noted that the extent to which the different sections of the national bourgeoisie participate in carrying out the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist tasks also depends to no small degree on the strength and stability of the workers’ and peasants’ alliance. In short, the success or otherwise of

building the broad People's Democratic Front to lead the revolution to victory hinges upon forging the unshakable worker-peasant alliance.

“It is common knowledge that our peasantry is not a homogeneous mass, that capitalism has made decisive inroads in it and brought about definite classification among them. The different sections of the peasantry play different roles in the revolution. The agricultural labourers and poor peasants who constitute seventy per cent of the rural households and are subjected to ruthless exploitation by landlords, by their very class position in present-day society, will be basic allies of the working class. The middle peasantry, too, are the victims of the depredation of usurious capital, of feudal and capitalist landlords in the countryside and of the capitalist market, and landlord domination in rural life so affects their social position in innumerable ways as to make them reliable allies in the democratic front.

“The rich peasants are another influential section among the peasantry. The Congress agrarian reforms have undoubtedly benefited certain sections of them and to some extent they have gained under the rule of the new post-Independence regime. They aspire to join the ranks of capitalist landlords and by virtue of their engaging agricultural labour on hire for work in their farms, they entertain hostility to them. Nonetheless, heavy taxation, high prices for industrial goods and inflation constantly harass them so as to make their future uncertain. Subjected to the ravages of the market under the grip of the monopolist traders, both foreign and Indian, they come up often against the oppressive policies pursued by the bourgeois-landlord Government. By and large, they can also, therefore, be brought into the democratic front and retained as allies in the People's Democratic Revolution.”

Such are the precise conclusions outlined in our Party Programme regarding the task on the agrarian front.

15. The adoption of this Programme, however, has only aid the political-ideological basis for our Party to break with the old reformist-oriented outlook and work on the peasant front. This has to be followed by systematic work, deepening and concretising this new understanding

and by re-educating and reorganising the work of the entire Party on the correct class approach to the whole agrarian question and struggles. The struggle against revisionism inside the Indian Communist movement will neither be fruitful nor effective unless the alien class orientation and work among the peasantry are completely discarded. No doubt, this is not an easy task, since it is deep-rooted and long accumulated and also because the bulk of our leading kisan activists come from rich and middle peasant origin, rather than from agricultural labourers and poor peasants. Their class origin, social links and the long training given to them give a reformist ideological-political orientation which is alien to the proletarian class point and prevent them from actively working among the agricultural labourers, poor and middle peasants with the zeal and the crusading spirit demanded of Communists. Hence the need and urgency to rectify and remould the entire outlook and work of our Party in the kisan movement.

16. Mention should in this connection, be also made of the alien class approach not only to the work among the peasantry but to all mass work. Following the well-known principle of Marxism-Leninism, our Party Constitution enjoins upon every Party member "to devotedly serve the masses and consistently strengthen their bonds with them, to learn from the masses and report their opinions and demands to the Party, to work in a mass organisation, unless exempted, under the guidance of the Party." However, a new reformist orientation began to be given to the work of the Party in the years after the first general election, and orientation directed to parliamentary work in the main rather than to mass work on correct class lines. The result was that the former emphasis on work in the trade unions and in the kisan sabhas went into the background; mass work came to be associated more with those strata which are involved in the constitutionalist parliamentary forms of agitations and struggles. To the extent to which trade union and kisan sabha work was carried on, it, too, came to be more or less confined to fight in the labour courts, making representations to the authorities, voicing the demands on the floor of the legislatures.

17. A sharp break has to be made with this organisational pattern. A new and sustained drive to put the work of the kisan front on the new lines chalked out by the Party will have to be organised. The above mentioned provision in the Party Constitution should be strictly enforced. Every Party member should be asked to work in a mass organisation—the bulk of them in trade unions, kisan sabhas or agricultural labour associations. As for Party units in rural areas, they should look upon work in the kisan sabhas or agricultural labour associations as their main job. No Party member who is unwilling to work in the kisan sabha or agricultural labour association should be allowed to continue to remain within the Party. If at all there is to be an exception for any specific reason, it should be made by responsible higher committees. The State and District Committees should see to it that this provision is properly explained to every Party member and that they all carry it out truthfully and faithfully. This should be applied not only to members of Party Branches; but also to all higher committees of the party in the rural areas; all of them (with such individual exemptions as are sanctioned by the District Committee) should join and actively work in the kisan sabha or agricultural labour association. Even at the district Committee level, it should be made obligatory that Party members not connected with trade unions or organisations of middle class employees or artisans, or those not given any other specific assignment by the district Committee, should be functioning in the kisan sabha or agricultural labour association. No improvement in the work among the peasantry can be registered unless these organisational measures are taken.

18. Such a change in the organisational set-up of the party, however, will not by itself lead to any significant improvement in its work among the peasants and agricultural labourers. This should be combined with the evolution of a programme of work and appropriate slogans for the purpose. The State Committee in consultation with the district committees should, therefore, work out the practical demands along with which Party members should work in the mass organisations of the rural poor. They should make a concrete study of the changes in

agrarian relations brought about through the Congress legislations; the extent to which these legislations have given relief to this or that section of the peasantry; the futility of these legislations in giving relief to those who really require relief; the concrete forms of exploitations resorted to by the newly-emerging rich peasant or capitalist landlord class; the impact of community development and other projects on the various strata of the rural poor; and so on. such a study of the concrete problems of the rural areas, as they are being tackled by the bourgeois-landlord state, alone would help the formulation of a plan of action for the Party in the rural areas.

19. The ideological foundation for such a study has been laid in the Party Programme which, as has been pointed out above, has clearly formulated the basic task of the Indian revolution. All the problems and difficulties faced by the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses in the rural areas arise out of the fact that the class alliance of the landlords and the bourgeoisie led by the big bourgeoisie is trying to transform the economy in the direction of capitalist development without uprooting feudal and semi-feudal landlord domination. This general assessment of the class character of the present Indian state and its agrarian policies, however, requires further elaboration. But the generalised statement of the present situation and the broad slogans of People's democracy worked out in the Programme are sufficient for initiating a broad movement of the rural poor in all parts of the country. For, since the aim and direction of the Congress Government's agrarian policies is to strengthen the class alliance of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, it follows that the milliant struggles of the mass of peasants and agricultural labourers are to be directed against the land monopolists and landlordism of different hues and colours.

20. As described in the foregoing paras the struggle against feudal and semi-feudal landlordism, as it combines in itself the features of feudalism and capitalism, is a complicated process, and it is, in the main, a struggle for the complete liquidation of feudal remnants, even though in some respects it is directed against capitalist forms of exploitation. *Land monopoly, rack-renting of tenants, exploitation of*

*the rural labour by imposing on them destitute wages, the practising of usury in different forms, the discriminatory wage allocations on the basis of caste to the farm servants and labours, the exploitation of women labour by paying half or one-third of men's wages for the same work, and the denial of access to certain castes and tribes of the use of common tanks, wells and other communal properties, etc., are nothing but feudal in character.* The rousing of the people's consciousness and organising them for the struggle to liquidate these remnants is still essentially a democratic struggle, and an agrarian-revolutionary struggle. It does not yet become the struggle against capitalism as such and for socialism. Different state and area units of our Party should work out practical demands, basing on the concrete study of conditions obtaining there, for securing substantial reduction of rent, against evictions and for tenants' protection, for the distribution of cultivable waste land to the rural labourers and poor peasants, for better wages and service conditions, for securing loans at reasonable rates of interest and against usury, for implementing the law prohibiting untouchability, for house-sites to rural poor free of cost, for educational facilities to the children of the rural poor and for special grants and aid for the upliftment of the scheduled castes and tribes, etc. Local movements and struggles for such demands should be accompanied by statewide movements for reforms in the legislation, proposals for reforms being made part of the common programme on which the united front of democratic opposition is sought to be built.

21. However, organising agricultural labour and the rural poor and building a powerful kisan movement is not an easy task. Scattered and disorganised over distances in rural areas where communications are ill-developed, illiterate and culturally backward because of centuries-old exploitation and oppression, divided into different castes, sects and sub-castes, facing the constant threat of oppression and repression at the hands of local landlords, bureaucracy and the police the problem of awakening and organising the toiling peasantry of our land presents us with formidable difficulties. It requires a patient, prolonged and sustained effort on our part. There are serious limitations to launching



their struggles and winning their demands, if the movement is confined to isolated pockets and one or two villages. Concerted efforts should be made by our Party to extend the movement to ever-wider areas, while deepening and intensifying it where it already exists. But care should be taken not to fritter away the present limited energies of our Party by spreading the available cadres far and wide, into areas separated by vast distances and gaps. Conscious attempts should be made to develop these movements in some compact and contiguous groups of villages or taluks or districts in a state, so that these struggles are effectively guided, organised and fought and the growth and success of these struggles may rouse and inspire confidence in the other dormant sections and areas.

22. Experience has proved that the effort to solve the problem of redistribution of land through legislations fixing ceilings on landholdings are totally ineffective. The landlords and their hangers-on are clever enough to bypass all such legislations to keep with themselves the bulk of their lands. Our Party and the kisan and agricultural labour organisations should, therefore, not allow themselves to be fooled by the idea that the basic slogan of "land to the tiller" can be realised through the adoption and implementation of legislations fixing ceilings on landholdings. Our Party should ceaselessly educate the peasant and agricultural labour masses that the basic slogan of "abolition of landlordism without compensation and the giving of land to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants free of cost" is to be realised through the mass action of the entire peasantry. In fact, these struggles for the realisation of their basic demands are a part of the main revolutionary struggle, the struggle for the establishment of a People's Democratic State.

23. It is, however, possible for strong, militant and well-organised movements of the poor peasants and agricultural labourers to force the unwilling Government and landlords to distribute fallow lands to some extent. It is also possible, through effective mass struggles, to prevent the eviction of tenants from the land they are cultivating, and to achieve land for house-sites for the rural poor, free of cost, to a limited extent.

Such struggles against evictions and for the distribution of fallow lands will so strengthen the force of agrarian revolution that revolutionary redistribution of land will be possible at a subsequent stage. These struggles, therefore, are of particular interest to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants. But directed as they are against the landlords and the Government, no stratum of the peasantry is opposed to it. Those middle peasants who are holding lands under landlords as tenants are, in fact, interested in the anti-eviction struggles. There is, therefore, every possibility of making these struggles the united struggles of the entire peasantry. It is, however, the agricultural labourers and poor peasant who are immediately and directly interested in them. These struggles, therefore, can succeed only if the mass of agricultural labourers and poor peasants are actively drawn into them and widest democratic support is built for them.

24. However, on different issues connected with the peasantry, different strata of it react and participate in the struggles in different degrees basing on the direct bearing of the issue on their sectional interest. But issues such as rent-reduction, burdens of land revenue and cesses to the Government or local bodies, credit facilities, price of agricultural crops, irrigation and drainage facilities, democratic rights, supply of chemical manures and industrial goods at reasonable prices and several other demands are of interest to the entire peasantry. It should, therefore, be possible to unite the entire cultivating peasantry including the rich peasants around these demands and build their common movements to realise these demands.

25. At the same time, there are issues on which the interests of the rich and even middle peasantry and of the agricultural labourers conflict with one another. Such are questions of wages and conditions of work for which the agricultural labourers have to fight. The rich peasants, naturally together with the landlords, come out against the agricultural labourers on these questions. As for poor peasants, they are not directly interested in them since they do not employ wage-labour. Many of them are, in fact, simultaneously wage-labourers, (particularly in the non-agricultural seasons) and are, therefore, interested in the conditions

of rural labour. As for the middle peasants, they, too, employ very little agricultural labour and, therefore, need not be opposed to the demands of agricultural labourers. They are, however, pulled towards the rich peasants by several socio-cultural ties, as well as by the fact that they, too, employ a small percentage of wage-labour. All this makes the relations between the employers and wage-labourers in the rural areas an extremely complicated phenomenon.

26. It should also be realised that, while the agricultural labourers, poor peasants, middle peasants and rich peasants have their different (and sometimes even conflicting) interests, there is something which unites them all—unity against landlord oppression and the anti-peasant policies of the bourgeois-landlord state, led by the big bourgeoisie. On a series of questions like taxation, prices, allocation of finance for projects and so on, conflicts develop between the urban and rural sectors of the economy. Conflicts also develop between the landlords and rich peasants and the big bourgeoisie, on a number of issues. All these conflicts being with the framework of the class alliance of the bourgeoisie and the landlords, they invariably attempt to resolve them “peacefully”, i.e., within the framework of their solidarity as against the proletarian and semi-proletarian strata. Undue emphasis on these conflicts would, therefore, lead the Party to Right opportunist mistakes. It would, however, be equally wrong to dismiss these conflicts within the class alliance of the ruling classes as of no significance. Occasions may, in fact, arise when these conflicts among the various strata of the ruling classes can be so utilised as to isolate the big monopolist bourgeoisie—the strongest partner of the ruling class alliance, the most ruthless enemy of the proletarian and semi-proletarian strata. This, however, depends on the extent to which the agricultural labourers and poor peasants are organised and brought into action both on their own specific slogans and on the general slogans of the peasantry as a whole.

27. One of the most important questions facing the agrarian revolutionary movement in general, and the Party in particular, is

whether the agricultural labourers should be organised separately, or whether they should be brought into the kisan sabha itself. It would be incorrect here to make a rigid pattern of organisation for the agricultural labourers for all states and regions. Depending on the numerical strength of agricultural labourers as a stratum of rural society; on the extent to which the agricultural labourers are composed of scheduled or other castes; on the historical peculiarities of the way in which the organised peasant movement has so far developed; etc., it may be possible, in certain regions, to draw the agricultural labourers into the kisan sabha itself. This, however, would make it necessary for the kisan sabha to take up the wage and other demands of agricultural labourers and organise struggles for their realisation. This may not be possible everywhere; there may be cases where the mass of agricultural labourers who come from scheduled castes, tribes and other socially oppressed sections hesitate to be in one common organisation along with the upper caste peasantry. In such cases, it will be necessary to have parallel organisations of the cultivating peasants and of agricultural labourers. There may also be regions where not only have the agricultural labourers to be organised separately, but their organisations have more in common with trade unions, while in the larger part of the country, the agricultural labour associations have more in common with the kisan sabhas. It is, therefore, necessary for the State and District Committees to take full account of all the factors and take proper decisions as to whether, where and how the agricultural labourers are to be organised. But one thing to be borne in mind is that it is absolutely necessary to hold separate and sectional meetings of the rural proletariat to discuss and formulate their demands even in places where the kisan sabha functions as the united organisation of all.

28. Whatever the particular pattern of organisation, the fact has to be borne in mind that agricultural labourers have a dual character. As wage-labourers, they have to face their employers from whom they have to secure higher wages and better conditions of service. At the same time, they, in common with the rest of the peasantry, have to face the exploitation of the landlords. The breaking up of the monopoly of

land enjoyed by the landlord class— both of the old feudal as well as the new capitalist type—is in the common interest of the entire peasantry, including the agricultural labourers. This makes it necessary, in those areas and regions where the agricultural labourers are organised separately, to have coordination of work between the agricultural labour unions and kisan sabha. On the other hand, in those regions and areas where the agricultural labourers have been brought into the kisan sabha, it is necessary to deal with the specific problems of the agricultural labourers and to organise their struggles.

29. While directing the State and District committees of the Party to undertake the *political task of formulating the concrete demands and slogans of the peasant and agricultural labour movement as well as the organisational task of throwing the entire Party cadre in the rural areas into the job of building mass organisations of poor peasants and agricultural labourers*, the Central Committee wants to stress that partial struggles organised for the realisation of partial demands are part of the general struggle for the realisation of the fundamental demand of the Indian people— the replacement of the present bourgeois-landlord state, led by the big bourgeoisie, by a new state of People's Democracy, led by the working class. The day-to-day agitations and struggles of every stratum of the peasantry including the rural wage-labourers should, therefore, be combined with the systematic educational and organisational work of recruiting, educating and organising the mass of militants drawn from the rural poor into active organisers of the agrarian revolutionary movement. Such a process of raising the level of consciousness of the vanguard of the rural people should be based on the democratic functioning of the kisan sabhas and agricultural labour organisations on the one hand, and the further development and strengthening of the Communist Party among the mass of rural poor on the other. Such a parallel development of democratically functioning broad organisations of the rural masses (embracing the millions of ordinary cultivators and labourers) and the development of the consciously organised communist vanguard would be the best guarantee that the slogan "turn your face to the peasantry" will, in fact, be realised.

Every Party member and Party unit working in the rural areas and, in fact, our entire Party should awaken to the urgency of reorientating and reorganising our work on the kisan front in accordance with the new line embodied in the present document. The new revolutionary orientation and style of work on the agrarian front gets additionally emphasised in today's context because of the deepening economic crisis the country is passing through and the consequent social unrest that invariably accompanies it. Situated as our socio-economic set-up is at the present stage of development, the agrarian crisis cannot be viewed merely as a crisis in one among several sectors of our economy. The entire course of social progress and development hinges upon the solution of the agrarian crisis. It is precisely because of this realisation that our Party in its Programme speaks of the agrarian and peasant question as "the foremost national question". Again, it is not without immense significance that Marxist-Leninists always characterise the agrarian revolution as the axis of the democratic revolution. The profound meaning and content of these generalisations can be correctly appreciated provided we take a look at our countryside and analyse our economic situation.

As pointed out earlier from our Party Programme, a bare five per cent of the landlords have come to monopolise as nearly as forty per cent of the total land under cultivation while at the other end, as nearly as thirty to forty per cent agricultural labour and other rural poor possess nothing or next to nothing. Even according to Government's data, unemployment and underemployment haunt the villages and the agricultural labour is completely unemployed for six months in the year on an average and they are forced to hire themselves for destitute wages. Another biggest section of the peasantry which comprises of poor and middle peasants, with their tiny plots of land, is neither in a position to economically cultivate nor able to get the required resources to improve their farming techniques and production. Rural indebtedness is steadily mounting, and it has by now jumped to Rs. 3000 crores from Rs. 900 crores estimated in the year 1955-56. All these huge loans borrowed by the peasantry are from the rural users and landlords since such

facilities by the Government are denied to them. Reliable estimates state that as a result of the existing agrarian relations over a thousand crores of rupees find their way annually into the hands of big landlords and moneylenders by way of rent and interest. The country is plunged into a chronic food crisis, made to abjectly depend upon food imports from the U. S. imperialists under PL 480 and a total of Rs. 2500 crores has been paid on this account in the post-Independence years.

The peasantry is continuously fleeced and sucked dry by ever-increasing tax burdens and price manipulation. It is under constant harassment and oppression at the hands of the high-handed police machinery and corrupt officialdom of the Congress Government. Squalor, poverty, hunger and misery stalk the countryside while a handful of big landlords and top section of the rich peasants are able to garner the benefits from different schemes under the five-year plans. Full twenty years of uninterrupted Congress rule and its execution of the three five-years plans have demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that it is utterly incompetent to resolve the agrarian crisis and place the country's socio-economic set-up on a stable and sound basis. On the contrary, the country's agrarian crisis which is at the root of the present economic crisis has got further intensified despite the different forms it assumes.

The working class and its Communist Party, guided by the scientific thought of Marxism-Leninism alone, is historically destined and competent enough to give effective leadership to the agrarian revolution. As aptly formulated in our Party Programme :

“We cannot develop agriculture to a considerable extent and provide the country with adequate food and raw materials because the impoverished peasantry deprived of land is unable to purchase the most elementary agricultural implements and necessary fertilizers in order to improve its farming.

“We cannot develop our national industries and industrialize our country in a big way because the peasantry constituting eighty per cent

of the population is unable to buy even a minimum quantity of manufactured goods.

“We cannot improve the condition of the working class because hundreds of thousands of hungry people forced by poverty to leave the countryside for towns swarm the ‘labour market’, increase the army of unemployed and lower the ‘price of labour’.

“We cannot rapidly work our way out of cultural backwardness because the poor and hungry peasants, constituting the majority of the population, are deprived of material means to give educations to their children.”

Such is our Party’s comprehensive outlook in the matter of agrarian question. The future development of our democratic movement and the growth of our Party depends upon how effectively and quickly we shall be able to overcome the existing lag and shortcomings in our work on the kisan front and how speedily and effectively we succeed in organising the peasant masses for the fulfilment of the tasks narrated in our Party Programme and in the foregoing pages of the present document.



## **Tasks On Trade Union Front \***

### **Document Adopted By The Central Committee Of The C.P.I.(M) In Its Meeting Held In October 1966.**

Our tasks on the trade union front are directly linked with our political objectives and with the role that we assign to the working class in the struggle for People's Democracy— for a Peoples' Democratic Revolution paving the way for a socialist revolution. Our Programme states, "The People's Democratic Front cannot successfully be built and the revolution cannot attain victory except under the leadership of the working class of India and its political party, the Communist Party of India. Historically no other class in modern society except the working class is destined to play this role and the entire experience of our time amply demonstrates this truth."

#### **1. Raise Consciousness Of The Working Class**

The working class as a class can play its historic, political class role in the People's Democratic Revolution if the trade union struggle where it gains its initial consciousness, trains it, disciplines and raises its consciousness to discharge its political obligations.

Our Programme further states, "The core and the basis of the People's Democratic Front is the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry. It is this alliance that constitutes the most important force in defending national independence, accomplishing far-reaching democratic transformation and ensuring all-round social progress" (Pp. 44-45). Once more this objective of the alliance cannot be realised unless the trade union movement which is the cradle of class-consciousness is able to heighten it and take it out of the narrow bounds set by the immediate struggle.

For the Marxist-Leninist Party the tasks on the trade union front do not comprise of only the tactical line of running the trade unions as organs of daily struggle for the effective defence of the economic

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\* *Published as a booklet*

interests of the working class under given conditions. While defending the daily interest, they aim at organising a disciplined working class with revolutionary socialist-consciousness, drawing it nearer the Party, with its best elements joining the Party in hundreds, enabling the class as a whole to play its historic political role in the revolutionary struggle.

Herein lies the main difference between the revisionist-reformist and opportunist outlook on the trade union struggle and the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist outlook. The former wants to restrict the working class and the trade union movement to a purely economic outlook of daily struggle confining it at best within the limits of bourgeois politics and divorce it from the main struggle for socialism whose essence is the capture of political power by the working class. The advocates of this policy inevitably adopt a class-collaborationist outlook on the political front and equally so on the economic front and betray even the day to day struggles of the working class. The Marxist-Leninist outlook regards the economic battles as the small skirmishes during the course of the great class-battles between the two contending classes for power and, therefore, always bears in mind the vital link between the immediate and the political or final struggle. While attaching vital importance to the defence of the daily interests of the working class, and the building of its mass trade union organisations, it measures its own success and the success of the working class movement by the level of revolutionary consciousness created during the course of these struggles, the advance of the Marxist-Leninist Party among the workers, and the extent to which the Party is able to exercise its leadership over the trade union movement.

Marx's historic formulation that trade unions are schools of Communism means therefore the following : (1) The trade unions are organisations that must embrace the whole class; (2) the trade union must politically educate the masses in the spirit of Communism, raising them to the level of understanding their general tasks—the abolition of capitalism and establishment of proletarian statehood. In India they mean establishment of People's Democracy, the building of the People's Democratic Front with the workers' and peasants' alliance as the core; (3) the trade unions link up the Party with the masses, i.e., the vanguard with class; (4) they train the working class in the spirit of proletarian

internationalism; (5) they wage the struggle against capital under the leadership of the Party.

In short, the trade union movement should be so conducted that it not only unites the entire working class in the economic struggle but helps the political unification of the class under the banner of the Marxist-Leninist Party.

Sometimes our Party members fail to draw a distinction between the elementary trade union consciousness of the worker and his socialist consciousness. More often than not by class-conscious workers they mean workers who have realised their antagonism to their particular employer and are prepared to fight him in the economic battle. But this is not socialist class-consciousness.

A worker can be said to have developed socialist consciousness when he realises that he is destined to be a wage slave so long as the present social order lasts, that his struggle for emancipation is not only against a particular employer or a set of employers but against the state of the capitalist class which he must replace by a state of his own. Unless, therefore, he realises that his interests are in complete contradiction with the existing social order and that he must wage continuous political battle against the rule of the capitalist class, he cannot be considered to be really class-conscious. It is this class-consciousness that the Party has to gradually create in the course of the trade union struggles. It is the task in the trade union movement to lead the workers from the elementary trade union consciousness to this higher consciousness.

## **2. Alliance with the Peasantry**

It is of utmost importance that in the course of this very struggle the working class comes to realise who its allies are in the fight against the bourgeois-landlord state in our country. Our Programme correctly emphasises the need of a People's Democratic Front to challenge and defeat the power of the bourgeois-landlord state. The different classes that compose this front are the allies of the working class. It must realise the vital importance of winning them over for the common struggle. If we do not broaden the outlook of the working class in the

course of trade union struggles and educate it about the importance of these allies, its consciousness will take a distorted and egoistic form isolating it from its main allies and rendering it incapable of going beyond the confines of economic struggles while mouthing phrases about socialism and end of capitalist rule.

As our Programme states, the working class has to act as the builder and leader of the People's Democratic Front. Not only has it to recognise its allies but it has to gather them and guide them in the common struggle. The creation of firm ties between the working class and other allied classes, the sensitiveness of the working class about political happenings that affect the other classes and the preparatory work to evolve a working class leadership—all have to be created in the course of direct class conflicts which the working class wages for its own advance. The trade unions must continuously keep before the working class the situation facing the other allied classes, the facts about their economic exploitation, the way they are facing them, the attitude of the ruling class towards them, the repressive laws and measures taken against them so that the workers know that all this is part of a gigantic class domination which the bourgeois-landlord state exercises over the majority of the Indian people. It is through this propaganda and agitation that the soil is created for working class actions to defend the interests of other classes; for working class initiative to champion the demands of other sections for defence and extension of democratic rights thus laying the groundwork of leadership of the working class. From solidarity campaigns to express sympathy with this or that demand of other sections to protest actions against repression and actions for defending their democratic rights, every conceivable method has to be used by the trade unions to bring the different sections together and create a firm impression that the working class is their true champion.

The most important part of this activity is to build firm ties between the trade union movement and the peasant movement, between the workers and the peasants.

### **Our Programme States :**

“The core and the basis of the People's Democratic Front is the firm alliance of the working class and the peasantry. It is this alliance

that constitutes the most important force in defending national independence, accomplishing far-reaching democratic transformation and ensuring all-round social progress. Further it should be noted that the extent to which the different sections of the national bourgeoisie participate in carrying out the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist tasks also depends to no small degree on the strength and stability of the workers' and peasants' alliance. In short, the success or otherwise of building the broad People's Democratic Front to lead the revolution to victory hinges upon forging the unshakable worker-peasant alliance."

This alliance cannot be built if the trade union movement does not utilise every opportunity to tell the worker that the peasant is his best ally, does not focus the attention of the worker on the horrible conditions existing in our rural areas, does not inspire him to help the peasantry's fight against bourgeois-landlord oppression, organise solidarity campaigns to help the peasant in distress and make him realise that without the agrarian revolution neither the food problem will be solved nor the worker has any chance of being emancipated. The Party's slogan of workers' and peasants' alliance can never materialise unless the trade unions built by the Party make serious endeavours to make the worker peasant-conscious and champion the rights of the peasantry. It has been found in some places that the peasantry has helped working class strikes by collecting grain and rendering other help. But there have been very few occasions of working class help to the peasantry. Even when there are widespread famines affecting millions of peasants the working class of that state as well as in the rest of the country is not moved by the trade union organisation to do anything for the peasant mass. When famine and floods take place it is often the bourgeois humanitarian organisations that start collecting relief funds but not the trade unions. If this is the position with regard to these elementary duties one can easily imagine how the trade unions are silent on the basic questions affecting the peasantry. Unless we make a break with this anti-Marxist outlook, utilise every opportunity to build workers' and peasants' solidarity, make the worker sensitive on every attack on the peasantry, educate him on the importance of the agrarian revolution, our slogan of building the workers' and peasants' alliance will only remain a dream.

### 3. Weakness of Class Unity in Economic Struggle

To enable the trade unions to play the above role they must become an effective instrument of the defence of the economic interests of the working class, must be in a position to unite the entire working class in struggle. Without such unity and the intense class struggle that it implies the trade unions will not succeed in raising the class-consciousness of the workers and raising it to a revolutionary level. The wider the sweep of the struggle, the larger the participation of the class, the greater the class-consciousness. Marxist-Leninists can never therefore forget the immediate objective of the trade unions to rally the entire class for the defence of its daily interests. To neglect the task of day-to-day organisation and struggle and hope to raise the consciousness of the workers in isolation from it is infantilism which strikes at the very base of class unity.

It is true that the trade union movement in this country has been built on the immense sacrifices of the working class and trade union leaders. During the days of the British there were hardly any rights for the working class and whatever legislation there was was the direct result of working class struggle and resistance. The rising trade union movement though it could never embrace the whole class still compelled a number of concessions from the British and their successors, the Congress Government. The enactment of the eight-hour day, the right of annual leave with full pay and a number of other legislative measures after the achievement of independence were recognition of the growing strength of the working class and its organised movement. With all this it must be admitted that notwithstanding our long association with them and the prominent part we have played in building them, the trade unions have not succeeded as yet in uniting the entire class round them for the daily struggles, much less have they contributed in any significant measure to the realisation of the basic tasks which we as Marxist-Leninists expected them to perform under our leadership.

No doubt the trade unions wherever they exist have heroically fought

against the attacks on workers' standard of living. They have scored sometimes very big victories. They have also succeeded in giving much relief to certain sections of workers in big industries. In certain industries there are mass unions capable of commanding allegiance of the overwhelming majority of the workers and yet taken as a whole one has to admit that the trade union movement has failed to embrace the majority of workers even in advanced sections. Often a small minority is organised and the less advanced sections remain unorganised. True, under capitalism it is impossible to get every worker inside the trade union. Even then the present organised strength in India is much less than what it should be.

This basic weakness of the trade union movement is due to a number of factors—the method of functioning the trade unions, the reformist outlook of the leadership, the divorcement of the trade unions from the general political struggle and the reformist policy of economism on the trade union front, of class-collaboration in the trade union and political struggle, the failure of Marxist-Leninists to pursue an irrevocable line of uniting the working class while fighting against the betraying policies of the reformists, the failure to apply consistent tactics of united front in the entire sphere of trade union activity and finally the freedom of the trade unions from the guiding hand of the party, which in effect has meant a growing depoliticalisation of the trade union movement.

The weakness of the Indian trade union movement is in the first place reflected in the small strength of the organised workers. Out of a non-agricultural working force of 1.51 crores, only 39 lakhs were organised in 1964 according to official statistics of membership of reporting unions. Making allowance for the fact that some part of the membership is not reflected in this figure, still it is clear that the overwhelming majority of the workers are not even formally organised. Only a little more than 25 per cent can be said to be members of unions.

The following figures for some of the industries make the point

clear beyond doubt. Out of a total of 13.27 lakh textile workers, only 6.29 lakhs are reported to be members of trade unions. Tobacco which includes bidi workers has a higher proportion of membership—1.31 lakh members out of a total of 1.81 lakhs. In paper and paper products, 21,000 out of 54,000 are organised; in products of petroleum and coal, 11 thousand out of 19 thousand; in non-metallic mineral products (except products of petroleum and coal), 93,000 out of 2.23 lakhs; in basic metal industries, 1.33 lakhs out of 2.46 lakhs—workers in the iron and steel industry comprising 1.25 lakhs of the 1.35 lakhs organised; in manufacture of metal products except machinery and transport equipment, 68,000 out of 1.89 lakhs are organised; in manufacture of machinery except electrical machinery, apparatus, appliances and supplies, 32,000 out of 1.32 lakhs; in transport equipment 52,000 out of 4.18 lakhs; in railways, out of a total of 12.15 lakhs workers in 1963-64, only 4.22 lakhs were members of trade unions.

These figures tell their own tale. Except in rare cases the number of organised workers is below 30 per cent. And everyone knows that these figures are inflated. The rival trade unions and all-India trade union centres give inflated figures to claim representative character from the Government.

This conclusion has to be reached despite the fact that the number of unions registered is more than 11,000 and those submitting returns are slightly more than 7,000, i.e., more than 33 per cent do not submit returns. It is known that almost all important unions submit returns.

Apart from this the membership shown does not pay union dues for all the twelve months, but intermittently during the year. A very small percentage of membership is on the list of the union throughout the year. Of course, some well-organised unions are an exception to this general rule. Only in the case of some of the INTUC unions which collect trade union dues with the aid of the employers—you may find a large number of workers paying dues throughout the year. But here the contribution is not voluntary.



The weakness of the organisation is seen in the amazingly low income of the trade unions :

| Year    | Number of unions submitting returns | Income in lakhs of rupees | Monthly income per union in Rs. | Contribution per organised worker in Paise |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1951-52 | 2509                                | 50.84                     | 169.00                          | —  |
| 1955-56 | 3970                                | 82.94                     | 174.00                          | —  |
| 1960-61 | 6717                                | 153.09                    | 190.00                          | 0.36                                       |
| 1962-63 | 7109                                | 174.52                    | 205.00                          | 0.39                                       |
| 1963-64 | 7036                                | 192.00                    | 227.00                          | 0.41                                       |

The average per capita annual money earnings of employees earnings less than Rs. 200 per month in the manufacturing industries were Rs. 1187 in 1956; Rs. 1385 in 1960; Rs. 1465 in 1962; Rs. 1479 in 1963 and Rs. 1475 in 1964.

Not only a very small number of workers pay trade union dues; even these pay a very small amount. The financial condition of the unions is an evidence of the feeling of detachment which the mass of workers, except the most advanced ones, have towards the union. With these precarious resources what chance has a union to enter on broad activities for its members, or even efficient discharge of day-to-day responsibility ?

Except in the rich unions with its corrupt office-bearers, union officials are ill-paid or not paid at all. Propaganda, agitation leaflets, educational pamphlets—all are beyond the reach of the unions.

Not only the majority of the class is not organised in these primary organisations, those that are formally members of the unions are divided and scattered into a number of rival unions and all-India trade union centres. To quote a few instances of the utter chaos prevalent in 1964, the number of railway unions was reported to be 70 with a total membership of 4.24 lakhs; in textiles the number was 643 with a total membership of 6.29 lakhs; in basic industrial chemicals 150 unions

with a membership of 38,000; non-metallic mineral products (except products of petroleum and coal) 259 unions with 93,000 membership; in basic metal industries 183 unions with 133,000 membership; manufacture of metal products except machinery 211 unions with 68,000 membership; manufacture of machinery except electrical machinery 210 unions with 70,000 membership; and so on.

The size of the country, the fact that industries are scattered all over the country are partially responsible for the inflated number of unions. Another reason is that employers and Government often start bogus unions with no backing from the workers for their own purpose. And yet the fact has to be recognised that there are far too many rival unions dividing the ranks of the workers—a large number of them directly started by the ruling party, others are controlled by other political parties. The combined effect of all this is to weaken the daily struggle of the working class and render the trade unions ineffective to a great extent.

The fact that there are so many unions and all-India centres controlled by bourgeois political parties including the ruling party shows that the bourgeoisie through different bourgeois parties is seeking to get the control of the working class to keep it ideologically tied to itself. It is a known fact that generally these parties—with rare exceptions—have been taking a violently anti-Communist attitude and doing their best to disrupt the organisations under our leadership. Of late they have been joined by the Dange group in this.

#### **4. Rising Strike Wave**

It is in this background that we have to wage the fight for rallying of the entire class inside the trade unions so that they can effectively defend the daily interests of the working class and raise his consciousness so that he is able to discharge his historic tasks. The fight for trade union unity, the fight for establishing the leadership of the Party over the trade union movement is not just a fight for ousting the revisionists from a few unions, but for winning the entire working class—organised and unorganised—for defence of their own interests

under the banner of the revolutionary trade union movement. In this struggle the winning over of the majority in unions controlled by reformists and revisionists no doubt occupies an important place as they represent sections of comparatively advanced workers—in comparison with the unorganised. This struggle is inseparable from a fight against the opportunist outlook, the betraying practices of the reformist and revisionist leadership, in the trade union movement and against their class-collaborating political line which preaches bourgeois politics to the working class.

Notwithstanding the organisational weakness of the trade union, it must be noted that a large number of them have become focal points around which thousands, tens of thousands and even lakhs gather during times of strike and action. If they take initiative in time, give a call in time many of them including those led by the reformists and revisionists are capable of moving into action tens of thousands of workers. The central organisation of the AITUC, though ridden by bureaucratism and the corrupt outlook of some of its leaders, can launch into action thousands if it chooses a proper issue, in proper time.

Thus though the unions, and much more so the central organisation, have slender day-to-day ties with the mass of workers, yet because of the past struggles, they are looked upon as defenders of the workers' interests and the latter rally around them in times of strikes. Hence the great importance of a large number of the existing unions in the battle for working class unity in the trade union struggles and for defence of its daily interests.

In the coming days the trade unions will have once more to play the role of rallying the workers in the struggle for defence of its economic interests. Considering the times ahead, both the weakness and importance of the trade unions, it is necessary that a correct line is adopted so that the present weaknesses are overcome and the way is cleared for the trade union movement to rally the entire class, wage an effective struggle for its interests and play its revolutionary role of educating the working class in the spirit of socialism, of an irrevocable struggle to end the present system and the rule of the capitalists .

The wave of strikes has been going up and down, reaching a higher peak every two or three years and receding after a few concessions. But the ever-rising prices take away the effect of concessions and again force the workers to strike. The whole situation has been showing a growing degree of instability.

| Year | Number of workers involved | Number of man-days lost |
|------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1958 | 9.28 lakhs                 | 77.97 lakhs             |
| 1959 | 6.93 lakhs                 | 56.33 lakhs             |
| 1960 | 9.86 lakhs                 | 65.36 lakhs             |
| 1961 | 5.11 lakhs                 | 49.18 lakhs             |
| 1962 | 7.05 lakhs                 | 61.20 lakhs             |
| 1963 | 5.63 lakhs                 | 32.68 lakhs             |
| 1964 | 10.02 lakhs                | 77.24 lakhs             |
| 1965 | 7.79 lakhs                 | 61.73 lakhs             |

(Provisional)

1958, 1960 and 1964 were peak years both as regards the number of workers on strike as well as the number of man-days lost.

The textile, cotton and jute industries constitute the biggest single contributors to the number of strikes and the man-days lost. They are followed by the engineering industry. In 1964, strikes in metal products manufacturing (except machinery and transport equipment industry) involved 57,000 workers and caused a loss of 10 lakh working days—next only to the textiles.

Next to these generally come the coal industry and the tea plantations. The figures of strikes in individual industries also disclose the unstable character of the settlements and concessions offered. In a year or two workers in each industry pick up the gauntlet and fight for the defence of their livelihood.

The strike wave is growingly seizing the public sector also as is evident from the following figures relating to industrial disputes in the manufacturing group of the public sector.

| Year | Number of man-days lost in '000 | Estimated average employed in '000 | Time loss per 1000 persons employed |
|------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1959 | 32                              | 337                                | 94.9                                |
| 1960 | 77                              | 355                                | 216.9                               |
| 1961 | 63                              | 386                                | 163.2                               |
| 1962 | 165                             | 449                                | 367.5                               |
| 1963 | 2                               | 536                                | 5.6                                 |
| 1964 | 253                             | 600                                | 421.7                               |

Since 1960 the percentage of successful strikes has shown a tendency to go down. In 1960, 33.1 per cent strikes were successful; in 1961, 28.8 per cent; in 1962, 30.2 per cent; in 1963, 23.4 per cent and in 1964, 27.7 per cent.

The percentage of unsuccessful strikes has risen. In 1960 it was 30.5; in 1961, 29.5; in 1962, 30.7; in 1963, 41.0; in 1964, 37.2. The resistance of the Government and the employers is increasing and the workers find it growingly difficult to ensure success for the strikes. Besides, the fact that all these years only 30 per cent of the strikes could be successful speaks eloquently of the conciliation machinery, the official legislations and the claims of the revisionists to have scored triumphant victories for the working class. It shows that the present organisation falls far short of that required for a successful defence of working class interests. Apart from governmental repression which is intended to intimidate the workers and disrupt the organisation, this weakness is due to the fact that the scattered, numerous and often rival unions dealing with individual factories or a small area are unable to organise resistance of the entire industry or over a wide area.

Every alternate year since 1957 the number of disputes due to wages and allowances and bonus rises was above 40 per cent of the total disputes. Next in order come disputes due to personnel and retrenchment which oscillate between 25 and 30 per cent.

The reason for this is obvious. According to official statistics the real wage of the worker has been under constant pressure, notwithstanding the provisions of DA for certain sections of workers. In the base year, 1961, the real wage of the workers was on the same level as the miserable wage of 1939 under the British rule. Between 1952 and 1956, money earnings and real wage both increased by 15 per cent. By 1957 the process was reversed and the consumers' index started advancing rapidly while money earnings crawled slowly bringing about a reduction in real earnings. The real wage dropped down to 105 to be pushed to 110 by strike struggles in 1960 and to 116.2 in 1962. Thanks to the atmosphere of national chauvinism and the truce betrayal by the Dange revisionists the strike wave went down and the index of real earnings came down to 113 in 1962 and 102 in 1964. It has gone still further down in 1965 and is now perhaps below the 1939 level. No wonder then the strike wave has been rising. The present year has seen a number of big strikes. There was the textile strike of Bombay's two lakhs which lasted for 12 days. There was the strike of Madurai textile workers in which our comrades successfully applied the tactics of the united front drawing the workers following the INTUC and even the leaders in the common struggle; there was the rubber plantation workers' strike in Kerala, lasting for more than two months, and in which once again our comrades were able to make a successful use of the united front tactics drawing all the unions together. And there was the great strike of two lakh tea plantation workers of West Bengal.

These were accompanied by an unprecedented wave of strikes, protest strikes, and actions of employees of State Governments and of the Central Government, protest action of LIC employees and mass actions of school teachers and other middle class employees; engineers in electrical power houses; village workers, gram sewaks, temple workers, ministerial personnel in schools and universities; and agricultural workers—all have joined the ever-surging strike wave. The figure for 1966 will reveal an astonishing rise in the strike activity of the working class.

## **5. The Growing Crisis of the Economy**

But this is just the beginning of things to come. The coming months herald an intense all-round offensive against the working class and every working section. The economy of the country is being brought to a halt by the contradictions of the bankrupt capitalist path pursued by the Congress Government. The earlier stability of the economy based on continuous fleecing of the people by means of taxation, high prices, inflation and foreign loans and expressing itself in the continuous growth of industrial production is giving way to a period of uncertainty in production, reduction of the rate of growth, lay-off, unemployment, closure of industrial concerns, overstocking of consumers' goods of certain types and overproduction of intermediate and capital goods. In short, we are moving in the midst of a typical capitalist crisis, rendered more intense by the abject dependence of the economy on foreign, especially American loans, and intensified by the blocking of the agrarian revolution.

In fact, the Indian economy has been passing through a severe economic crisis since 1965 as a result of which the strike wave is once more in the ascendant. The Industrial Ministry's Review of General Economic Situation submitted to the Eighteenth Meeting of the Central Advisory Council of Industries stated, "Industrial production suffered a serious setback and the rate of growth declined to less than 4 per cent. This may be compared to our growth rates of 8 to 9 per cent, which had been attained in 1962-63 and 1963-64 and of 7 per cent in 1964-65. In the first quarter of 1965-66 hope had begun to rise, with a substantial increase of 10.5 per cent in industrial production. These hopes were, however, belied in subsequent months. Production rose by only 1.0 per cent in the quarter ended December 1965 and was virtually stagnant in the quarter ended March 1966. There was some improvement during the first quarter of the current year, with the index registering an increase of 3.5 per cent."

"Jute mills imposed a 10 per cent cut in production during the year and closed down for one week in order to phase the consumption of scarce raw materials. Shortage of vegetable oils forced vanaspati

manufacturers to cut production by 20 per cent. The drought necessitated power cuts which affected several industries including the cotton textile industry. A major strike in Bombay was the additional reason for the decline in the output of cotton textiles.”

“Industries which depend largely on imported raw materials were badly hit because of the cuts in imports imposed during the year. These include most engineering and chemical industries. Production of tin plate in a major unit and one particular make of motor vehicles came to a complete stop. The fall in the production of sulphuric acid thus had an adverse effect on several chemical industries depending on this basic product. Scarcity of non-ferrous metals also affected several industries such as the galvanising industry.”

“Despite these discouraging factors several industries were able to show higher production during the year. Among them are coal, iron ore, aluminium, cement, soda ash, paper and sugar.”

It is this creeping crisis that led to the abject surrender before the Americans and acceptance of devaluation by the Government of India. Both the crisis and surrender were the result of the capitalist path which could be pursued only by growing reliance on the Americans.

Devaluation has accentuated the crisis in a number of ways. It has raised the cost of industrial advance; it has lowered the foreign exchange value of Indian exports thereby intensifying the foreign exchange crisis; it has increased the burden of foreign debts; it has imposed a heavy burden on industries which have incurred foreign loans; it is compelling India to go in for forced sales abroad at the cost of the Indian people and finally it has given a big upward push to the price level reducing the purchasing power of the people. In every respect, therefore, devaluation has made the task of industrial recovery more difficult and is to lead to prolongation of the critical situation.

The net result of all this is going to be direct all-round attacks on the standard of living of the workers as a result of the capitalist attempts to solve the crisis at the expense of the working class and appease the imperialists whose debts can be paid only by increasing the exploitation of the workers.



## **6. Stagnation in Industries**

The Congress Government attempted to conceal the real character of the crisis by presenting it as one only due to lack of international exchange media and consequent fall in imports. They made it appear that the wheels of industry would run smoothly as soon as the American imperialists started their aid again. The shortage of foreign exchange is not just an accidental phenomenon but the direct result of the capitalist economy reared in dependence on American loans. In the second place, a crisis of market, an internal crisis of purchasing power is affecting the economy. Thus it is attacked on both sides and hence the crisis is much deeper. To quote an article in an economic journal, "The fact of the matter is that unlike in the early sixties, there are only a few products in which the economy faces shortage; among these are mainly automobiles, newsprint, fertilizers and alloy steels. Even cement which till recently used to be included in the list no longer looks so much in short supply. The demand for cement, exaggerated by the control system, is being brought down to more realistic levels and supplies, rapidly increasing, are fast catching up with it. The result is that the ACC has now to use the excuse of devaluation and higher costs to slow down its expansion programme.

"In most other goods a market surplus had begun to emerge much earlier; this was so, for example, in the case of glass, sanitary wares, tyres, electric cables and metres. To this list, a few more commodities—not only steel pipes and rayon yarn have been added recently, in both of which some sort of price-war is reported. This surplus is partly a result of stoppage of exports after devaluation (particularly of steel pipes). Finally cotton textiles, our oldest and largest industry, is in one of its phases of periodic slumps, spreading the cold wind to the textile ancillaries, particularly the machinery-makers."

The fact of stagnation cannot be denied, though it is difficult to pin-point any one factor as responsible for it. In any case the Government's hopes that imports liberalisation would lead to revival has been belied.

The over-production is seen in the fact that the public sector steel plants are forced to make every effort to export and get rid of the surplus on their hand. The latest to join this rank is the HMT; "for more than a year, there has been a recession in the demand for machine-tools, which has been felt by all manufacturers. Investa Machine Tools, as a result, was forced to merge with Telco." Now HMT complains of falling sales which have gone down from Rs. 11.14 crores in 1964-65 to Rs. 10.51 crores in 1965-66. Inventories increased from Rs. 4.93 crores as at March 1965 to Rs. 7.73 crores (almost 7 months' sales). The directors' report blames the general economic recession for the setback to the unit ... HMT which is responsible for half the production in its industry and has been setting up additional capacity had apparently not provided for an adequate appraisal of market demand. It is only now, with a recession staring it in the face, that it is making a long-term appraisal.

The index of industrial production for January-June 1966 (base 1956=100) showed only a moderate increase from the fall registered in July-December 1965. It showed a rise of 2.6 per cent as compared to the preceding half year and of 1.6 per cent as compared to the corresponding half year of 1965. The much smaller rate of increase in industrial output in the first half of 1966 (1.6 per cent) was partly the result of a fall of 7 per cent in the output of cotton textiles as against an increase of 5.2 per cent in the corresponding period last year. But the matter does not end here. The significant fact is that the index for capital goods industries has not only not shown any increase but has declined. Though the index for this category has declined by only 0.5 per cent, individual items having more than 50 per cent of the total weight of the category have declined sharply. Besides there is a universal decline in the rate of growth of all the remaining items. Railway wagons show a decline of 30 per cent, automobiles of 7 per cent, hand tools and small tools 7.3 per cent, cables and wires 4.8 per cent.

Similarly the index for intermediate goods industries has also declined by 3.00 per cent. Under this heading jute manufactures show a decline of 16.5 per cent; manufacture of leather and fur products of 8

per cent; fertilisers of 3.4 per cent; cotton-spinning of 8.1 per cent; manufacture of batteries 4.1 per cent; rubber products of 10.0 per cent; manufacture of bolts, nuts, screws, etc., 0.9 per cent. Under consumers' goods industries cotton textiles declined by 6.6 per cent; woollen textiles by 18.5 per cent though the index of production for the category as a whole increased by 1.1 per cent.

And now a large number of textile mills are already closed—the government figure admits closure of only 20 mills, while in reality forty mills are reported to have been closed down for financial reasons and more are likely to follow in the next few months.

The drastic fall in the purchasing power of the people was already creating difficulties for the textile industry. The capitalists of course would not think of reducing their profits. And devaluation has intensified the difficulties many-fold. The cotton textile industry is dependent heavily on imports of foreign cotton, mill stores, dyes, so much so that with all its exports it uses more foreign exchange than it earns. Devaluation has hit it hard raising the prices of all the materials that it imports. It now demands higher prices for cloth—i.e., attack on the people and the workers—to compensate itself against the difficulties imposed by the foisted devaluation. It is also demanding drastic attacks of workers' earnings to bolster its profits. Some textile owners are complaining that even the banks are not lending them money on the ground that the cotton mills industry is not a good risk.

Since the above was written four months ago, the economic crisis has deepened and its existence is admitted in official circles.

The deliberate withholding of foreign exchange by the USA for a long time, the rise in prices of imported goods, including capital goods, the increased burden on Indian industry due to increase in its foreign obligations, the uncertainty connected with the Fourth Plan, the reduction in the orders for wagons, etc., from the railways—all have accentuated the recessionary tendencies. Today the textile mills are forced to take an additional compulsory holiday every fortnight; nearly 50,000 workers from engineering concerns are already on the streets

of Calcutta due to closure, lay-offs, etc. Even the interim budget reflects this reality.

The Railway Minister who presented the railway budget said that in place of possible increase of up to 12 million tons in originating freight over the 1965-66 level, the “first ten months of the current year showed that revenue earning traffic has increased by only about four million tonnes. The lower level of revenue earning traffic reflected partly the relative sluggishness of economic activity in the country during the current year, particularly steel production.....”

This sluggishness had its effect on the railways which cut their capital expenditure and started attacking the workers. “Traffic capacity built up to meet traffic demands as assessed from time to time in consultation with the Planning Commission and the concerned Ministries not having been fully used during the year, further capital expenditure on creation of extra capacity has been pruned substantially during the year, as will be evident from the deep reduction in the provision for works and the rolling stock. On the revenue side, efforts to secure economy in operating costs consistent with efficiency and safety have been intensified. A ban was placed in August 1966 on the recruitment of ministerial staff for administrative offices, and even normal wastage on account of retirement, discharge, etc., are not being made up by fresh recruitment. Rationalisation and simplification of procedures and the elimination of unproductive work has been undertaken in order to accommodate the consequent reduction in the number of staff; and it is also proposed to transfer gradually to machines more and more items of routine work, which will increase the efficiency and output of workers and thus secure maximum economy.”

The chain reaction has started. Sluggishness in economy has led to lower rail receipts; which in its turn has led to lower capital expenditure in railways and curtailment of new recruitment and reduction of staff by introducing machines to do men’s jobs. And now the lower capital expenditure of railways had led to a drastic reduction of orders for the engineering industry which is one of the reasons for the shut-down of engineering concerns in Calcutta.

The Finance Minister describes the economic situation as follows : “The growth of industrial output had slowed down considerably in the final year of the Third Plan. In the current financial year also production has increased rather slowly. The slackness in industrial growth was a widespread phenomenon and there was, in fact, an absolute drop in production in many agriculture-based industries, such as cotton textiles, vanaspati and jute.

“On the other hand, industries catering to the requirements of agriculture—such as those producing diesel pumping sets or pesticides (read : catering mainly to the needs of better-off farmers) have fared quite well.”

“The failure of monsoons affected industry in many ways. First, agricultural raw materials were scarce and their prices were high. Secondly, farm incomes were low and consequently the effective demand for manufactured consumer goods was depressed. Thirdly, high prices of food diverted urban purchasing power away from manufactured articles. (Is there any surprise that cloth production fell a few months ago ?) Fourthly, economy measures introduced by the Government designed to limit monetary expansion at a time when food was scarce, created areas of depressed demand for certain categories of manufacture, for example railway wagons and machine-tools”—first official admission that the Central Government is responsible for the unemployment of thousands of engineering workers in Calcutta.

## **7. All Features of a Crisis**

What Morarji Desai has described is not just sluggishness, it has all the typical features of a capitalist crisis, reinforced by the agrarian crisis of an underdeveloped country. The drought and failure of monsoons over certain parts are not the cause of the crisis. They have only accentuated it, unmasking the so-called progress of Indian agriculture under Congress rule, the hand-to-mouth existence of agriculture and the utter untenability and bankruptcy of the agrarian relations and set-up established by the Congress Government.

It also shows that Congress efforts to drag India along the capitalist path are leading to a break-down of the economy. Inflation, that weapon of looting the people to accumulate capital in the hands of the big capitalists, the handy weapon of an ambitious big bourgeoisie of an underdeveloped country, is at last coming up against its own contradiction and restricting the very internal market it is supposed to loot. That market, hitherto kept safe from foreign hands by means of import duties, is itself narrowing under the impact of rising prices.

It should be realised that the crisis is being intensified by our reliance on the capitalist economy of the western countries and heavy indebtedness to the USA. The Finance Minister had to admit that "one of the reasons for the failure of our export was the recessionary tendency in the capitalist countries. Demand conditions in some of our major markets abroad have also been .. These and other developments in world market have tended to depress the value of our traditional exports, for example tea, jute, manufacture of cotton fabrics."

Secondly, the balance of payments problems of countries like the USA and Britain have also had their impact on our crisis. It has led to growing American pressure on our economy, doling out of foreign exchange and exorbitant demands in return for it. The price of some of the goods that we have to purchase in return for this free exchange is 25 to 30 per cent higher than the world market price and it puts an unbearable strain on our economy. American refusal to allow free non-project foreign exchange for supplying the needs of some of our heavy plans is causing dislocation and leading to a curtailment of industrial growth.

The debt burden also has risen heavily. By March 1968, the Government of India's foreign debt will be 5,413 crores of rupees, nearly 50 per cent of which is borrowed from the American Government and American institutions. India's repayment liabilities already amount to Rs. 195 crores in 1967-68. During the coming five years, according to the calculations of the Planning Commission, the total liabilities will be 1300 crores of rupees, an average annual charge of 260 crores of rupees. Considering the fact that our exports amount to only Rs. 800

crores, the debt payment represents a colossal sum which virtually mortgages our export trade and with it our economy to our foreign imperialist creditors.

The role of defence expenditure in the accentuation of this crisis must also be realised. A bourgeois nationalist outlook with its chauvinism towards socialist China and Pakistan dare not fight against this imposition of colossal defence expenditure on a people ground down by poverty. Today it is leading to complete distortion of our economy and threatens the jobs of thousands of workers because of the heavy strain it puts on our production. A drastic reduction in our defence expenditure must be one of the urgent demands of the trade union movement.

### **8. Offensive Against the Working Class**

There is already an open attack on the dearness allowance of textile workers. The Ahmedabad Millowners' Association has given open notice to reduce the DA. The Bombay millowners had announced similar intentions a few months earlier. The Maharashtra Government had set an example to the millowners by compelling the workers either to forego DA or accept a lesser amount in mills closed by the capitalists and taken over and run by the Government.

Thus the textile workers who form the biggest single contingent of strikers in any year and account for the largest number of man-days lost are already facing the offensive.

It is, however, becoming a general offensive. Everywhere demands for bonus are being resisted and the Government itself is slyly supporting the resistance. The Bonus Act— that treacherous product of Dange's subservience to the Government in the name of unanimity— is now used against the workers. The wage boards have been adopting delaying tactics— to ward off acceptance of wage- increase. The Tea Wage Board took six years to release its recommendations. In many cases the workers have to fight for arrears of wages for work done. There has been an enormous increase in workload. A general offensive to reduce labour costs by retrenchment is also in the offing. The foreign

oil companies have taken the lead by introducing computers to reduce the strength of the clerical workers. The banks have also introduced IBM machines.

The Governments-owned LIC is introducing automation threatening the jobs of more than 30,000 office workers. The Government is embarking upon retrenchment of Government servants. The industrial workers are faced with a similar offensive. The textile and engineering workers are already undergoing it in the shape of lay-off, closure, lock-outs. This is likely to be intensified by new labour-saving methods of exploitation, increase of work-load, introduction of automatic looms, etc.

Wage-cuts, cuts in DA and bonus, retrenchment and dismissals, new methods of exploitation throwing large sections out of employment—these are the ways in which the capitalists and the Government seek to pass on the burdens of the crisis to the workers.

The Government has announced its policy of delinking dearness allowance from the cost of living index in connection with the Fourth Plan. They have also made it clear that now there is no question of a need-based minimum wage. Thus there is hardly any room left for concessions. The delinking of DA from the cost of living index, the contemplated retrenchment of Government workers, the open advocacy of a policy of wage-cuts—all these are proposed in the name of follow-up measures after devaluation hiding their real character as measure to solve the crisis at the expense of the workers.

One feature of this offensive should be particularly noted. The offensive to reduce labour costs has wider implications than a solution of the internal crisis of the economy. The American imperialists to whom the economy is being mortgaged are also insistent that the latest method of exploitation be introduced in India so that when private monopoly capital decides to enter India the way should be clear for the most brutal methods of extraction of profits.

The USA is thinking of opening a chain of private fertilizer factories in India and is pressing the Government to accept its terms. They



naturally include full freedom for profits—which will mean curb on labour demands and facilities for the introduction of the latest methods of exploitation. It is well known that in the name of more efficient methods of production, the Americans have been pressing the Government to give full freedom to the private capitalists, especially American monopolists, to loot the workers and the country. The refusal hitherto of the Government to intervene in the dispute of the Calcutta employees of the American Caltex Company is significant.

In this crisis, therefore, the working class will come face to face with not only the capitalist class and its Government; it will also have to face the direct results of the growing American domination over our economy. The accentuation of the crisis through devaluation and all the consequences following from it will be present as day to day realities. No longer can the trade union movement ignore foreign imperialism as it has been generally doing since independence.

It is in this background of looming class battles in which every section of the working class—even the most backward—will be found to participate because of the all-pervading offensive that we have to outline our tasks. The question is whether the trade union movement, following its traditional chaotic methods will just tail behind the scattered elemental struggles to be easily defeated by the Government or whether by proper guidance and leadership it will unite them in a class battle, to defend their immediate interests and raise their consciousness from the trade union to a socialist revolutionary level.

This time the trade union struggle will have tremendous national significance for in defending his livelihood the worker will be defending also the independence of the economy of the country from American imperialism.

## **9. Repression on Trade Unions**

Just as there are great opportunities in the present situation, the difficulties also must be realised. No doubt this year and in the preceding year the working class has given a splendid response to call for mass-strikes in the shape of the bandhs organised for general democratic

and popular economic issues. Its participation in these total and mass actions has broadened the sweep of the movement. In individual strikes directly affecting them the workers have often shown great heroism in withstanding police repression, mass arrests and threat of dismissals. The militancy of the working class is on the rise. But it cannot be said that its consciousness is any higher than the other sections of the urban population.

But now in the coming struggle this must change, for the struggle will be faced with totally different conditions. The working class rights are being rapidly curtailed. The recent struggles, students' struggles for instance, have been ruthlessly dealt with. The Government is trying to rule with class terror—the police is being instructed not just to maintain 'law and order' but hunt out the people with a view to crushing their resistance. All these methods will now be increasingly used against working class struggles, making normal functioning of trade unions during strikes impossible.

This means that unless the working class militants, the trade union cadres are fired with the spirit of class pride, are inspired to sacrifice their all for their own class and up with hardships for their class brethren, the battle cannot be won. Trade union leaders themselves may have to set examples of personal suffering and courage to inspire their followers. This ABC has to be repeated today because we will be dealing with totally new cadres who have seen very little of the repression of the earlier years. And in recent years the cadre has been accustomed to the corrupt trade union boss who orders them about and generally does the trick either in the court or private conclaves with the employers.

To revive the old tradition of militancy, of capacity to sacrifice, of class pride in the union, it is essential to undertake at the earliest the education of new and old cadres and educate them in the real meaning—political and class meaning—of the impending battle.

### **10. United Front from Below and Above**

The working class not be able to defend itself, it will not be able to defeat the offensive of the capitalists and the Government unless it is

able to resist it unitedly and act as a class in this resistance. It will not be able to raise its consciousness above the trade union level unless the trade unions rally all its strength in the coming struggles.

Bearing in mind the weak organisational position of the trade unions, the fact that the organised trade union movement is itself divided and that we ourselves from a far from dominating and leading force in the organised trade unions—the other sections being stronger than us in many industries and equal to us in some industries—the task of mobilising the working class can only be done through a persistent prusuit of united front tactics. The objective of the unity of our class in the coming struggles, cannot be achieved by attempting to ride the strike wave on our own. Such a tactic will definitely isolate us from the huge mass of workers that will be set in motion in all centres—the non-committed mass and the mass under the influence of other trade unions and political parties.

The following figures will further prove the necessity of united front.

*Industrial disputes classified according to affiliation of workers' unions to central workers' organisations— 1964.*

| Central unions  | No. of disputes |              | No. of workers involve |              | No. of man-days lost |              |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
|                 | No.             | %            | No.                    | %            | No.                  | %            |
| AITUC           | 374             | 36.9         | 1,26,557               | 26.3         | 11,70,435            | 27.8         |
| INTUC           | 317             | 31.3         | 2,07,280               | 43.1         | 16,24,709            | 38.6         |
| HMS             | 173             | 17.1         | 65,459                 | 13.6         | 6,05,630             | 14.4         |
| UTUC            | 34              | 3.4          | 8,463                  | 1.8          | 1,11,082             | 2.7          |
| Multiple unions | 115             | 11.3         | 73,453                 | 15.2         | 6,94,986             | 11.5         |
|                 | <u>1013</u>     | <u>100.0</u> | <u>4,81,214</u>        | <u>100.0</u> | <u>42,06,842</u>     | <u>100.0</u> |

Though these figures are not fully representative they are sufficient to indicate the fact that a large proportion of strikes were led by reformist sections. In the strikes led by the AITUC the revisionists also had their share.

The most consistent and determined operation of the tactics of united front from below constitutes the real bolshevik method of mobilising the masses. It has to be supplemented by offers of united front from

the top which at times is a pre-condition of united front from below. Only the broad united front, the starting point of which is the spontaneous striving of the masses towards unity in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, will rally the organised and unorganised, the advanced and backward, workers belonging to all shades of trade unions and political parties in a successful bid to defend their interests.

That is the only method of overcoming our present weakness and coming out of our present position as one of the many trade union groups, to occupy the position of the leading force in the trade union movement.

What is meant by united front tactics? It does not mean and cannot mean the surrender of our position to the reformists and revisionists. It does not also mean an abandonment of the ideological and organisational struggle against the revisionists and reformists, the struggle to eliminate their influence and ensure the leadership of the Party over the trade union and the growing unification of our class round the Party. This is an opportunist concept of the united front which will only betray the working class in its political as well as daily struggle.

The united front tactic bases itself on the fact that because of the capitalist offensive there is a spontaneous urge among the mass of workers—most of them not attached to any union—to unite. It crosses ideological, political and organisational barriers. It includes the rank and file of the reformist and revisionist unions also. This spontaneous urge is itself a challenge to the reformist and revisionists whose main role is to divide the ranks of the workers so that the class struggle does not get sharpened.

It addresses itself to the task of rallying and uniting the unorganised and backward workers who have refused to join any union. It addresses itself to the task of winning over the ranks of the revisionist and reformist unions despite the manoeuvres of the leadership.

Its aim is to sharpen the struggle for the defence of working class interests. To achieve this it has to fight at each stage the disruptive tactics of the revisionist and reformist leadership even while offering to have a front with them for defeating the capitalist offensive. The

fight against the reformist and revisionist leadership, in the context of united front does not take the form of general political and ideological exposure, but is connected with their reactionary or harmful attitude on questions directly and immediately affecting the workers' demands or tactics and positions in connection with action and struggle. It is a part of our general political fight against them, but it addresses itself here only to trade union questions and policies on concrete issues.

The united front, besides sharpening the class struggle, also enables the working class to judge and estimate the real character of the reformist and revisionist policies, strengthen the class-outlook of the workers, increases confidence in their ability to resist the capitalists and the Government.

### **11. Opportunist and Sectarian Mistakes**

All this, of course, is possible only if the Communists pursue a correct united front tactics—and do not commit either opportunist or sectarian mistakes.

If we forget that to sharpen the class struggle and forge the unity of the workers we must consistently defeat the disruptive manoeuvres of the revisionists and reformists, that real unity in action has to be won despite the opposition of the revisionists we will be committing an opportunist error.

The main pillar of our tactics is united front from below. That is so because there is a powerful urge for unity in the masses and without giving expression to it, without strengthening and turning it into an active force the reformist and revisionist leaders will not have joint action or unity of action. Without pressure from below, from the ranks and the masses in general, the reformists will continue evade joint action and weaken and disrupt the trade union struggle.

The efforts for united front from below includes constant appeals to all sections of workers, not directly under our influence, for unity and joint action in face of common danger, for pressing the leaders of other organisations to help the struggle for unity. It consists of joint actions at the base, in factories, under our initiative drawing workers from all sections. It includes calling wider conferences, meetings under

the auspices of our union, or joint auspices, once more drawing together far wider sections of workers than the immediate loyal following of the union. In the course of this struggle it becomes necessary to make direct appeals to the leaders of rival unions and it should be done; sometimes this may have to be done at the very start. It demands of our cadres and followers that they develop close contacts, fraternal relations with other workers and appear before them as serious builders of workers unity as people who are devoted to the cause of working class unity. The idea that some workers are our workers and others are theirs or not ours must go from the minds of our comrades.

All this persistent effort for unity must end in united front for common action on immediate issues and preparation to meet the common offensive.

We should take the initiative in industrial areas, to put before the workers the maturing capitalist crisis and what it means to the working class, and the need for immediate unity. They must learn from us the economic developments, about the growing struggles and our sincere efforts to promote unity. In the course of this powerful appeal we should criticise the reactionary policies of the reformists and the revisionists. Our experience both at Madurai and in Kerala shows how potent and powerful the united front from below can be. The pressing need of the time is such, the attacks are so shaping the minds of the workers, that even the leaders cannot always set their face against joint action, provided we pursue our tactics of united front from below. In Madurai we started with fraternal relations and appeals for action at the base, earned the support of the INTUC ranks for common demands and the latter saw to it that their union also supported the common struggles. In Kerala also the united front included not only the revisionists but also the INTUC union in the strike of the rubber workers which lasted for more than six weeks.

One of the essentials of united front tactics, and an important lever to carry our trade union influence to the masses beyond our direct influence, is the organisation of solidarity class actions in support of other workers.

Living in an atmosphere of reformism and revisionism all these years we forget this elementary duty not only in respect of actions organised by others but by ourselves also. During the entire six weeks' struggle of the rubber workers of Kerala not one solidarity action was organised anywhere in India including Kerala. During the several weeks' struggle of the Madurai textile workers' strike, again solidarity actions were not organised at least outside Tamilnad. The comrades concerned also did not think it necessary to suggest this support.

If this is sometimes the level of our consciousness—including the Party committees'—how can we blame the workers.

Failure to work in reformist unions, failure to develop solidarity actions with workers on a strike means leaving them completely in the hands of the reformists. Solidarity actions constitute a patent weapon of lifting the worker out of his immediate surroundings, raising his consciousness and are an effective instrument of building united front with the strikers, unorganised masses and the followers of reformists.

Besides, under present-day conditions they help to fight chauvinism which seeks to divide the working class of one state from another and asserts the class unity of the working class.

To facilitate the tactic of united front from below we may have and often will have to give calls for united front from above—depending on the strength of the reformist and revisionist leadership and our own ability or inability to move the uncommitted mass. To win over the workers under the leadership of the reformists and revisionists is a vital part of our tactic as they represent comparatively an advanced organised section of the working class. And these sometimes do not respond to your appeal for unity unless you appeal to their union and leaders. Their organisational loyalty, their pride in their union is exploited by the revisionists to obstruct the united front. It becomes generally necessary to start the offensive from below with prospects for a joint action at top, a joint conference body or agitation committee or a strike preparation committee of unions or leaders.

At the same time it must be noted that a joint body of two or several unions and leaders can never replace the struggle for united front from

below. Such tactics are opportunist in concept; they do not unleash the initiative of the mass for unity, and leave room for betrayal by the reformists at the opportune moment. Through struggle from below we carry the initiative for unity to the rank and file of the workers, and take it out of the hands of the reformist leaders. That is the only guarantee of successful struggle. Therefore, even though appeals are made to the reformist leadership, even though joint action bodies of leaders are formed, there should be no relaxation of united front tactics from below. By relying only on top committees we perpetuate the division between workers belonging to different unions and the leadership of the revisionists and reformists over them.

This is one of the main deviations of recent times. In places where we have pursued united front tactics with the aid of top committees we have often failed to make a dent in the reformist and revisionist influence though there have been common actions involving thousands because of failure to work at the bottom.

It is necessary that in all localities, areas and industries we seize certain vital issues of the working class for action and launch a wide preparatory movement for uniting the workers. It is necessary that we apprise everywhere the working class of the looming danger and appeal to all sections to get ready to meet it. We should appeal to all genuine unions for joint bodies. Of course, if these are purely bogus organisations discredited in the eyes of the mass of workers, or with no influence over them—there is no question of joining hands with them. We do not intend to give a new status to discredited leaders by inviting them to form united fronts.

The reformist and revisionist leaders have been hitherto avoiding joint actions and a genuine effort for unity. They are always afraid of the working class getting class-conscious. But now they will not always be in a position to resort to open and crude opposition to every proposal for unity. Under stress of circumstances and pressure from the ranks they may accept united front committee but may try to restrict their scope and the scope of the struggle. They will at all event prevent rank and file initiative from developing, prevent the struggle from



taking a militant form and take the first opportunity to retreat. Some of them may try to conduct honestly the economic struggle but may lose heart at the first setback. This in the first place requires a vigilant watch over them and in the second place demands concrete criticism of their policy and tactics. A generalisation that they are opposed to struggles, they are anti-struggle, will not make sense to their workers when they find them joining the joint body. Their tactics of sabotage from within must be exposed on the basis of concrete evidence. The point is that their anti-struggle policy may take diverse and subtle forms and not appear in the cruder form of open opposition to strikes.

The revisionists, for instance, have in some places adopted the technique of the earlier reformists to sabotage the strike by appearing to lead it. This becomes possible where we are weak and where they still hold some sway over the loyalty of the workers. For instance, in this year's general strike of Bombay's two lakh textile workers they 'led' the strike finding it impossible to repudiate it, and yet within ten days they withdrew it without consulting the strike committee. Similarly, in November, they had given notice of strike for adequate bonus and they suddenly withdrew it on the plea that the workers were not supporting the actions as they had accepted the bonus tickets. The technique consists in allowing the strike to take place without organisation, keeping a bureaucratic hold over it and then suddenly withdrawing it and throwing the workers into confusion. In the alternative it consists in giving calls for action without preparation and then blaming the workers for the fiasco.

All these are familiar methods and they become more and more outplayed the more we raise the initiative of the workers through the united front and seize the initiative. At the same time it is quite possible that some of the reformists and revisionist cadres, especially those nearer the working class, may break away from these treacherous policies and loyally work with us. It has been the experience of history that the reformist parties cannot maintain their solid unity when faced by a rising struggle and the honest elements leave them.

## **12. Our Trade Unions and Influence :**

### **The Main Base**

In the struggle for working class unity to meet the looming capitalist offensive our trade unions occupy a strategic position. Our independent strength wherever it exists is the main base and initiator of this struggle. No other party is interested in it. Second in importance is our strength in the joint unions where we work. It is through these we take the initiative for trade union unity.

Needless to say while agitating for united front, our trade unions must do everything to strengthen themselves and strike deeper roots among the workers. Championing the cause of unity itself will earn for them stronger support from the workers. While fighting for united fronts they must continue to agitate and fight for working class demands and rally as big a section as possible of the workers.

Similarly our work in joint unions must be immensely strengthened so that we secure decisive influence in them. We will soon see the defects in our trade union work.

Our trade unions must take the initiative for working class unity. But there are certain difficulties in our way. What should be our attitude towards the rival unions—the INTUC, HMS, etc., and finally the Dangeite unions ?

A constant appeal for unity to these organisations on vital issues must form a part of our agitation where they have some influence. The appeal is made to them as well as directly to the workers. Unless this goes on for some length of time we will not be able to forge the front when it is immediately necessary. While we make this appeal we do not lay aside our ideological propaganda. If they raise political issues, attack our line, we have to reply to them all the more. In any case the struggle for united front does not end over ideological struggle against them. It may be carried from other platforms like the Party, our papers, etc.

### **13. Defects In Our T.U. Functioning**

We must simultaneously remove the defects in our trade union functioning which hamper the mobilisation of the workers and pander to their backwardness. In the first place like the revisionists we also have our share of bureaucratic functioning of the trade unions. Though we have decided to discard revisionism ideologically still we have not yet discarded it in our methods of mass functioning. At best our trade unions function though the top organisation of the union secretariat, executive or council. The main mass of membership is a passive spectator—an audience at some union meeting, individually approached perhaps once in the year for collection of union dues. In very few industries do the workers come of their own accord to the union office to pay their dues. This in effect freezes the influence of the union as the main burden of the organisation is borne only by a few top leaders and active workers who are unable to be in touch with the mass of membership and workers.

There is in our work a lack of bold application of forms and methods of proletarian democracy which really accelerate the radicalisation and activation of broad masses of workers. These consist in drawing members as well as non-members in the task of discussing the policy of the union, shaping its decisions, apart from taking agitation for day-to-day issues in the factories. The election of delegations to conferences, congresses, in the open mass meetings, or at least in meetings of union members, after explaining to the workers, the subjects to be discussed and the line adopted by the union constitute an important part of this proletarian democracy. This democracy does not consist in observing the rules of union constitution only. It is only by applying these broad forms of proletarian democracy that the mass of members and workers can be drawn into the daily work for the union and its mass base can be continuously expanded.

After all it is in shaping the union policy, in participating in union activities at different levels, in its discussions and struggles that the mass of union membership is supposed to get its class-training and class-consciousness. By our method we are precisely preventing this

development and in a factory where we hold the absolute sway, the entire number of workers do not necessarily join the union.

We have to make use of every weapon of mass participation, general factory meetings, election of various delegations and committees of action, their regular reporting to the general meetings, factory committees, departmental committees, separate meetings of women workers, and use of ballot for getting workers' opinion on particular issues. The pattern of the executive being the only policy-discussing body and the general mass meeting the only form of participation must end. Without this the perpetual famine of trade union cadres and activists that we encounter cannot be overcome and large-scale recruitment to the Party also cannot take place.

Another major defect in our functioning is failure to establish factory committees and where they are established, their reformist functioning. The factory committees are supposed to act as the vital link between the mass of workers and the trade unions. Though they are formally part of the trade union they have to look after the interests of not the members alone but of the entire workers and rally them round the union. But they often stagnate and do not make consistent efforts to win over hostile or neutral workers or workers of rival unions. The situation soon leads to a consideration of some workers as "our workers" and some as "theirs". In some unions, factory committees become mainly an instrument of collection of union dues from members.

One of the obstacles in the way of developing our trade unions is the isolation from, lack of contact of our trade union workers with the non-Communist, reformist and other workers. This sometimes leads to sectarian approaches to them and their organisations, hampering their release from reformist influence and building of our union. This is especially so where we have no union of our own and only the reformists control the union.

It is obvious that most of our unions are unable to do their minimum work for lack of financial resources—the all-round work of agitation, enlightenment, education, which a class trade union run by us is

supposed to do. And yet we are in many cases extremely shy of raising funds from the workers even when with a class appeal we can raise funds. The result is half-starved wholetimers and often inefficiency in the work of trade unions. The reformists are able to raise more funds by appealing to the workers and by using the pride of their party cadres to agitate for it.

The large number of strikes led by the reformist unions clearly shows the necessity of carrying on systematic work in them, systematic revolutionary work. Not to do so means abandoning these workers and activists to the reformists, allowing them to betray the strikes and yet retaining their influence. The resistance to work in the reformist unions to carry the battle for the class inside the reformist unions, must be quickly overcome to bring success to our struggle for united front. How to work in these unions, what methods to adopt, what issues to choose are matters which should be discussed thoroughly in each concrete case.

#### **14. Break With The Past**

We have stated that one of the causes of the weak trade union organisation was the influence of reformism and economism in our midst when the Party was dominated by the revisionists. These tendencies, like the organisational deviations, have not yet disappeared and we must see that we wage a conscious struggle against them and eradicate them completely.

What was ideologically preached in the trade unions by the Party then was glorification of the bourgeoisie with its capitalist plans which were certified as national plans worthy of support from the working class. The so-called two-pillar policy was unashamed political support to the Congress planners, embellished by a formal appeal for defending the economic rights of the workers. Accept bourgeois politics; and confine yourself to your crude economic demands—such was the dual formula.

Similarly, working class internationalism was replaced by glorification of Nehru's foreign policy which finally led to complete surrender before chauvinism in 1962 and foisting of the treacherous industrial truce agreement on the AITUC unions.

What was thus preached was open class collaboration in the name of national advance.

A recapitulation of what happened in these years will not be out of place.

After independence, the bourgeoisie and its Government followed a dual policy of minimum concessions to organised workers and negating them through high prices, etc. It resorted to rationalisation, price increase, fraud in the preparation of cost of living index, and refused to link DA with the cost of living index for the majority of the workers, all in the interest of capital formation. For carrying out this offensive, it depended on a show of concessions, organisational division of the trade union movement through the INTUC, and ideological corruption on the one hand and police repression on the other. The working class had to fight a bitter struggle for every little concession.

The bourgeois Government built an elaborate machinery of labour relations—conciliation and industrial courts and right of appeal to the Supreme Court—all weighted against the working class. It built up a tripartite machinery in order to put up a show that the Government was consulting the workers and treating the workers on a footing of equality with the employers. It appointed wage boards for a number of industries.

Simultaneously it launched a political offensive by parading its five-year plans as designed to build an independent economy. It propagated that the state sector industries were the foundations of socialism.

Thus it sought to corrupt the working class ideologically and blunt the edge of class struggle. In fact it was making a bold bid to make the working class give up the class struggle and take to the path of class collaboration.

### **15. Record of The Revisionist Leaders**

In this it was tremendously aided, abetted and helped by the AITUC under the leadership of Dange, particularly from 1957 when the Ernakulam session of the AITUC was held.

The notorious “two-pillar policy” that the session adopted as the

basic line of the AITUC conceded the bourgeoisie its claim of building an independent economy. This line was carried forward in the next session at Coimbatore where the slogan was given :

“We support the plan for the nation.”

“We oppose the class in its attacks on the working class.”

Even as late as December 1963, when the bankruptcy of the capitalist path was becoming more and more clear, when it had been crystal-clear that under the plans the economy had been so developed that it depended upon western aid even for maintenance imports, when the Government was making concession after concession to woo foreign capital for investment in the private sector in collaboration with the Indian monopolists, when all talk of developing an independent economy was revealing itself to be a mirage, when the crisis of the economy was daily mounting—even then the Dangeites persisted in this line. The report to the T.U. Fraction that Dange submitted in December 1963 eulogised the development under the plans as no bourgeois leader had ever done and stated :

“These instruments of production, right on our soil and wielded by our own working class, can be transformed into instruments of people’s prosperity from their present state of being capitalist prosperity.”

Dependence on imperialist aid and collaboration with foreign monopolists were completely ignored and the only defect noted was : “Some of the plants depended on foreign supplies for their renewal and spare parts and on foreign technicians for their know-how.” Dange hastened to add that this was a temporary phenomenon and need not worry anyone. He stated : “Once the heavy tools, structural plate and foundry forge base is completed the economy will be what they call ‘self-generating.’ That will release it from the inhibiting hand of foreign technique and foreign dependence to a large extent.”

He added :

“But it (the bourgeoisie) is able to go forward because in times of crisis and deadlock, it uses the help of the socialist countries who do not dictate such terms and who genuinely want India’s development

on the basis of heavy industry.” This was how a gloss was put on the fast-developing danger of neo-colonialist enslavement by U.S. imperialism.

In fact, Dange stated quite plainly that the line of development adopted by the bourgeoisie was the only line available to the country. He stated in the report :

*“We support the line of industrial development in the country, though we know that it is capitalist development. Firstly, because our industrial development weakens the hold of imperialism on a world scale, strengthens independence and creates the technical pre-requisite for steps towards a democratic non-capitalist path or socialist path, depending on the strength of the working class relative to the bourgeoisie. We are now out to build capitalism. And our support to the development is not as if some other alternative were available, but we reject it purposely and prefer capitalism. We have been thrown into that historic stage of development by the objective laws of the history of our country.” (Emphasis added)*

If this was the line of development dictated by inexorable objective laws of history, the task of the working class, was naturally, to support the bourgeoisie in this line of building capitalism and with imperialist aid and in collaboration with foreign monopolists.

In actual practice, the AITUC leadership paraded many of the schemes of the Government such as the tripartite bodies, wage boards, workers’ participation in management, T.U. schools, etc., as great achievements and gains of the working class. It was itself a party to many of the tripartite decisions such as those on rationalisation, code of conduct, industrial truce, etc., which worked havoc on the trade union movement and facilitated the offensive on the working class.

It must be frankly admitted that in the past the Party’s reformist line on the trade union front did not meet with any resistance from inside the Party. When Dange directly went to the TUC with his own reformist line without a previous discussion on it in the Central Committee our comrades not only failed to oppose it in the TUC



Fraction they did not raise it at any time inside the Central Committee. In fact this also was the effect of our comrades getting swept by the reformist current inside the Party. Even when serious political differences were arising over the political line of the Party and were being debated inside the Central Committee, none thought it necessary to discuss the trade union line which was taking the Party into the swamp of reformism.

This reformist class collaborationist line was the logical result of the reformist political line adopted by the Party under the leadership of the revisionists and over which a clash took place at the Vijayawada Congress of the Party. The glorification of plans was the logical outcome of the glorification of the role of the national bourgeoisie and its capacity to bring about a social change, especially its anti-imperialist role. An outlook which looked to the national bourgeoisie as the main motive force of social change, which looked upon developments in the Congress—progressive vs reactionary—as the main vehicle of political advance and refused any creative and leading role to the working class was bound to produce this abject class-collaborating policy in the trade unions.

Thanks to it the Party accepted the entire class-collaborating apparatus established by the Government as a victory for the working class. Not that the wage boards, conciliation courts should have been boycotted, but a struggle should have been carried on to defeat their purpose of cheating the workers. Their main purpose was to buy industrial peace at cheap price when the bourgeoisie was building its industry and getting ready to settle accounts with the workers. Had this been realised there would have been greater reliance on mass strength which would have knocked off much bigger concessions from the employers.

As part of all this reformist outlook we accepted the bourgeois Government's scheme of workers' education which was nothing but an attempt to spread bourgeois ideology among the workers and corrupt their consciousness. It was thought that by asking for our participation in it the Government was recognising our strength and doing away

with the monopoly of representation which the INTUC had hitherto enjoyed in connection with such schemes. It was not realised that we were becoming an instrument of recruiting workers for schools where bourgeois ideology was propagated.

Our consciousness was so dull that our comrades did not realise that job evaluation was only an instrument for intensification of work; and they never resisted it. Similarly we participated in productivity councils which are only meant to secure more surplus from the workers for the benefit of the exploiting class. Not that participation was itself wrong but we should have gone there with the correct consciousness, seeing the real meaning of the non-class term, productivity, as the intensified exploitation of the working class. There was a theory that in underdeveloped countries the working class should have a positive approach towards production and productivity in the name of building a self-reliant economy to gain independence from imperialism. In effect this was a call for class collaboration exploiting the national sentiment of the working class. More glaring still was the reformist attitude towards the movement in the public sector. The worker working in public sector undertakings has less rights than those working under private management. In fact they have hardly any rights. Instead of fighting against this they were virtually called upon to surrender their rights, support the public sector and regard it as a national concern. It was correct to show a general preference for the public sector as against the private sector. But it was thoroughly opportunistic to glorify the public sector into something above class and call upon the workers to slow down the struggle for their rights, liberties and demands. The public sector itself is controlled by the capitalist state in the interest of the capitalist class. Toning down the workers' struggles only meant their betrayal.

It should be realised that we are not free from this outlook even today. Not that we object to participation in any committee, board, tribunal, etc. But our participation must lead to a fight against the use of these instruments as weapons of class collaboration and cheating the working class. Our participation must be done with the full

consciousness that these are class weapons to corrupt, disorganise and cheat the working class and our business is to see that they do not succeed and that the working class through our efforts is able to see their real role.

### **15. Consequences of Reformism**

As a result, the reformist tendency of relying primarily on the government apparatus rather than on the strength of the workers developed amongst us. And even sections of workers became victims of it—unions showing a sudden rise in membership when cases were being fought in the courts and losing their members when the case was over.

Courts, lawyers, boards—these came to replace the class strength of the unions. Even now it will be a mistake to boycott these. But it must be realised that the primary source of strength is the class solidarity of the working class.

This also led to depoliticalisation of the working class, compromising it in the day-to-day struggle, divorcing it from the main political struggle against the bourgeois-landlord Government. The political and economic meaning of the plans, the penetration of American imperialism, the reactionary turns in the foreign policy, the compromise with landlordism, the necessity of alliance with the peasantry, and finally the necessity for socialism—all these were neither debated nor propagated on a mass scale. Thus the working class was kept away from its own class politics, while it was poisoned with the politics of its class enemy.

This was later on developed into a new principle—that trade unions should be independent of party politics, i.e., of the leadership of the Communist Party. Under the excuse that the trade unions are mass organisations we eschewed revolutionary class politics. The limit was reached when under the same excuse Dange refused to condemn our arrests at a General Council meeting of the AITUC in 1963—after protests he agreed to protest against the arrests only of the trade union leaders but not party leaders. And in the 1963

march to Parliament he refused to raise the demand for the release of leaders of the Party in jail.

This is where economism in practice has led. This is where direct class collaboration has led.

It has left the working class defenceless against bourgeois ideology against national chauvinism which raised anti-Chinese frenzy in 1962 and to which large sections succumbed ; it has kept the worker ignorant of the American penetration; it has disorganised his consciousness and failed to raise it to a higher level so that today he is often a prey to the worst kind of chauvinism. And above all it has disorganised his trade unions also.

Our comrades often mistake the anti-Congress consciousness of large sections of the working class for socialist consciousness and thereby exaggerate the level of working class consciousness which leads to underestimation of the importance of fighting backwardness in the working class. We have already seen what socialist consciousness is. Anti-Congress consciousness is a general feeling of anger against the Congress rule without a clear class understanding of the situation and the class forces required to change it. This anti-Congress understanding often fails to see the difference between one political party and another in so far as they both attack the Congress. The class attack which our Party makes against the class policies of the Congress rule is not distinguished from the anti-Congress denunciation of the revisionists and other Left parties in which they really do not question the basic policies of the Congress or while pretending to be Left, actually take positions to the Right of the Congress like the PSP, etc.

This anti-Congress outlook often goes hand in hand with an anti-working class, communalist outlook. In fact the anti-Congress discontent is often diverted into communal and provincial channels to divide the ranks of the workers and the trade union movement is often its helpless victim. The fact is that in recent times because of the reformist and revisionist outlook of the trade union movement there has not been a consistent stress on the unity of the working class

irrespective of caste, religion and community. The younger generation of working class has hardly had that elementary schooling of class consciousness which in the thirties and forties inspired the working class to combat attacks of the communalists. The result is that even in a city like Calcutta, in some places as in Bata Nagar, workers could not be prevented from participating in communal riots and massacring Muslim workers. The organised trade union movement stood a helpless spectator to this internecine conflict inside the working class.

Another danger which has arisen in recent times is that of provincial chauvinism among workers, The increase of unemployment in all big cities which is leading to frustration and disappointment among the workers is being utilised to divert their anger against workers from other states who flock to all industrial centres. Thus, in Bombay an organisation called Shiva Sena is pretending to protect the jobs of Maharashtrians by demanding that outsiders should be thrown out of the city. It is true that in these cities the capitalists often follow a policy of giving employment to non-local people due to considerations of safety, of casteism and provincialism that are rampant in Indian society.

The trade union movement must fight this provincial chauvinism and educate the working class that the growing unemployment is created by the capitalist order and must be fought unitedly by the entire working class. The fact that such reactionary organisations preach provincial chauvinism and get the ear of the working class shows the weakness of the consciousness created by the trade union movement. In fact it demonstrates that because of reformism and revisionism the trade union movement has failed to create the minimum class consciousness among certain sections of the working class.

This is one of the main reasons why who followed this policy in the past have failed to rouse and inspire the working class, build mass unions all round and create that revolutionary fervour in him which is essential for him to fight his class battles and gravitate towards the Party.

Naturally under the influence of this ideology no one thought of training workers in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism and recruiting them in large number to the party.

## **16. Restore Link Between Economic And Political Struggle**

The workers have responded tremendously wherever a correct political call has been given. Their participation in the bandhs often under our leadership has been a historic act. Today when their vigilance is ever sharper, their consciousness is greater and they themselves are under attack we must seek every opportunity from our trade union platform to carry as many political issues as possible to them and restore the link between the economic and political struggle.

We must break with economism; while utilising whatever official machinery we can, we must break with the practice of putting reliance on it and turn to the mass strength for our main support ; from our own platform we must launch direct agitation against American penetration and concessions to it and link it with the offensive against the working class and the nation. We must rouse the working class to action for every democratic demand.

We carry the revisionist heritage in relation to internationalism also. At the AITUC we got our platform of unity adopted unanimously. It contained the demand for peaceful settlement with China. This was a fine opportunity for us to propagate on this issue from joint unions as well as our unions. But hardly anything seems to have been done. Even the AITUCs call for Vietnam Day seems to have been observed only in some places.

The platform for unity is based on break with economism and reformism and should be popularised. It should be one of our main weapons in the joint unions to move them to anti-American action and for India-China settlement. Also it contains a number of basic demands including nationalisation of banks, foreign trade, wholesale trade in foodgrains, which must form part of our agitation.

In the midst of the present food crisis our trade unions must take a lead in explaining the agrarian crisis, the role of the peasantry and the

necessity of workers' and peasants' alliance if the working class is to oust the present bourgeois-landlord Government. The peasant is the most neglected section of the trade union platform.

Our trade unions should take seriously the anti-automation struggle of the LIC employees. Similarly they should pay special attention to the struggle of the employees of American oil companies—the Caltex employees of Calcutta, for instance.

Studying the situation in each industry the concerned trade unions should consider whether national or statewide conferences are necessary to prepare for statewide or countrywide industrial actions in any particular industry. In any case the struggle must be widened and should not be a scattered local struggle as far as possible. Every effort should be made to have a common platform for agitation, and action in future.

Trade unions must ceaselessly carry on a struggle against the high taxation of the Government which fleeces the workers. The interminable tax burden leading to all-round robbery of the workers' wages must be denounced before the workers.

The trade unions must also demand a drastic reduction in the monstrous defence expenditure which inflicts an annual burden of nearly Rs. 1,000 crores on the working class and the people of India. It should be explained to the workers how they were befooled by the anti-China hysteria of 1962 and were made to accept this burden, and now they have to pay for it. A Government following a consistent anti-imperialist policy will be able to dispense with this waste, by peacefully settling its dispute with Socialist China and also with Pakistan. That should be the demand of the working class.

The trade unions must fight against the continuous price rise and unmask the entire price policy of the Government. The deficit financing of the Government was meant to raise prices, defraud the workers, and help capital formation, i.e., transfer wealth from the workers and the people to the industrialists. The result could be attained only through inflationary price rise. All measures of price control were fake measures

to cheat the people. The workers must, therefore, be roused to fight the basic policies of the Government which inflict a price rise on them.

Fighting against high taxation and high prices, the trade unions must rally the workers to fight the monstrous retrenchment offensive and closures. They should demand that the factories which close down should be taken over and run by the state and steps should be taken to nationalise them. Inefficient owners cannot be allowed to trifle with the lives of thousands of workers and society's production. In the present context they must wage a fight for their legitimate share of bonus, dearness allowance, and raise the slogan of living wage. They must further demand social insurance at the expense of the state and capitalists against every kind of disability and unemployment. Provision of decent housing, right of trade unions to recognition, right to strike, strengthening and extension of democratic rights and complete freedom for trade union struggle should also be demanded. It is necessary in the background of the crisis to raise and popularise some of the basic demands. These are :

1. Moratorium on all foreign debt payments, nationalisation of foreign capital in plantations, mines, oil refineries and factories, shipping and trade. Nationalisation of banks, foreign trade and monopolist industries. No further concessions to private American capital and steps to stop its entry.

2. Democratic management of the public sector by ensuring the creative participation of the workers and technicians in the management and running of industries.

The differing conditions under which workers in small industrial establishments work should be taken note of. We have to organise the mass of workers employed in these establishments which are very numerous in cities like Calcutta and Bombay. In our present state of organisation they often escape our attention as our effort tend to concentrate on the bigger factories. In these establishments the worker is face to face with the small employer who himself is often the victim of government policies and competition from the big capitalists. He is often as anti-working class as the big capitalist and seeks to compensate



himself at the expense of the worker. At the same time because of the smaller scale of production he is not able to offer the same conditions to the workers as owners of big factories can.

Reformist practice in the past has on many occasions meant trailing behind events and being drawn into strikes willy-nilly. Besides the strikes have often been symbolic, the main attention being concentrated on the courts, conciliation machinery, etc. The situation has changed now and under the stress of the crisis neither the employers nor the Government want to make concessions; on the other hand every opportunity will be taken to resist them and attack the workers. Hence protracted battles are in the offing with repression let loose over the workers. In this situation every strike, every action has to be organised with great preparation and forethought so that it can withstand protracted resistance. No doubt elemental strikes will burst on us and we will have to lead them. This is inevitable where we are weak and considering the fact that the crisis is developing rapidly. But where we are strong and our trade unions have influence over the workers—there, every effort should be made to establish broad-based committees of action and strike committees during the strike.

The method of conducting the strike, not through union committees, but broadbased strike committees fully representative of the strikers and not packed with only our followers is the application of proletarian democracy to strikes.

This alone will enable us to evolve rank and file leadership and fight the reformists as well as government repression, and give a sustained lead to the strike. In the coming period we will have to manoeuvre and sometimes retreat, accept temporary compromises—all in accordance with the fighting capacity of the workers and their consciousness and mood. The valid tactics of trade union struggle do not cease to operate; but they have to operate in the background of the general offensive and with the consciousness that it no longer is a question of local compromise with this or that employer.

Every strike conducted under whatever leadership is an action of our class and we should not be indifferent to it. We should intervene to support it, establish contact with the strikers and wherever possible give our guidance to them.

In the past in many places we have spread our trade union activities in an elemental unplanned manner. We went on organising trade unions without a systematic plan, without priorities to certain industries and workers and then we continued to remain confined to them till some other sections came to us. Now every State Committee should have a plan of expansion of trade union work with priorities assigned.

In recent times goondaism and gangsterism are coming forward as a permanent and conscious weapon of the capitalist class against the working class. The trade union movement in India and the workers are familiar with the use of goonda gangs for the purposes of strike-breaking. They are also familiar with their use against striking workers, for the purposes of intimidation and assault. Working class pickets have often been murderously assaulted by these hirelings of the employers but what is being witnessed in recent times in some places is organisation of mass terror against the workers with the aid of numerous goonda gangs aided and abetted by the police. As the class struggle intensifies and the workers' spirit shows no sign of breaking down, these attacks will multiply and attempt to disrupt the unity of the workers. Only a firm spirit of solidarity, individual courage and determination to fight for one's class will enable the workers to counter this offensive. In some places it may be necessary to raise special workers' defence corps from among the workers.

In this connection it should be noted that where the organised movement is weak or is lacking in militancy, opportunist trade union leaders use gangster methods to organise new unions and instal themselves as the representatives of the workers in that factory. They get hold of certain lumpen elements among the workers who terrorise the rest into joining the union. Once having got the 'backing' of the workers they deal with the management indulging in corrupt practices and always attack attempts to start a genuine union.

Sometimes the leaders of such unions originally start as militant organisers fighting a strike or two successfully; later on, instead of developing the class consciousness of the workers to strengthen the union, they adopt these gangster methods to secure their allegiance and then work hand in glove with the employers. The fight against this type of leadership not only involves ideological struggle, not only demands exposure of its corrupt practices but also requires a fight against the gangsterism organised by it.

### **17. Ideological Fight Against Revisionists And Reformists**

The revisionist leaders will have to be fought persistently as they in consonance with their international line regard us as the main enemy. We can never forget that they helped the police repression against us in 1962 and 1964 and are quite capable of doing so again. Nor can we forget that they besmirched the banner of proletarian internationalism in 1962 by raising war-hysteria against Socialist China, pleaded for American help and betrayed the working class and our people. In them we see the utter degeneration of international revisionism masquerading as part of the world Communist movement. They are dangerous because exploiting the name of the Soviet Union they spread their poison among the workers and claim to be Marxist-Leninist. Therefore, there can be no ideological truce with them on a party plane.

While, therefore, pursuing united front tactics there should be no opportunist illusions about them, no softness towards them. This warning is essential because a wrong understanding of the united front tactics leads to opportunist practice towards the leaders, and overestimation of their role as well as influence. It should not be forgotten that the united front tactics are necessary to unite the working class and the fight against reformism and revisionism is an integral part of these tactics. The unity is sought not on the basis of reformist outlook but a revolutionary class- outlook.

At the same time there must be fraternal relations with the workers following the revisionists. In the revisionist or joint unions, therefore, our method of work should be such as would appeal to all impartial

workers; we should be the guardians of the unity of the union and unmask the disruptive policy of the leaders. This can be done only on the basis of taking initiative for championing the urgent demands of the workers and leading them step by step to realise the real implications of the revisionist policy in the trade unions.

It is, however, wrong to think that any section of the reformists including the revisionists can be fought successfully only on the basis of exposure of their trade union tactics. This is an economist outlook which does not take into account the political affiliations of the working class, especially its advanced cadre which leads the trade unions and is generally the strong supporter of some political party. It is known that in many states even our own trade union followers do not always follow us on political issues and all of them do not necessarily vote for us in the elections.

The reason for this is that reformism and revisionism are bourgeois political tendencies and policies which thrive on exploitation of some of the illusions shared by the workers, or exploiting the bourgeois distortions in the minds of the workers. For instance the feeling of nationalism is exploited to create illusion about national planning by the revisionists. It has been exploited by parties like the PSP, SSP, Dange group, to rouse bourgeois-chauvinism against China to support the bourgeois-landlord Government. INTUC and PSP have been using the weapon of anti-communism basing themselves once again on the bourgeois-nationalist outlook which grips large sections of the workers. INTUC strength in many places reflects the political influence of the Congress. Without fighting the politics of the Congress the workers cannot be rescued from the influence of the INTUC.

It is futile to think of a successful fight against reformism and revisionism in the trade union field with out giving continuous battle against them on the political field, exposing and unmasking their policies, and their class-outlook. This has to continue while the struggle for united front goes on. The polemical tone of the exposure may undergo some change as the united front comes into being but the criticism of thier political line must continue. A major part of this

political exposure has to be done on the Party platform, through the Party press, meetings and pamphlets. But the trade unions have also to do their job on the political issues confronting the workers, on which the workers are acting or which are agitating them.

Without such constant political struggle from the TUs within the limits of TU unity and TU democracy and from the Party, united front tactics will not succeed in rescuing the workers from the revisionist influence. The struggle inside the TUs should be persuasive and educative and should be seen by the workers as a unifying factor.

The political influence of the reformists and revisionists on the trade unions and workers should not be underestimated. When several of them have combined with us—as in the Rashtriya Sangram Samiti—a call for strike on any issue has won tremendous response. Only in Bengal are we the leading force in this front.

It means that a large part of the vital trade union cadre of the unions controlled by them belong to these parties—many of them firmly committed to their policy. A large number of these cadres come from the ranks of the working class. Nothing practically is done to win them over politically—no political dialogue, no debate, no special literature to educate them. They are often labelled as their men and the matter ends there.

It is a vital part of our struggle for trade union unity to attract and win over all militant union workers.

This can be done only by a continuous dialogue of our workers and comrades with them in factories and elsewhere on burning political issues. We must restore the fervour and crusading spirit of our ranks to popularise and broadcast our policy and engage in debates with other workers. Here our workers and members must act as Communists and carry on this minimum political activity. In this connection we must also note that we are not effectively combating hostile anti-Communist propaganda against us and allow the poison to be spread among the workers. Even parties professing fraternal relations with us circulate anti-Communist slanders and we sometimes treat them with indulgence.

## **18. The Party And The Trade Unions**

Our weakness on the trade union front arises also from the failure of the political leadership of the Party. We have seen how in the past the Party under the leadership of the revisionists evolved a class-collaborationist line. As a result of this outlook the leadership of the Party over the trade unions—the role of the Party in guiding and laying down the line for our comrades in the trade unions—disappeared and our trade unions, especially the TUC, began to act independently of the Party, taking their own decision. The local trade union boss often became too big a figure for the local Party to handle. This was the beginning of the political independence of some of the trade union leaders who refused to recognise the line of the Party.

All this, of course, must change now and the leading role of the Party must be asserted in practice by giving concrete guidance, by devoting greater attention to trade union problems.

Their class-collaborating outlook had led to a virtual liquidation of the Communist fractions. Where they functioned they generally discussed such matter as union elections, choice of office-bearers, day-to-day problems, etc. They rarely discussed matters connected with the propaganda side, the political and theoretical propaganda among the workers, their training in Marxism-Leninism, the problem of expansion of the Party and recruitment of proletarian members to the Party.

The role of the party fraction in the trade union has not been properly understood because of the influence of revisionism and reformism inside the Party in the past. Instead of operating as the vehicle of the Party's entire political line, it has generally contended itself with dealing with immediate questions affecting the particular trade union and nothing more. The fractions' responsibility is not only to guide the day-to-day activity of the trade union, to ensure that the trade union functions on the basis of working class democracy that the mass of workers are enabled to actively participate in shaping its decisions, to give concrete guidance during strikes. If its activities were to be confined to this then the fraction would be indistinguishable from any

competent honest trade union executive. It is the duty of the fraction to see that the union and the workers are taken out of the narrow shell of economism, that they are made class conscious and are able more and more to link their daily struggle with the working class struggle for socialism and state power. Union activities have to be guided by the fraction in such a way that the advanced and militant workers come to look upon the main slogans of the Party as their own. It is the responsibility of the trade union fraction to make every effort to enrol new members for the Party, to see that Party literature reaches the mass of workers, to see that the best among them are drawn into the study circles to get their lessons in Marxism-Leninism.

In doing all this the trade union fraction works directly under the guidance of the corresponding Party committee. It is sometimes thought that recruitment to the Party, training of the consciousness of the workers, holding Marxist study circles and schools is only the responsibility of the Party committee and the responsibility of the fraction is the management of the trade union apparatus. This, of course, is wrong. The trade union fraction which is in direct contact with the cadre and rank and file of the trade union is in a position to pick and choose and train the most militant workers and recruit them to the Party. Its constant contact with the trade unions should be used for continuous propaganda of Marxist views among the trade union ranks. It alone is in a position to do it and organise the recruitment of the workers to the Party.

No doubt the party committee decides how to conduct the school, who is to teach and what is to be taught. No doubt in the end it is the Party unit that finally admits the new recruits into the Party.

In this connection one of the main weaknesses which hinders the development of the class consciousness of the workers must be noted. Most of our trade unions hardly produce any agitational TU literature—much less TU propaganda literature. It is part of the job of the trade union fraction to prepare this literature and spread it among the workers.

Perhaps the most serious deviation of our TU cadres, fractions and the Party is the failure to recruit large numbers of workers inside the Party. Even in the strongest industrial centres like Calcutta the working class membership is small in proportion to the hundreds of fighting and militant workers. Our comrades have led innumerable battle of the workers; our working class has shown exemplary heroism during strikes; we have loyally stood by the workers in every crisis and led struggles of tens of thousands. And yet after all this we draw only a small part of the workers inside the Party. Why? Does this express lack of confidence in the workers? Is it because we underestimate the class-consciousness created in the course of the class struggle or does it arise out of a total underestimation of the role of the Party? The latter is no doubt one of the reason, otherwise we cannot explain comrades who work day and night for trade union remaining indifferent to the development of the Party. It is clear beyond doubt that any trade union activity, whatever may be its pretensions to be revolutionary, is purely reformist activity if it does not lead to a rapid expansion of the Party among the workers. There are instances of trade unions where we have been working for more than a decade and where we are not having even ten Party members—not one Party member per year. This has been our practice when the Party was under the leadership of the revisionists.

This again must change and in the coming struggles and period we must see that the Party develops rapidly. After all we want a mass party of the working class and it can arise only in the course of the struggle. But it does not arise spontaneously it has to be organised consciously using the lever of trade union class struggle.

Our diffidence arises in the main from the inability of the trade union and party leadership to train the new recruits quickly. This has to be overcome by training a cadre of teachers whose permanent task should be to go from centre to centre to hold schools for new recruits or worker sympathisers such schools to be repeated for the same people two or three times. Together with this, steps should be taken to produce theoretical and other propaganda literature.



Unless this is done, neither the Party will expand nor the permanent famine of trade union cadres be removed. Only the widespread net of the Party among the proletarians will provide the requisite cadre for the unions and the Party.

One of the results of reformism inside the Party is that there is often a kind of conflict between the leaders of the trade union and leaders of the Party. Reformism and revisionism succeeded in breaking down the discipline of the Party and its role as the supreme class organisation of the working class. Simultaneously, because of these tendencies, a type of trade union leader came into existence who enjoyed the support from mass organisations of workers, wanted to escape the revolutionary discipline of the Party, functioning on his own and saw to it that the Party did not develop among the workers over whom he had hold. He accepted the Party formally while functioning practically independently.

In our Party, too, these tendencies may not have been completely eliminated. We must guard against both these deviations and see that our mass leaders are not kept out of the Party committees and that they bring their fresh experience to the Party committees in shaping their policies and decision. It will also help to check the trade unionists, the individualist tendencies which each trade union leader may develop, and help them to integrate their day to day activity with the political line of the party.

It has not been possible to detail the situation for each major industry for want of reports.

## **19. Our Immediate Task**

Our immediate task is to effect the maximum mobilisation of the working class to resist the looming attacks of the capitalists and the Government which is under the constant pressure of the American imperialist. For this purpose we want to pursue the tactic of united front, while simultaneously carrying on a fight against the revisionists and reformists on the trade union and political front. We regard our trade unions our independent strength, to be the basic force in the

struggle for working class unity and we attach utmost importance to strengthen and develop the mass base of our unions. We are conscious that in the coming struggle we will be faced with repression, attacks on trade union rights and we are determined to evolve methods of functioning despite all this.

By pursuing correct methods of proletarian democracy in our unions and strike committees, by developing them in joint unions we intend to broaden the trade union movement and bring the rank and file into the picture as an active force. By our work in reformist unions and unions of the revisionists we continue to press our fight for unity and overcome the resistance of the leadership of the union. By linking the daily struggle with major political issues, with the defence of the poor peasants and agricultural workers, with the fight against American imperialism, we intend to take the trade union struggle out of the confines of economism and reformism. And by raising the revolutionary consciousness of the workers, by bringing them nearer the Party, by drawing large sections inside the Party, by establishing the leading role of the Party in the trade unions—we prepare the working class to discharge its historic role of leading the People's Democratic Revolution on the basis of the workers' and peasants' alliance.

## Our Tasks On Party Organisation \*

Adopted by the Central Committee of the C.P.I.(M) at its Calicut session, October 28 - November 2, 1967.

Our Party in its Programme adopted at the Seventh Party Congress at Calcutta had decided that the aspirations of our people for a new life and for a new society—a socialist society—can be achieved only by replacing the state of bourgeois-landlord classes led by the big bourgeoisie by a people's democratic state led by the working class. To achieve this a broad people's democratic front of all anti-imperialist anti-feudal and anti-monopolist forces and classes has to be built, the core and basis of which is the firm alliance of the working class and peasantry led by the working class.

By adopting the Programme and the Report against revisionism and the Declaration removing the Dangeites from the Party our Party took the first step to rebuild our Party on correct Marxist-Leninist principles.

The Government suddenly attacked our Party and kept most of our leaders in prison for more than sixteen months. The Party was taken unawares and was not in a position to take the steps necessary to forestall this attack because of the hang-over of old revisionist illusions, but after the release of comrades from jail, in furtherance of this task, our Central Committee released the document on ideological issues to the Party ranks for discussion and also reiterated our Party's adherence to the 1952 Policy Statement of our Party.

The people's democratic front cannot be built without forging the alliance of the working class with the peasantry. This can be done only by building a powerful working class movement and the class organisation of the working class that is capable of helping to organise the peasants and other democratic sections to struggle for their just,

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\* Published as a booklet.

immediate and basic demands and win their confidence and thus achieve working class leadership. Our Central Committee dealt with some of our basic failures and revisionist understanding and practices on the trade union and kisan fronts in its documents and outlined our tasks on the two fronts.

In working out our tactics on the eve of the Fourth General Elections and later after the elections in the report, *New Situation and Our Party's Tasks* the Central Committee pointed out that the deepening economic crisis had matured into a political crisis for the ruling classes. It pointedly drew the attention of the Party members to the fact that it was not an ordinary capitalist cyclical crisis, but one resulting from the failure of the policies pursued by the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes for the last two decades to build capitalism in India in alliance with the landlords and in collaboration with imperialism. It stressed that this Indian economic crisis was part of the general world crisis in which imperialism was deeply enmeshed and that this had come when U.S. imperialism had shifted its drive to Asia and Vietnam had become the focal point of all world contradictions. The report went on to stress that only two alternatives were left for our people: either all anti-imperialist and democratic forces speedily organise and lead an assault on the big bourgeois-landlord combine and bring out democratic transformation, or, allow the big bourgeoisie to surrender our national independence to the U.S. and other imperialists step by step and mount brutal attacks on the people's livelihood and liberties, perpetuating naked class rule and ruthless class exploitation, even through police and military raj.

The Central Committee's report pointed out that the economic crisis was developing into a political crisis with the masses coming face to face with the political class realities. Under these circumstances the ministries in which we are participating had become battle-grounds for further struggles. The ministries themselves were called upon to fight against the all-pervading powers of the centre, its financial grip and political intervention. Unless this struggle was carried on, they

would be unable to implement any programme of ameliorating the conditions of the masses. Thus the Central Committee gave an all-round call to mobilise the people for struggle, to forge a united front for big mass battles, to use the ministries also to win allies and broaden the mass base of the Party.

A Communist Party is born out of the fiery class struggle of the masses; it gets disciplined and strengthened in the course of the struggles— from partial political struggles; its revolutionary fibre is developed through the direct class experience of the masses. The Communist Party, the revolutionary Party of the working class, cannot be built apart from the revolutionary experience of the working class and the people.

In a period of growing economic and political crisis, new movements and struggles of the oppressed sections of the masses come up. Our Party should avail of this opportunity to come forward and encourage, participate and lead such mass struggles and thus win the confidence and leadership of the masses. It is necessary to explain to the masses that without these struggles there is no possibility of achieving tolerable living conditions for the workers and expose all those who try to avoid and obstruct these struggles. It is the bold leading of these struggles that will help the broadening and deepening of the movement in the old areas and spreading it to new areas and hitherto unorganised mass, and help to create new opportunities for building class and mass organisations and for drawing and training up new cadres for the Party.

As the Central Committee Report, *The New Situation and Our Party's Tasks* points out : “The crisis and the consequent mass upsurge have thus opened a new inspiring chapter in the history of the post-independent revolutionary mass movement in India. An ever-increasing number of common people are being drawn into the vortex of political life, with a new class and mass awakening. It offers tremendous opportunities to the working class and its Communist Party to take big strides forward in building the class and mass organisations of the people, in forging and consolidating the united front of different

democratic classes and in defeating the class policies of the big capitalists and landlords and opening the bright prospects of replacing the present Government by an alternative people's democratic government”.

It is in this context we must examine how our Party organisation is geared to carry out these pressing tasks.

Here we will try to critically examine the inroads made by right opportunism and revisionism into the methods of our Party organisation and to suggest some broad necessary steps to liquidate these evil legacies still persisting in the Party organisation.

It is after clearing these broad features that our Central Committee will have to produce a detailed organisational report of how our various Party committees are functioning, the state of activities, Party membership, their education, the state of Party journals, agit-prop material, the financial position at different levels, the state of mass organisations, of mass fractions and of mass Party sub-committees, etc., and then review and check-up reports from one Central Committee meeting to the other.

In this connection it is relevant to seriously recall to our minds the invaluable observations made by Lenin and Stalin on the question of Party organisation.

“In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organisation. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by ‘lower depths’ of utter destitution, savagery and degeneration, the proletariat can become, and inevitably become, a forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the invincible force only when its ideological unification by the principle of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organisation which will weld millions of toilers into an army of the working class.”  
(Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*)

“As to the structure and composition of the Party itself, Lenin considered that it should consist of two parts: (a) a close circle of

regular cadres of leading Party workers, chiefly professional revolutionaries, that is Party workers free from all occupation except Party work and possessing the necessary minimum of theoretical knowledge, political experience, organisational practice and the art of combating the tsarist police and of eluding them; and (b) a broad network of local Party organisations and a large number of Party members enjoying the sympathy and support of hundreds of thousands of working people.” (Stalin, *History of the CPSU(B)*, pp. 33-34)

This brilliant concept of Lenin that the proletariat in its struggle for power has no other weapon than organisation, no doubt, is well known to all Communists. But it is one thing to know it and quite a different thing to understand it, in all its depth and significance, and faithfully translate into action. A self-critical examination of our past over long years would convincingly prove that in spite of repeated enunciation of certain basic concepts and elaboration of certain immediate tasks, we did not succeed in building such a Party organisation based on such a firm ideological and political orientation.

(1) We have been stressing the necessity of taking up Party building as an urgent political task. Our problems are problems of growth, arising from the problem how to consolidate our mass influence into proper Party organisational form.

(2) We have been stressing that we have achieved a certain measure of political unity after adopting the 1951 Party Programme and Policy Statement of 1952 and further unification is possible only by strictly observing discipline and Party forms.

(3) We have been stressing, at least on paper, the necessity of strictly adhering to the principle of democratic centralism— by observing inner-Party democracy, by practising criticism and self-criticism, and by encouraging criticism from below; and by fighting bureaucratism, federalism, frontism and localism and by adhering to the principle of collective functioning.

(4) We have been stressing the necessity of the all-India centre and state centres being strengthened to carry out minimum tasks like

improving Party journals; functioning trade union, kisan and other mass organisations by guiding them through proper Party sub-committees and through the functioning of mass fractions; improving our parliamentary work while linking it with mass movements outside.

(5) We have been stressing the necessity of educating and activating the entire membership, especially our functionaries, by organisation of schools, bringing out pamphlets on current and basic issues and activating them by allotting jobs of a multifarious character suitable to each and by having enough number of wholetimers and looking after their minimum needs and of regularising our financial resources and Party fund.

We failed to carry out these well-known sound precepts because during all these years not only our political line was revisionist but our organisational practices and changes in Party Constitution were also of a right revisionist character.

In our drive for a mass Party we have reduced the standard and quality of Party members to that of a militant or a striker, and reduced the Party organisational structure to one that is suited only for parliamentary activity, to one of a Social Democratic variety.

This grave failure of not building such a Party organisation did not get liquidated at one stroke, and it persists even after our breaking away with the revisionists in 1964. A sustained and prolonged struggle is necessary to overcome it. But several amongst us while formally accepting this difficult and inescapable task tend to leave this task to spontaneity, and in a way, entertain the illusion that the correct ideological, political and mass line worked out by the Party would automatically, in course of time, set right the Party organisation, and consequently neglect this task which should be fulfilled as the foremost task facing our Party at the present juncture.

However, nothing is farther from the truth than such an assumption whether it is so crudely entertained by us or our practice virtually amounts to it. It is against such an erroneous outlook that Stalin made



a pointed attack and we reproduce below the relevant passages for the benefit of our comrades.

“Some people think that it is sufficient to draw up a correct line, proclaim it from the housestops, state it in the form of general theses and resolutions, and take a vote and carry it unanimously for victory to come of itself, spontaneously, as it were. This, of course, is wrong. It is a gross delusion, only incorrigible bureaucrats and red-tapists can think so .... Victory never comes by itself — it usually has to be attained. Good resolutions and declarations in favour of the general line are only a beginning; they merely express the desire for victory, but not the victory itself. *After the correct line has been laid down, after a correct solution of the problem has been found, success depends on how the work is organised; on the organisation of the struggle for the application of the Party line; on the proper selection of the personnel; on the way a check is kept on the fulfilment of the decisions of the leading bodies.* Otherwise the correct line of the Party and the correct solutions are in danger of being seriously prejudiced.” (Emphasis added)

“Furthermore, *after the correct political line has been laid down, organisational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure.*” (Stalin, *On Problems Of Organisational Leadership*, Emphasis added).

Such are the Marxist-Leninist propositions on the question of Party organisation and its living connection with the ideological and political line of the Party. Judged from this standpoint, we, today, find that our Party suffers from a number of grave shortcomings and it is far from having attained the stature of such a real revolutionary Party of the Indian proletariat as to successfully discharge its destined duties and tasks. Unless we sharply awaken to this harsh reality and critically examine all the alien class manifestations that are haunting it with a view to systematically liquidating these evils, we would be miserably failing in our duty towards the Indian revolution. There need be no two opinions on it, and our Central Committee in its document,

*New Situation and Party's Tasks* drew pointed attention to this task in the following words :

“The particular immediate task, in our opinion, the fulfilment of which ensures the successful fulfilment of the rest of our tasks is the one of educating, reorganising, rebuilding, consolidating and expanding the Party organisation. In fact, a sort of well-organised rectification campaign is the dire need of the hour without which it is next to impossible to carry out any one of the other tasks with any measure of success.”

Obviously, the questions that should arise here are, what are these basic mistakes to be rectified, how and when did they creep into the Party, what is the class nature and source of these errors and how to rectify them?

### **Basic Mistakes In Our Party Organisation**

*I. Undermining the character of the Party as the vanguard, class-conscious, Marxist detachment of the working class* “armed with knowledge of the life of society, of the laws of its development and of the laws of class struggle, and for this reason able to lead the working class and to direct its struggle. The Party must therefore not be confused with the working class, as the part must not be confused with the whole. One cannot demand that every striker be allowed to call himself a member of the Party, for whoever confuses Party and class, lowers the level of consciousness of the Party to that of ‘every striker’, destroys the Party as the class-conscious vanguard of the working class. It is not the task of the Party to lower its level to that of ‘every striker’, but to *elevate* the masses of the workers, to *elevate* ‘every striker’ to the level of the Party .....

But in our Party no clear-cut standards for Party membership were laid down nor was there uniform implementation of the standards in vogue by all states and districts in the country. Further, in the name of building a “mass Party”, even the existing standards were given up and the Party was virtually diluted into a mass of militants from the peasants, middle classes and the workers.

The Party has not been insisting on the method of practising criticism and self-criticism and not once had it carried out check-up of membership and purging of alien and unreliable elements.

Whatever schooling was organised by the state or district committees was sporadic, running hither and thither for teachers as well as students for those schools, and without any systematised and properly worked out syllabus. Nor was the Party able to get a minimum number of Marxist-Leninist classics translated and made available to our cadre in different national languages. Nor did it make it obligatory on the Party cadre to regularly read the classics, let alone making them study and imbibe the essence of the teachings.

*II. Undermining the character of the Party as the embodiment of the connection between the vanguard and the working class and as the highest organisational form of the working class.*

“The Party cannot exist and develop without connections with the non-Party masses, and without multiplying and strengthening these connections. A Party which shuts itself up in its own shell, isolates itself from the masses, or loses or even relaxes its connections with its class, is bound to lose the confidence and support of the masses, and consequently is bound to perish. In order to live to the full and to develop, the Party must multiply its connections with the masses and win the confidence of the millions of its class.

“Consisting of the finest members of the class, armed with an advanced theory, with knowledge of the laws of the class struggle and with the experience of the revolutionary movement, the Party has every opportunity of guiding and is obliged to guide all the other organisations of the working class.”

In our Party, we have not made it obligatory for every Party member to work in our basic class organisations, the TUs, agricultural labour and kisan organisation. Most of our members are not even members of a class organisation, leave alone being active functionaries of these mass organisations. This is reflected in the state of the poor organisation and strength of TUs, agricultural labour and kisan organisations.

Starting with the general elections of 1952 held under the new Constitution of the Indian Republic, the greater part of the Party's energy, resources and time was spent in periodical general elections, mid-term elections, by-elections and elections for village panchayats, panchayat samitis and the like, with the result that work in the class and mass fronts, building their organisations and leading their day-to-day struggles were practically paralysed. In short the Party's main work was reduced to parliamentary work. The parliamentary and assembly leadership at different levels began exercising a predominant influence on the Party's political line, the militant and revolutionary TU leaders were gradually replaced in the TU movement by 'new talents' who were adept at representation, 'experts' in the niceties of law in the 'industrial tribunals', 'arbitration councils', 'tripartite conferences' and similar other bodies.

And whatever work was done among these basic classes, it was mostly done in a typical non-class Social-Democratic fashion, economism being dominant; no revolutionary initiation and direction was given to the basic classes.

Work among students and youth or women was practically neglected. And work among these sections or in other broad multi-class democratic associations was not linked up with the demands, aspirations or organisation of the basic classes.

We have given up the idea that the primary units of our Party primarily are to be organised on a vocational and functional basis and built the Party units mostly on a territorial basis.

We have failed to function the Party fractions in the mass and non-Party organisations.

The whole of our Party membership failed to function actively and constantly in the mass organisations and develop mass struggles through them and through mass struggles political consciousness, and these mass organisations continue to be weak and disunited. Our Party is not able to exercise the leading role in these mass organisations.

Further, since only some comrades are expected to do work in the mass organisations while some others are expected to look after the Party organisation, a conflict between mass frontiers and Party organisers developed. Instead of leading Party functionaries being the leaders of mass organisations and the leaders of mass organisations simultaneously becoming builders of Party organisation, we find a situation in which Party leaders trying to guide the leaders of mass organisation from behind the scenes and leaders of mass organisations resenting the influence.

III. *Undermining the character of the Party as “the organised detachment of the working class, with its own discipline which is binding on its members.”*

“Party members must necessarily be members of some organisation of the Party. If the Party were not an *organised* detachment of the class, not a *system of organisation*, but a mere agglomeration of persons who declare themselves to be Party members but do not belong to any Party organisation and therefore are *not organised*, hence not obliged to obey Party decisions, the Party would never have a united will, .....it would be unable to direct the struggle of the working class. The Party can lead the practical struggle of the working class and direct it towards one aim only if all its members are *organised* in one common detachment, welded together by unity of will, unity of action and unity of discipline.”

“In its practical work, if it wants to preserve the *unity* of its ranks, the Party must impose a *common* proletarian discipline, *equally* binding on all Party members, both leaders and rank and file. Therefore, there should be no division within the Party into the ‘chosen few’, on whom discipline is not binding, and the ‘many’, on whom discipline is binding. If this condition is not observed, the integrity of the Party and unity of its ranks cannot be maintained.”

1. In our Party, Branches or Cells which are the primary units ceased to function. They were replaced by general body meetings where neither work can be allotted and checked nor discipline enforced.

2. The principle of a compact organisational form, in the shape of small units based on the factory, department, village, mohalla, school or college and the like, which alone could function properly and where alone proper distribution of work and check-up is possible was abandoned. In its place a general body of Party members and sympathisers of the entire village, bustee or taluk was substituted. Smaller and compact Party committees were expanded into huge bodies of taluk, district, state and national councils comprising of members ranging anywhere from 50 to 115 maximum, as seen in the case of the National Council elected at the Vijayawada Congress. Instead of the two-tier system that was in vogue, a new three-tier system was introduced with the disastrous result that a greater part of the time of all the active workers and leaders was wastefully consumed in these committee meetings while precious little time was left to implement these decisions directly among the masses.

3. Every serious Marxist-Leninist Party should have a cadre policy. Grading of the cadres, selection, promotion and their training is a must if the proletarian Party is to discharge its revolutionary duties. But, our Party never had any such thing as a cadre policy during all this period of existence.

4. A legalist outlook had grown in the Party to such absurd proportions that not a single measure or step was either conceived or implemented to safeguard the Party and its continuity against the surprise attacks of the class enemies and 'general round-ups' by the police. Not even the defence of the big strike struggles of the working class and mass peasant actions was ensured against the onslaughts of the repressive police machine which is accustomed to resorting to wholesale arrests and detention of all leading cadres with a view to disorganising the struggle, even before it is actually launched. Virtually, the Party was reduced to the impotent position of an instrument which can only lead such mass struggles as the authorities are 'kind' enough to 'permit' and 'tolerate'.

5. Alien class habits in the mode of day-to-day life and functioning of our parliamentarians and leading functionaries started developing. A gulf started developing between various sections of Party cadre and Party members. Even standards set by the Party for our legislators and functionaries could not be easily enforced. A common proletarian discipline could not be made equally binding on all. Because of this, the unity of will, of action and of discipline could not be maintained.

IV. *Democratic centralism*, the highest principle and the kernel of a Marxist-Leninist Party was subjected to furious assaults and was seriously undermined. The attack, which initially started during the period of the 1950-51 inner-Party crisis under the plea of fighting the sectarian political line and bureaucratic trends inside the then top committees, continued in the Party for years. The principle, though formally accepted, could not be restored in real practice. Add to it, certain specific features present in our country, namely, the multi-national Indian Union and several difficulties that confront us in building a centralised, monolithic and all-India Communist Party, which have accelerated the federal tendencies inside the Party. The result was that the principle of democratic centralism was reduced into a formality.

All the vices and non-proletarian organisational concepts briefly pointed out above had come to be treated as nothing repugnant to a Communist Party, and the constitutional amendments carried at the Fifth Congress of the Party at Amritsar had sanctified them by incorporating these concepts as the statutes in our Party's Constitution.

What is the necessity of going into this long past of our Party instead of straightaway pinpointing the defects, as they are present today, and working out steps to remedy them?

It is necessary because it is impossible to remedy these maladies unless every Party member is made to realise the depth of these maladies and how several of these concepts had corroded the consciousness of Party members, including those of us who had revolted and broken away with the revisionists in 1964.

It is necessary to sharply point out how in the Communist Party of India the right opportunist and reformist concepts of Party organisation had come to prevail much earlier than the modern revisionist onslaughts were unleashed on the concepts of dictatorship of the proletariat, the leading role of the Communist Party and its vital organisational principle of democratic centralism, on an international scale. The modern revisionist political line, of course, has its added adverse influence and impact on the organisational functioning of the Party.

It is also necessary because everyone of us should realise that these defects are not just deviations that cropped up in a firmly organised and principle-based Party organisation, but that they are alien class concepts which made deep inroads into the fabric of the Party organisation at a very early stage when it was in the process of being built as a genuine Communist Party. Hence the need for a patient, prolonged and sustained struggle to uproot these alien concepts and practices and to lay firm foundations on the lines enjoined by Lenin in his theses submitted to the Communist International.

The task of liquidating the legacies of right opportunism and revisionism in the matter of Party organisation acquires added urgency because of the fast developing economic and political crisis and the consequent big responsibilities that fall on the shoulders of the Party in leading the rising revolutionary struggles of our people.

The general description of the organisational shortcomings, and a Marxist-Leninist critique of these do not take us any far in overcoming them. Nor would it be realistic to attempt to set right *all of them at one stroke* and to build an ideal revolutionary Party overnight in too short a period. We should begin with certain basic aspects of the problem and then proceed methodically, step by step, to overcome the shortcomings. Let us start from the question of primary membership.

### **Unstable Membership And How To Rectify it**

During the Fifth Congress of the Party in April 1958 at Amritsar, the strength of the total Party membership was shown as around



220,000. By the time the Sixth Party Congress assembled at Vijayawada in April 1961, there was a fall of 40,000, and only 177,000 were on the rolls. But by March 1964, after another period of three years, when we asked the revisionist leaders about the membership, they gave us a figure totalling 145,000, and informed us that 25,000 out of the total were new recruits. If this additional new membership is put aside for scrutiny, it becomes quite evident that out of the total strength of 220,000 in 1958 there remained in the Party only 120,000 in the year 1964. What does it reveal? Nearly half of the primary members who were on the rolls in 1958 simply evaporated and did not renew their membership by 1964.

Let alone the distant past, let us examine this aspect in our Party after its break with the revisionists. At our Seventh Party Congress in November 1964, the total membership that had rallied behind our Party stood at 104,000, with another 15,000 as candidate members. But now, after another three years, as latest reports reveal, it does not exceed 75,000.

The unstable and fluctuating character of the primary Party membership of our Party can be glaringly seen if the two strong state units of Kerala and Andhra are examined. In Kerala if there were 65,000 members in 1958, membership steadily declined to 43,000 in 1961 and 23,000 in 1963-64. At the time of our Seventh Congress at Calcutta it was reported that as many as 19,000 were enrolled as full members while another 9,000 remained in the list of candidate members, as they did not renew their membership formally, while about 3,000 members had opted out to the revisionist side. In 1967, it is about 20,000, including new members and candidates.

In Andhra, it stood at 40,000 in 1958 and 33,000 in 1961. At the time of our Seventh Congress, as many as 28,300 were recruited as full members, while another 1,600 joined as candidate members. The revisionist could not muster more than 7 to 8 thousand in Andhra. But by August 1967, the total membership enrolled in Andhra does not exceed 15,000 in all including candidates. How do we explain this fall

of nearly 50 per cent in a period of less than three years? Such a state of affairs with minor differences is common to most of the states except West Bengal. Hence thorough analysis is required if this malady is to be rectified.

Why this big fluctuation and unstable character of the primary membership of our Party?

(1) This arises, first, because a considerable number of our Party members are not sufficiently conscious of their elementary duties towards the Party, do not feel the sense of urgency in paying the Party's dues regularly and do not feel proud of being its members in continuity and without a break. Their level of consciousness, at best, has been that of TU or peasant militants and nowhere near that of class-conscious Communists. To recruit such members into the Party in haste is totally wrong, as such recruitment in the final analysis is neither beneficial to the Party nor the member concerned, and not only harms the cause of the Party but also retards the political growth of the individual member concerned.

(2) Second, such instability and fluctuations arise because the unit or units in which such members are placed do not function properly. If the mass and political work of the unit is not collectively discussed and decided, if different members are not allotted specific jobs to carry out the decisions in accordance with their abilities and capacities, if the work of the unit and each of its members is not checked up regularly and if the weapon of criticism and self-criticism is not used to set right the mistakes and improve the work of the unit and the individual member, then the Party consciousness of the unit in general, and several of its new recruits in particular, is sure to get corroded, and the enthusiastic militants who moved towards the Party are bound to move away from it and become politically apathetic.

It is impossible to function the basic Party unit properly without a unit secretary or leader who is equipped with the minimum requirements demanded of such a job. A concerted effort to select, promote and

train this personnel is necessary without which it is next to impossible either to ensure the functioning of the Party unit or keep intact the unit members under the discipline of the Party. The absence of such cadres capable of leading the unit and the neglect of a concerted effort in this regard by the leading Party committees is one of the important reasons for the instability and fluctuation of membership.

A one-sided drive for the expansion of the Party and the recruitment of ever-increasing new members into it without a simultaneous and determined effort to select and train the requisite unit-leading personnel is bound to result in periodical steep rise and fall in the membership. This, in turn adversely affects the growth of the Party, its revolutionary image gets clouded, and the proud saying that “Communists are made of special mould” loses all its rich revolutionary meaning.

(3) The third important cause for this kind of big fluctuation is to be directly traced to the absence of any planned drive for the ideological-political education of the mass of Party members. Normally, a Party member is expected to accept the Party Programme and Party Constitution and pledge to abide by its rules. But in actual practice this is often ignored and it is no exaggeration to state that most of the members were being recruited without fulfilling these minimum conditions. Even after admitting them there was no effort on the part of different leading committees at different levels to make them read the Programme and the Constitution and to explain these documents. Much is taken for granted, as though they are read and understood by all our members.

Similarly, the Party, besides making available the minimum basic classics of Marxism-Leninism to its members in different languages of the country, shall have to produce short pamphlets and booklets for the benefit of the average Party member in a language and style that can be easily understood by them. The importance of this aspect is all the more emphasised by the fact that a great percentage of the workers and peasants in our country are still either illiterate or semi-literate.

And, finally, regular and periodical Party schooling which every Party member must be made to compulsorily attend is of utmost importance. Such Party schools are never planned or conducted methodically to cover the entire membership. Is it any wonder that in the absence of the above narrated efforts, the political-ideological level of the average members and new recruits does not improve and after a time of such stagnations they tend to become depoliticalised and drop out from the Party?

(4) The fourth basic cause for the unstable character of membership lies in the very class composition of the bulk of the new recruits. A fairly large proportion of our members are recruited from the peasantry and the different strata of urban and rural middle classes, instead of from the urban and rural proletariat and semi-proletariat. This, of course, is intimately connected with the nature and pattern of our mass work which is not yet decisively oriented to the basic classes. Even from the TUs run for decades under the leadership of our Party, no concerted efforts were made to recruit the largest number of TU militants into the Party and thus build the Party among the working class. As long as this pattern and class composition of the Party continues, the element of instability will persist with all its attendant evils. While not minimising the need of our Party's intensive work among the students, youth and urban middle classes, our Party will have to mainly base its recruitment on the urban proletariat and rural poor. Then alone can the Party be fairly ensured against the harmful phenomenon of frequent and heavy fluctuations in its primary membership.

The unstable character is also closely connected with the problem of a big percentage of our Party membership being virtually inactive and not distinguishing itself in any way from that of an ordinary militant who joins in some big campaigns only or electoral struggles and the like. Consequently, the entire Party activities come to be exclusively dependent upon a few wholtime organisers and their mobility. The absence of one or two such organisers, even in an area with strong Party membership and mass following, results in the

complete paralysation of Party work in the area concerned. If the entire Party activity is thus precariously dependent on a handful of organisers while the bulk of membership remains as passive spectators or sympathetic onlookers, then such a Party cannot rise to its revolutionary stature. What worth is such a member to the Party who is not keen on assisting the Party in any manner whatsoever, i.e., prompt payment of Party dues and collection of Party funds, the reading and sale of Party organs and literature, joining in and enrolling members in the class and mass organisations, and devoting some minimum time of his, weekly or even daily? Such membership sets a bad example to the whole Party and the people and only proves a deadweight on the Party. No work can be really planned out and no mass campaign can be organised by a Party in which a big percentage of its ranks is passive and inactive.

These, in brief, are the causes for the unstable and fluctuating character of our members; unless we start rectifying all these defects, simultaneously and in the shortest possible time, there can be no radical and lasting remedy for this malady.

The unstable character of the Party membership, besides several of its sad consequences on Party building and the revolutionary movement, has its direct impact on the political-ideological line of the Party, as it definitely introduces a strong element of instability in upholding and executing the political line itself. In short, no firm political line can be pursued and implemented by a Party in which nearly half of its members are unstable and their ideological-political consciousness is nowhere near that of a class-conscious Communist. Further, this element, in turn, introduces into the Party wrong and alien organisational concepts such as the so-called “freedom of criticism”, “democracy”, “rights minus duties” and factionalism in the name of inner-Party struggle, and all this objectively results in undermining the basic principle of democratic centralism and converting the Party into an endless debating society. Hence the need to urgently organise the Party from top to bottom on the basis of re-education, training, allotment of specific jobs and

check-up, criticism and self-criticism and purging of the alien elements who prove unamenable and are beyond rectification.

### **Mass Membership And Mass Party**

Does this amount to arbitrarily reducing the Party membership or negating the need for building a powerful mass Communist Party in our country? Nothing can be more erroneous than to read such a meaning in the present effort of our Party. In fact, it is precisely with the aim of building such a strong Party that the present tasks are set before us as the immediate and initial steps for it.

What is a real mass Communist Party? And how was it understood by the dominant leadership of our Party? During the period following the first general elections in the year 1952, the slogan of a mass Communist Party was initially raised by the General Secretary of our Party and the same was sought to be implemented, particularly, after the second general elections in 1957. Citing the examples of the Italian, French and Indonesian Communist Parties, whose membership in relation to the votes polled by them in the elections was said to be 1:3, 1:5, or 1:10, it was argued that our Party during the first and second general elections could secure 10 and 12 million votes respectively, and hence our Party membership strength should also be raised to half a million to one million, from the then existing strength of around a lakh or so. This concept was sought to be implemented and the steep rise registered at the Amritsar Party Congress was its direct outcome. As our experience shows and life demonstrates, this did not result in building a real, powerful mass Communist Party in the country, but only ended up in further loosening the then existing Party organisation into a mass of TU, kisan or other middle class militants. Neither the Party nor the new recruits got any benefit out of it. It only laid the basis to reducing the Party into a type of bourgeois parliamentary Party, a pattern of organisation which in its turn influenced the political line of the Party and ultimately paved the way for the capture of its leadership by Dange and his revisionist coterie at different levels.

The concept of a mass Communist Party with millions of members, and that, too, in a country where state power is not yet in the hands of the proletariat deserves careful scrutiny. It is all the more necessary to examine whether the socio-economic political conditions under which our Party is functioning today permit us such a luxury without grave risks for the very cause of the Party and the revolution, and whether it does not emanate from a totally uncalled for legalistic illusion. In this connection let us recall one of Lenin's assertions :

"I assert, (1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organisation of leaders that maintains continuity; (2) that the wider the masses spontaneously drawn into the struggle . . . the more urgent the need of such an organisation, and the more solid this organisation must be.....(3) that such an organisation must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; (4) that in an autocratic state the more we *confine* the membership of such an organisation to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to wipe out such an organisation, and (5) the *greater* will be the number of people of the working class and of the other classes of society who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it." \*

"The Party is an *embodiment of the connection* of the vanguard of the working class *with the working class millions*. However fine a vanguard the Party may be, however well it may be organised, it cannot exist and develop without connections with the non-Party masses, and without multiplying and strengthening these connections. A Party which shuts itself up in its own shell, isolates itself from the masses, and loses, or even relaxes, its connections with its class is bound to lose the confidence and support of the masses, and, consequently, is surely bound to perish. In order to live to the full and to develop, the Party must multiply its connections with the masses and win the confidence of the millions of its class.

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\* Quoted by Stalin in *History of CPSU (B)*, pp. 33-34

“In order to be a Social-Democratic Party [Bolshevik Party], we must win the *support* precisely of the class.’ (addition within bracket ours)

However, it is an admitted fact that a small Party like ours, with only 75 thousand members, scattered over the length and breadth of a vast country of more than 500 million people, is quite unequal to the tasks facing the Indian revolutionary movement, and it, undoubtedly, needs big expansion. But the desired results can never be secured by lowering the standards of Party membership, by the slackening of its revolutionary discipline and by the sheer increase in numbers.

We cannot conceive of building a really big, mass Communist Party covering several lakhs of members without establishing a firm ideological-political line for the Party and without a tested and solidly united core of Marxist-Leninist leadership, at least, at the states and national levels. It is well-known Marxist-Leninist experience that a Communist Party can be only built from above and under the strict political-organisational guidance of the centre. Hence it is idle and utopian to attempt building a mass Communist Party comprising lakhs of members without fulfilling the aforementioned prerequisites.

When large-scale recruitment into the Party is attempted *we must* ensure that all the new recruits can be systematically schooled, trained and disciplined, that a minimum number of trained and tested comrades are available to function as unit leaders to plan out, guide and check-up the work of the members of the unit, and that the Party’s political line and organisational cohesion are in no way disrupted. Otherwise it will be self-defeating, as was the case with our Party especially after 1957. There is nothing wrong with the thousands of militant comrades who were recruited into the Party, and they all joined the Party in good faith and earnestness. But the main failure comes from the incapacity of the Party in schooling and training them, in raising their ideological-political consciousness and helping them to function in mass class organisations and in assimilating them inside the Party.

Another important factor to be always borne in mind is that the drive for mass recruitment into the Party either in a state or on a national



scale should be closely related to the rising class and mass struggles which alone can ensure against the influx of different alien class elements and careerists. Greater rigidity and severe restrictions become necessary in the matter of large-scale recruitment when a comparative lull exists in the mass movement, when bourgeois legality appears 'stable and assuring' and when the parliamentary form of struggle dominates the political scene.

However, the mass character of a Communist Party cannot be judged by the mere strength of its big numbers. The Party's firm base in the politically awakened sections of the working class, its links with the different strata of the toiling millions, the extensive political influence it wields and, above all, its mobilising capacity for any call of action by it—all these factors go to determine the real mass character of a Communist Party.

To aim at building such a real mass Party we will have to reorganise and consolidate the present organisation of our Party in such a way that it will be able to absorb ever-growing new members in it without any danger of either diluting the standards of Party membership or adversely affecting the revolutionary cohesion of the Party.

To begin with, a systematic and well-planned scrutinization of the Party membership will have to be immediately undertaken. All those, whose Communist consciousness, mass activity, discipline, etc., fall too short of the minimum required standards, should be persuaded to opt out to join the auxiliary groups of militants of working class, kisan, youth, student or of women movements. This, of course, has to be carried out after a self-critical report of the basic Party unit in question with reference to the work and conduct of individual members is discussed, and the decisions should be taken in the light of the new organised directives to reorganise the Party.

The practice of recruiting TU, kisan, student or middle class militants directly as candidate members has to be given up. Such militants thrown up in the process of mass struggles should be grouped into compact auxiliary units and kept under the guidance of the

concerned higher unit. Candidate membership should be given only for those amongst them who prove their worth and whose ideological-political consciousness meets the requisite Party standards, after a fairly good period of work and observation in their auxiliary groups.

The period of candidate membership be extended to one year. It would be really hazardous to decide the eligibility of a candidate member from his or her progress in a shorter period as is the practice at present.

The minimum qualifications for Party membership should be:

1. One has to accept the Party Programme and its Constitution and agree to abide by the Party rules and discipline.

2. One must attend his or her unit meetings regularly without fail, and should obtain permission from the unit secretary to be absent in case of any emergency, and should pay the Party membership dues promptly and regularly to his unit secretary on his own and as early as possible and show his readiness and anxiety to keep his membership of the Communist Party.

3. One must become a member of one or the other class and mass organisation and actively function in it to develop and strengthen it.

4. One must attend all public meetings and rallies organised by the Party, and do his best in making them a success, by campaigning among the people of his street, village or bustee and persuading them to attend those meetings and rallies and bringing his family people as well.

5. One must participate in the sale of Party organs and literature in whichever sphere of activity he or she functions.

6. One must read the Party organs and in the case of illiterate members they should get them read to them, while in the meantime making every possible attempt to learn to read and write.

7. One must strive for self-education, study minimum basic classics and current Party literature and attend Party schools or study classes intended for Party members.

8. One must regularly contribute and collect funds for the Party or for the mass organisation and approach as many households and persons as possible for donations.

9. One must devote some minimum time, weekly or even daily, while earning his livelihood at his job or profession, to carry out all the above specific jobs as well as any other Party or mass organisational tasks assigned by his or her basic unit.

10. One must conduct his or her life in such a manner that it sets an example to others around him and thus inspire respect and regard for the Party among the people; one must be ready to subordinate his personal interests to the interests of the mass movement and to the interests of the Party organisation and be prepared to undergo the privation and sacrifices consequent to such action. He must constantly live up to and rise himself to be worthy of Stalin's maxim: "Communists are made of a special mould".

These in brief are the minimum standards that the Party should insist upon its members, and without insisting on which no Communist Party worth the name and calibre can ever be built.

### **Education And Schooling For Party Members**

One of the biggest failures of the Party, in the long period since 1952, is regarding the education and schooling of Party members. In spite of several resolutions and the expressed desire of our leadership from time to time, very little has been done in this regard. In fact, one of the basic reasons why the revisionist leadership could take along with it a good part of the cadres and one-third of the Party membership was because of the woeful lack of planned Marxist-Leninist education and schooling over the long years of the Party's existence.

We have not even now done anything to impart literacy to our militants and Party members, so that they can regularly read Party organs, Party literature and also the necessary minimum basic classics of Marxism-Leninism to develop themselves.

We have not produced any noteworthy popular booklets, applying Marxism-Leninism to specific Indian conditions, either on economic, political, historical subjects or on the cultural life of our people; nor have we brought out books reviewing major mass struggles and drawing lessons for the whole Party to learn from both their successes and failures. In fact we do not have even a bare outline of our Party history, not even the great revolutionary episodes of our people's struggles, or even the great stories of heroic sacrifices of our Party cadres made in the course of the revolutionary movement during the last four to five decades.

We have not trained cadres to conduct our weeklies and especially dailies, on how to run them with what materials on current development, as well as what material they must contain to develop the political and ideological development of our readers, especially the mass of readers coming from the working class and peasantry; so, today, our papers mostly become purveyors of news in competition to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois press just to satisfy the curiosity of the middle class newspaper readers.

We have not even made available the minimum, the most essential, classics of Marxism-Leninism, even in the major languages of our country which should form the basic and constant study material of all our Party members to enable them to develop their Marxist-Leninist theory and ideology. Whatever few books are translated, are also not available to be purchased and studied whenever anyone wants to get them.

Study courses with the list of minimum reading for our Party members or our branch secretaries and cadres of higher level, are not made. Nor are any systematic efforts made to run schools to help the Party members and cadres to learn to study and to develop themselves politically and ideologically; nor are any regular schools for training cadres, for developing mass movements, for building mass organisations and for Party building, etc., held. It is true that from time to time, in different states, schools were held for 3 to 7 days or

even a fortnight, but neither the lessons taught nor the lectures given in those schools were checked and printed, nor on the basis of pooling the experience of these schools, did we improve these lessons, and make schooling and training on a common basis and syllabus for different states.

Apart from the long-range plan of producing suitable Party literature, pamphlets, booklets, etc., and of conducting regular Party schools for different grades of Party members and cadres on a well-prepared and uniform syllabus which the Party has to seriously plan out, there should be a short-term plan in which the schooling for the entire membership of the Party is to be covered. The period of such schooling, in our opinion, should be 15 days minimum, if necessary divided in two or three convenient sessions. The subjects to be covered are :

(1) Basic principles of Marxism-Leninism— dialectical and historical materialism, economic and political theory;

(2) Party Programme;

(3) Policy Statement;

(4) Central Committee Resolution on Ideological Issues;

(5) New Situation and Party's Tasks;

(6) Tasks on the Kisan Front;

(7) Tasks on the Trade Union Front;

(8) Party Constitution and Tasks on Organisational Front;

(9) A brief history of our Party from 1920 to 1962 and especially the development that led to the removal of revisionists from our Party;

(10) A brief history of Indian people's struggle for liberation and analysis of the political parties and our attitude towards them.

It is true that all these subjects cannot be satisfactorily completed within the short period of 15 days.

Apart from these schools, the students attending these schools should be again regrouped and functional schools—seven-day schools—will have to be organised for the functionaries on the TU, kisan, student and youth fronts so that the special tasks on these fronts are dealt with

more intensively. But without covering all the above-mentioned subjects, it is not possible to give even the broad framework of our present general political line of the Party—a thing which is absolutely essential to unify the Party and to enable it to go into action like a disciplined army for implementing the line.

Such large-scale organising of schooling, if it is to be completed in the shortest possible time, requires a good number of comrades who can work as teachers in these schools. For this purpose, 10-day teachers' schools, on state or regional basis, should be organised by the CC and PB. All leading comrades in the state or region must be made to attend these teachers' schools, so that they, in turn, not only can conduct the schools to be held for all Party members, but also greater uniformity in the matter of teaching the subjects can be attained. The lectures made by the CC and PB members in the teachers' schools on different subjects can be recorded and after a careful check-up they can be printed in different languages for the benefit of the teachers as well as the students of primary Party membership. If this is found going into several hundreds of pages of 'study courses', and becomes difficult to be translated and printed, a synopsis or a summary of the main points covering the lectures should be brought out.

Similarly schools to train and develop all our branch secretaries must be organised and, in their syllabus, in addition to the general political line and about our tasks in the mass organisations, a minimum basic Marxist theoretical knowledge and study should be made compulsory. These schools for branch secretaries may have to last for a period of 15 days. And all these branch secretaries are to be schooled, say within a maximum period of one year.

While giving priority for this scheme of mass schooling of Party members on the current political line of the Party, schools for Party members and for our militants from TU, kisan, women, youth and student fronts, in which elementary principles of Marxism-Leninism are taught, should also be organised. The CC and the PB should assist the states in this regard in the fixing up of curriculum for such schools,

in the matter of providing synopsis for the syllabus, in the case of selecting and training teachers for such schools and in direct participation of CC and PBMs to the extent possible.

As an integral part of Party education and schooling, a monthly or bymonthly theoretical political magazine, shall have to be brought out by the Central Committee. It should be ensured that the same is simultaneously reproduced in the languages by the state committees.

## II

### **Defective Class Composition And Steps To Rectify It**

A Communist Party cannot pursue a correct proletarian political line, steadily and without serious deviations, if its class composition is defective, if the membership from petty-bourgeois and middle class origin is preponderant, if members from the urban and rural proletarian classes do not form the predominant force in the Party, if the leadership at different levels does not consciously and constantly strive to draw in increasing numbers of talented comrades of proletarian and semi-proletarian origin and if its Marxist-Leninist knowledge is not constantly improved and deepened.

But this correct concept of the class composition of the Party which, in the past, was current among Party—and to a certain extent there were efforts to ascertain the class origin of every member, every delegate to a conference or congress, and every leading functionary—is virtually abandoned or reduced into a formality. A non-class or above-class approach to this question has become the practice. A conscious effort to restore the correct concept of class composition inside the Party will have to be made and an earnest attempt to implement it in practice should be made. The Party's principal recruiting bases should be the urban proletariat, agricultural proletariat and rural poor. Naturally these sections could be our main recruiting base only when our movement develops deeply among these basic classes of our Party.

However, while restating this aspect of Party building, we have to take into account the concrete socio-economic conditions prevailing

in the country, where the real industrial proletariat is only a very small percentage of the population, where the peasantry forms 70-80 per cent and where the petty-bourgeoisie is preponderant in the social composition of the people, unlike the industrially advanced capitalist states. In view of these realities the ratio between the members of proletarian origin and non-proletarian origin inside the Party cannot be similar to that of a Communist Party or parties in the advanced capitalist states. The possibility and even the necessity of recruiting into the Party large numbers from the toiling middle and rich peasantry and other urban middle classes should not be under-rated. But in doing so additional care is demanded of us in the matter of observing the standards of Party membership and their ideological-political schooling, training and disciplining. In no case is the swamping of the Party with members of non-proletarian origin and neglect of the special emphasis on recruitment from the proletarian and semi-proletarian classes to be permitted.

Then coming to the problem of composition of the Party committees at different levels and in particular at the states and centre level, a good portion of the members of top and leading committees has inevitably come forth from Communists of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois class origin. This is due to the class composition of our society and of our Party. It is also due to the fact that in the initial stages of the working class movement, the working class spontaneously develops trade union consciousness. The intellectuals coming from the propertied classes have the educational and other facilities which enable them to develop the theory of socialism and are in a position to take it to the working class. Due to this intellectuals belonging to the social status of either the bourgeoisie or the petty-bourgeoisie who study and accept Marxist-Leninist theory and practice have come to occupy a dominant position in the leadership of the policy-making committees.

We have failed to consciously train and promote cadre of proletarian origin to the leading committees. We must immediately correct this failure and every opportunity must be taken to educate, train and



promote comrades of proletarian origin thrown up in the process of revolutionary struggles. It is through a process of education and training and through continuous work among the people, winning their confidence and of the Party ranks, that cadres are equipped for leadership.

Comrades who join the ranks of Communists from bourgeois and petty-bourgeois class origin will have to struggle hard to declass themselves and to imbibe the strict proletarian class outlook in theory, practice and the behaviour in their day-to-day life. At any rate the task of developing able leaders of the proletarian revolutionary movement and the formation of proper leading committees is a difficult and painstaking one which requires prolonged struggle and experience. As Lenin observed, "The training of experienced and influential Party leaders is a long and difficult job. And without it the dictatorship of the proletariat and its 'unity of will' remain a phrase. In Russia, it took us fifteen years (1903-17) to produce a group of leaders—fifteen years of fighting Mensheviks, fifteen years of tsarist persecution, fifteen years, which included the years of the first revolution (1905), a great and mighty revolution. Yet we have had our sad cases, when even fine comrades have 'lost their heads'. If the west European comrades imagine that they are insured against such 'sad cases' it is sheer childishness, and we cannot but combat it" (Lenin, *A Letter to the German Communists*). It needs no further elaboration to drive the point home.

The emphasis we lay on the proletarian and semi-proletarian composition of the Party membership, the necessity of basing the Party on the basic classes and defending the proletarian class character of the Party against the danger of it being swamped with members coming from the non-proletarian strata, should be understood in a correct class and revolutionary manner. In the process of building a Communist Party neither this aspect of class origin of membership can ever be lost sight of or overlooked, nor can we allow ourselves to be swayed into the erroneous idea that the class composition of the Party or its leading bodies, by itself, can ensure the Party against every anti-proletarian

trend and deviation. A Party that is strictly guided by Marxist-Leninist theory and practice, a Party that gets steeled and tempered in class and mass revolutionary struggles and a Party that stands like a rock weathering all storms in its onward march alone can discharge its supreme class tasks, the tasks of leading the revolution and building of socialism and communism. This, in fact, is the acid test. But, at the present stage of development of our Party organisation, the serious defect in the class composition of the membership and lack of proper class orientation in this regard are very serious shortcomings, and it is necessary that a conscious struggle is waged to remedy these defects.

When we insist that our Party must essentially be composed of persons from our basic classes, it does not mean that we must take special care to group all militant classes, or exclude from enrolling others from other classes, say, the middle and rich peasants, intelligentsia or middle classes and even from the upper sections. It only means that we must take special care to group all militants thrown up in course of mass struggles, and educate them politically and ideologically so as to enable them to join the Communist Party. Similarly it also means that we do not recruit persons from upper sections into the Party the moment they accept our ideology or programme, but should do so only after a sufficient period of examining his activities in the mass movement and his efforts at declassifying himself and identifying himself with the proletarian class and developing Marxist-Leninist ideology. It is only thus that the Leninist concept that while socialist consciousness has to be taken to the working class from outside, from the intelligentsia who have imbibed it and who dedicated themselves to the work among the working class, yet in the Communist Party, once they are admitted into the Party, no differentiation can be made between those coming from our basic classes and those coming from other sections.

Here the special role which the intelligentsia has in developing the revolutionary movement in colonial countries where due to the imperialist exploitation for centuries the working class and the toiling peasantry is kept in a very backward condition, with practically no

education and even no literacy, has to be specially noted. As such special efforts need to and should be made to keep in touch with the intelligentsia, particularly the student mass and especially the college students, so as to inspire them and rouse them to the task of dedicating themselves to building a new society, and to do this, the best and the only means is to throw oneself into the task of organising the oppressed masses and leading them on the basis of Marxism-Leninism.

### **Our Work Among The Working Class And The Rural Poor**

The class composition of our Party cannot be basically altered unless our work among our basic classes, the working class and the rural poor, is carried on on correct lines eschewing all the reformist and revisionist concepts and practices.

The people's democratic front can be built only by forging the alliance of the working class and the peasantry as the core and basis for it. This alliance of workers and peasants can be forged only by building such a powerful working class movement and its class organisation, the trade union organisation, as is capable of helping the rural poor. The working class will have to take the initiative to champion the demands of other sections of the mass of people, especially the peasantry, from solidarity campaigns to express sympathy with their demands to protest actions against repression and all necessary actions for defending and extending their democratic demands, immediate and basic. It must thus win the confidence and leadership of the peasantry and other democratic sections.

Working class leadership of the kisan movement can be achieved only if the proletarian Party undertakes as its main task the work of organising the agricultural labour and poor peasants on the basis of their specific demands. It can be achieved only by making the agricultural labour and poor peasants the living force of the agrarian revolutionary movement while drawing the middle and rich peasantry into it and by consciously training active cadres from the ranks of agricultural labour and the rural poor to make them the militant vanguard of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolution.

The reformist and revisionist mistakes in our functioning of our trade unions and in our work among the kisans and our tasks on these two basic fronts have been exhaustively dealt with in the Central Committee documents on them. Party ranks must thoroughly study and apply them. Here we will deal in some broad outline with our work among the students and youth and among women which the Central Committee has not yet formulated in detail.

It is only by improving our work radically among our basic masses and among our allied sections, that our Party can become the embodiment of the connection between the vanguard and the class.

### **Special Importance To The Work Among Students And Youth**

After independence in 1947, the class correlations in India have changed. The edge of our revolutionary struggle is now directed against the bourgeois-landlord government led by the big bourgeoisie, and our revolution has entered the agrarian stage. The same favourable all in united front background against imperialism which brought on the student and youth sections into the independent struggles is not there. Illusions about the ruling classes developing an independent economy and building a democratic society wherein the aspirations of students and youth for a better life could be fulfilled persisted.

In these conditions, the Party should have devoted greater attention to work among students and youth, to rouse their consciousness to the actual realities in the country, to mould it and draw them into class struggles against the ruling classes.

We have failed to devote necessary attention to the work among students and youth during the last 20 years in most of the states.

And now after 20 years of Congress misrule, when the students and youth find none of their problems solved and all their hopes and aspirations blasted, and they rise in wave after wave of mighty protest and revolt, we find we are nowhere in a position to head the tidal wave of upsurge of the younger generation (except perhaps in Bengal). In most states, it is the RSS, Congress, the ruling class parties or the petty-bourgeois parties that are heading this wave and leading them

into communal, disruptive and anti-working class and especially anti-Communist channels. Even where we have a foothold in the younger generation, their spontaneous militant urge is towards an ultra-leftist course of action, as we have failed to mould their consciousness and link them up with the class struggles of the working class and of the toiling peasantry.

We have also failed to pay even minimum attention to the student and youth sections of working class and of toiling peasant origin, to develop them and to draw them into our movement.

Without constantly drawing into the class organisations the students and younger generations, developing them as Party members and promoting them as cadres, we can never meet the growing need for more and more cadre to man the class struggles and revolutionary battles of our people.

We have already neglected the work among the students and youth and it is costing us heavily and any further neglect means utmost peril to our revolutionary movement and utmost priority is to be given to work among students and youth. Special youth sections of trade unions and of agricultural labour and kisan organisations have to be set up.

Special stress has to be laid on work among the student mass from secondary standards to colleges, especially among the latter in university and educational centres. Their democratic consciousness and later class consciousness has to be aroused and their movement and organisations have to be closely linked with the working class and kisan movements and organisation.

The student and youth cadres are to be carefully developed and safeguarded from police and government attacks.

Important and leading cadres have to be put in charge of this work.

### **Failure In Recruiting Women Members**

Another serious defect in our Party organisation is our failure to develop the womens's movement, or to draw women into their class

organisations and also to recruit women into our Party and develop them.

We have not paid serious attention to organise working women in their respective TUs or service associations along with their menfolk. During the nineteen-forties, when we were working to some extent among women, it was more a multi-class women's organisation with the main concentration on such demands as "equality of treatment of both sexes", "Marriage rights", share in property, etc. We have failed to see the importance of organising them in their class organisations. This feature has become more manifest during the nineteen-fifties. This non-class approach and our failure to organise them in their class organisations have resulted in stagnation of work among women in general.

Similarly even the little effort which we made earlier to recruit women members and develop them has been more or less relegated to the background during the 'fifties. We have practically given up the task of educating our womenfolk and raising their political and cultural level. Because of this, though many of them co-operative with their husbands and brothers and do not oppose their participation in mass and Party activities, it is more due to their loyalty to family ties than due to their roused class or political consciousness. That is why we see in our own families, observance of many of the feudal custom, caste and religious prejudices and practices. Instead of fighting their prejudices by drawing our womenfolk into their class organisations and political activity, we Party members start acquiescing in their practices and gradually surrender ourselves to these practices.

This neglect of work among womenfolk, especially of drawing them into their class organisations and activities, and of our failure to recruit them into the Party and develop them, has already cost the Party heavily. Instead of their being a source of tremendous strength and inspiration in the common battle against the class enemy and its rule, when we have to undergo tremendous sacrifices, when the brunt of the enemy offensive will have to be borne by the womenfolk and children, they

become a drag on us and we also feel discouraged and dispirited seeing the daily difficulties in our houses.

Therefore carrying out our Party members' duties means that we must take it as a part of our Party duty, as a part of our revolutionary duty, to educate our own womenfolk politically, draw them into mass activities, into their class organisations, and then to the Party. We must not treat them as mere housewives and confine them to the house to cook for the family and look after children, i.e., not treat them as mere chattel but we must treat them and develop them as partners and companions in the great battle for achieving a new society.

### **The Wrong Concept Of Party Versus Mass Organisations**

Our Party organisational principles enjoin on us that every Party member must join and work to build up a mass organisation. As he works and leads mass activity, he groups the militants thrown up during the struggles into auxiliary groups, develop the consciousness, discipline and functioning of the members of these groups and as they develop Communist consciousness, recruit them as candidates into the Party and later admit them to full membership. As our Party membership increases, they function and strengthen the mass organisations and take up more mass activity and spread the mass movement to newer sections and to newer areas.

Instead of this well-established pattern of Party functioning—mass activity—mass organisation—organisation of militants (auxiliary groups)—candidate membership—full Party membership—further increased. mass activity—we have substituted—mass membership of the Party—Party general bodies—agitation and campaigns, mass struggles—and further Party membership. Since our Party membership level itself is reduced to that of TU or kisan militant masses, we have in fact made the Party itself a substitute for mass organisation which only means crippling our work among the people of different political trends.

Another pattern that has developed in our organisational structure is that of Party organisers versus mass campaigners or mass leaders.

The Party must become the leader of united mass organisations. For this our Party cadre must work in the mass organisations and function as their functionaries. But our leading central, state and even district Party leaders are not functionaries of TU, kisan or other mass organisations at the appropriate levels. These functions are being discharged by other cadres whom the Party has deputed to work among this or that class organisation, while the most effective and experienced comrades are taken on to the Party organisation front. And these Party organisers giving directions and guidance to the cadres who are actually working in the mass organisation has led to these cadres on mass organisations feeling that these Party bosses do not know the real problems of mass organisation but try to dictate and dominate them, while the Party organiser thinks that mass front leaders have little or no theoretical-political level.

This conflict between the Party organisers and mass functionaries has led to the feeling that organisation and developing of the Party from among the mass of militants thrown up during struggles is not the job of the mass organisation functionaries but that of Party organisers. Party organisers feel that their job is to take classes, hold Party general body meetings, etc., but looking after day-to-day routine mass organisational problems that arise is the job of "mass fronters". This dichotomy has resulted in retarding the development of mass organisations on the one hand and, on the other, has also hindered building up the Party from TU or kisan militants.

This has also resulted in the phenomenon that Party leaders are not mass organisation leaders, nor are leaders of mass organisations Party leaders. Hence the broad general mass of workers and kisans who have developed TU or kisan consciousness but not yet Communist consciousness do not look on the Party or Party leaders as their own functionaries and leaders. The Party mass does not feel the need to join the mass organisation or look to the leaders of mass organisation, even though they may be Party members, as their leaders, their leaders being outside the mass organisation. This hampers serious attention being



given to building up real strong and big mass organisations and developing the Party's role in these organisations.

In this connection, it is necessary to recall that we instead of organising our basic units on functional basis especially in industrial areas, have deviated from this principle and built up our branches only on a territorial basis generally. It is certainly due to the conception that our main activity will be on territorial basis, suitable as for electoral contest, than on relying on mass activity and mass organisation. It is good that our Party Constitution at Calcutta has emphasised the importance of the Party units being organised on functional basis.

### **Functioning Of Fractions**

Further the class collaborationist, revisionist outlook led to the rejection of the role of the Party in guiding and laying down the line for our comrades in the trade unions and other mass organisations. This led to the trade union and other mass organisation leaders functioning independently of the respective Party committees, taking their own decisions. The leading role of the Party must be asserted in practice by giving concrete guidance, by devoting greater attention to trade union and other mass organisational problems.

This class collaborationist outlook also led to the virtual collapse of Communist fractions. Even where they existed, they discussed generally such matters as union elections, choice of office-bearers, day-to-day problems, but rarely political and theoretical propaganda work among the workers, recruitment to the Party and training them in Marxism-Leninism. The fraction's responsibility is not only to guide the day-to-day activity of the trade union, to ensure that the trade unions function on the basis of working class democracy, the mass of workers actively participating in shaping its decisions, and to give concrete guidance during strikes, but it is also its duty to see that the trade unions and the workers are taken out of the narrow shell of economism, and are made class-conscious and are able more and more to link their daily struggle with the working class struggles for socialism and state power. Union activities have to be guided in such a way that the

advanced and militant workers come to look upon the main slogans of the Party as their own. It is the responsibility of the fraction to make every effort to enrol the best of the working class militants as new Party members, to see that Party literature reaches the mass of workers and to see that they are trained to study and practise Marxism-Leninism.

This is possible only if the primary units of the Party are organised on factory basis; every Party member in the factory is made to work in some trade union; all Party members in a union, in its general council or executive, are organised into convenient fraction groups; these groups function under the guidance of fraction committees or Party sub-committees consisting of developed trade union Party functionaries as well as members of corresponding Party committees, and all under the respective Party committees.

It is only thus that the Party will be in a position to develop and lead the trade unions and the working class movement, and can in practice become the highest form of class organisation.

This applies to our Party functioning in all mass organisations.

### **Party Structure and The Persisting Legacies of The Reformist Past**

Another serious organisational deviation that developed in our Party was the giving up of the functioning of the basic unit, the cell or the branch, and trying to function through the general body of Party members in an area. The apparent reason for this departure from our basic organisational principles was that before we could train enough capable branch secretaries, it was necessary to activate the Party members and the easiest and shortest way to do this was to organise general body meetings of all Party members in a locality or town. It was first begun as the quickest way of reporting the decisions of higher Party units, as a way of giving political and organisational report by Party leaders. In the name of political reporting and activating for campaigns, the general body meetings acquired the character of mass meetings of Party members and close sympathisers.

Later, the general body meetings have in fact become the Party's basic units, where discussions are to be held and decisions are to be taken on political, mass or organisational issues. This practice was justified in the name of inner-Party democracy! The basic Party unit, the cell or later even the branch, has been given the go-by, the general body in a locality becoming the accepted Party basic functioning unit. It meant no proper discussion of any issue as in such a large body most of the Party members do not get time to express their criticism or make self-criticism from their own experience. It becomes possible that only a few leading vocal comrades talk and decisions are taken without large numbers able to participate.

It also becomes impossible to divide and allot work among various members and check their fulfilment. Instead of functioning the basic unit, the branch, through Party units, through various mass organisations, a reformist pattern of functioning through 'leaders', 'followers' and 'masses' has developed.

This practice of functioning through general body meetings, through the leader-follower pattern has led the Party members to become passive and move into any activity only when the leaders move. Instead of thousands of small and compact meetings to explain political developments and carry on our agit-prop work, we depend upon some star speakers or well-known leaders. Instead of Party units taking up on their own the enrolment of Party membership, mass organisation membership, collection of funds, sales of literature, or mass activities, we wait for leaders from higher committees to come and do these jobs. Local branch members are ready to follow the leaders in carrying out their errands, but on their own do not start doing. This results in a few limited cadres or leaders doing all the jobs and since these jobs cannot be done simultaneously by a few cadres, the whole activity gets slowed down. It is only by making Party units, especially the branch or cell, to function that we can carry out these multifarious activities and strengthen mass activity, build mass organisations, recruit new militants into auxiliary groups, educate them to become Party members, and make them participate in further mass activities, and

then further educate and train them to select them as our cadres. It is only through activising and functioning the branches that we can sell the Party organs and literature, collect Party funds and maintain our cadres, take more and more cadres as wholetime revolutionaries and expand our areas of functioning.

Another revisionist practice that was introduced in the Party organisational structure was the three-tier system— the council, the executive committee and the secretariat. Except the last, the others are constituted with large numbers, all this in the name of extending inner-Party democracy. We know from our practical experience that even large councils and executives did not promote inner-Party democracy, but led to interminable discussions wherein only few comrades could participate, spending too much time to go through the proceedings of the three-tier system and attending one meeting after another, and in reality leaving the decision-making job often to the smallest unit— the secretariat.

Though we have abolished the ‘councils’ along with the ‘three-tier system’ and reduced the number of members of the central and state committees, there is still a strong opinion that larger committees must be continued to preserve inner-Party democracy and prevent wrong decisions being taken by a few in the small committees. Comrades forget that the real guarantee that the committees do not make hasty or wrong decisions is the functioning of Party units from branch to the state level, actively discussing the decisions of higher Party units, criticising the wrong points and reporting back to the higher bodies what they consider to be wrong, that the size of the committees did not and do not ensure a correct political line.

In this connection it is very necessary to critically examine as to how this ‘three-tier’ system, GBs as basic units, and unwieldy and large-sized committees, etc., have arisen. These reformist changes in the structure of Party organisation had an intimate connection with the right-reformist and opportunist political line that was sought to be pursued in the united CPI by a section of its leadership.

In short it was the clear reflection of the bourgeois parliamentary illusions that had come to be entertained by a section of the dominant leadership in the Party. It was an organisational line based on 'legalism', born out of the faith in bourgeois legality and the outcome of faith in the so-called parliamentary path.

A glance at the whole process as to how it was ultimately worked out into a systematic right-opportunist political line and organisational pattern would convince us about the correctness of the observations made above. In the inner-Party struggle that flared up anew in the first quarter of the year 1955, the then dominant section of the leadership was confronted with the spectacle of a sharply and evenly divided Central Committee, when it proposed big departures and a new political line. It was precisely to bypass and steam-roller that opposition that the ideas of enlarging the Central Committee, introduction of the 'three-tier' system and the building of a so-called mass Party, etc., were first seriously mooted. In the name of representation to all states in the Central Committee and under the ostensible plea of bringing 'new blood' into it, several new comrades were brought into the Central Committee. Consequently a good number of comrades who had neither adequate mass movement experience nor political experience, who had scant equipment in Marxism-Leninism, who had no experience in either Party building or the building of mass organisations, and whose theoretical and ideological level was in no way better than, and in fact inferior to, that of several DCMs and state committee members in the major Party states like West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra, etc., were injected into the Central Committee and the National Council.

However, the question is not merely big committees versus small committees or their unwieldy nature and the consequent ineffective discussions and immature decisions. Nor is it a question of a facile idea that bigger committees alone can safeguard inner-Party democracy while the smaller ones fail to do the same. The basic question that arises here is, what sort of committee or committees, with comrades of what sort of calibre, and with what sort of ideological-political standards they should be composed in a really revolutionary Party of the proletariat?

Again, if we look back to our own history we find how even though an avowedly right-reformist political line advocated by a sizable section at the Fourth and Sixth Party Congress delegates received a set-back. The advocates of that line were able to recover from their set-back, because no corresponding organisational guarantees were worked out in forming the central bodies of the Party.

Thus we observe in life that a wrong and alien class political-ideological line not only leads to wrong and anti-proletarian organisational forms and practices, but wrong organisational forms and structural changes in a Communist Party also, in turn, pave the way and facilitate the pushing through of an erroneous political line. We should learn the lesson from this and guard against its repetition in future.

The pattern of functioning through GBs, the introduction of the 'three-tier' system and the setting up of huge Party committees in utter disregard of all ideological-political standards for the members of these committees had, also, its crassest legalist outlook behind it. This erroneous trend which raised its head as early as the 1952 post-general election period got strengthened gradually, and crystallised in the end into a systematic line which discarded every precaution against attacks on the Party by the class enemies.

It is highly instructive to cite here what Lenin stated on the subject: "Notwithstanding their false and hypocritical declarations, the governments of even the most enlightened and freest of countries, where the bourgeois democratic system is most 'stable' are already systematically and secretly drawing up blacklists of Communists and constantly violating their own constitutions so as to give secret or semi-secret encouragement to the white guards and to the murder of Communists in all countries, planting *agents provocateurs* among the Communists, etc., etc. Only a most reactionary philistine, no matter what cloak of fine 'democratic' and pacifist phrases he may don will deny this fact or the conclusion that of necessity follows from it."

The truth of every word of these remarks about bourgeois legality has been amply demonstrated during all these long years and, in particular, in the period we are living through after the second world war. Thousands and lakhs of Communists were butchered by the bourgeoisie and landlords in a series of countries in different continents of the world war on the pretext or the other. Not only are several Communist Parties legally banned, but even the legality that is accorded to CPs in most of the cases is fake and every vicious device is invented and practised to harass them, oppress them and undermine the Parties. In our own country, even under the 'benign democratic' rule of Nehru, hundreds of Communists were tortured and shot dead, thousands were thrown behind bars for years together and people even for their remote sympathies with the Party were victimised and terrorised. We know what the Congress Government did to our Party in the year 1962-63 and again in 1964-66. Who does not know that not a day passes these days without some slander or other being spread against our Party, utilising the countrywide bourgeois press, with a view to crudely suppressing it by state force and destroying it before it gains mass strength?

In the face of these harsh realities a dangerous outlook of legalism has gripped our Party since 1952. Reckless exposure of every donor and rare contacts, utter inability to keep inner-Party discussions and secrets from reaching the class enemies, complete lack of vigilance against the danger of infiltration by enemy agents into the Party, the issuing of Party cards and keeping of open lists of all Party members, the formation of huge committees in which neither any serious discussion of vital issues is possible nor revolutionary standards for the members in forming these committees can be observed, and a host of other evil practices came into existence. Despite our discarding the revisionist theories and politics of the Dangeites, this erroneous outlook persists, and its legacies which are deep-rooted are far from liquidated. A sustained and systematic struggle to eliminate this evil and corresponding organisational steps to safeguard the Party against any surprise enemy attack are urgently demanded. In pursuance of these

objectives, the Party Constitution, which was so amended in the past as to make it a Constitution fit only for a parliamentary, social-democratic Party, is to be thoroughly gone into and suitably amended so as to make it a revolutionary instrument, in the hands of a really revolutionary Party. Every conscious Party member should realise that a real revolutionary ideological-political line can never be implemented by a Party organisation patterned on the lines of legalism and parliamentary cretinism with high-sounding and deceptive slogans of 'democracy', 'freedom', 'individual liberty' and so on and so forth.

One of the erroneous trends that gained currency in the Party during the period of the reformist and parliamentary deviations, was discarding the Leninist principle of insisting on weightage for working class centres, and weightage on the basis of revolutionary mass movements in the matter of representation at Party conferences or congresses and in the method of composing and constituting the committees at different levels. It had come to be accepted that the strength of the Party membership *alone* was made the criterion for representation. Similar was the concept of territorial representation in the top policy-making bodies of the Party, a concept that disregards the nature, character and depth of the revolutionary movement in the concerned area and the theoretical, political level of the representatives from such area or areas and their experience of the mass movement. In short, for example, a state unit with a membership of 5,000 with a mobilising capacity of 5 million votes or conduct mass movements where millions participate is given the same representation in congresses and committees as is given to another state unit with the same membership strength, but whose mobilising capacity is not even half compared with the former. This baneful practice should go.

Our Party, in course of time, will have to be reorganised from top to bottom on the new, correct and revolutionary lines, if it is to play its true class role in our nation's revolutionary movement.



## **Lack Of Cadre Policy And What It Means for A Communist Party**

The worst part of our failure in Party building lies in the total absence of what is commonly known for the Communist Party as a well-defined cadre policy. So far neither in the once united Communist Party of India nor after our Party breaking away with the revisionists at the end of the year 1964, there exists a cadre policy and for that matter it was not even once formulated and discussed by the central bodies of our Party. Before we proceed to discuss this question, it is fruitful to make some general observations on the topic.

Just as some terms like stage, strategy and tactics are borrowed by Marxist-Leninist literature from military vocabulary and are used in a specific scientific sense, the term cadre also is borrowed from the same and is used by the Communist Parties. In plain words the term cadre means a nucleus or the permanent skeleton of a military unit, i.e., the commissioned and non-commissioned officer corps of different grades around whom the rank and file of the army may be speedily grouped.

A Communist Party, the advance detachment of the working class, cannot conduct its class battles for power successfully unless and until it is organised like an army, with a firm discipline, as Lenin puts it, bordering on military discipline. Such an organisation is simply inconceivable without a nucleus of able and well trained cadres for the Party. "The Party cadres constitute the commanding staff of the Party", observed Stalin. Further he taught us to cultivate cadres 'as a gardener cultivates his favourite fruit tree' and "treasure them as a gold reserves of the Party". Comrade Dimitrov, in his reply speech to the discussion at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International had dealt with this subject in detail and told the Congress, "Comrades, our best resolutions will remain scraps of paper if we lack the people who can put them into effect", and warned as to how, "in their practical work, our Parties have not yet realised by far that *people, cadres, decide everything*". He sharply summed up the point, that, "only a correct policy in regard to cadres will enable our Parties to develop and utilise all available forces to the utmost, and obtain from the enormous

reservoir of the mass movement ever fresh reinforcements of new and better active workers.”

Though everyone amongst our leading comrades are fully conversant with these authoritative pronouncements regarding the problem of cadres, it must be admitted to our regret and shame that scant respect is paid to this problem, and it is high time that we awaken quickly and make a clean break with the sad past and take upon ourselves the task of earnestly tackling the problem. It is all the more urgent in view of the fact that a good part of the cadres belonging to the once united Party deserted to revisionism, while new additional tasks and responsibilities are falling upon the existing cadres with which they are unable to cope.

To tackle the problem and evolve a cadre policy for our Party we should be clear as to what a correct policy with regards to cadres implies? In answering this question, the six important points made by Comrade Dimitrov can surely serve us as an unfailing guide. They are:

(1) First, it is necessary to know one's own cadres. It requires systematic study of cadres in our Party.

(2) Second, proper promotion of cadres on the basis of their ability to discharge the particular functions allotted to them.

(3) Third, our ability to use cadres to the best advantage, i.e., ability to ascertain and utilise the valuable qualities and talents of every single active worker.

(4) Fourth, proper distribution of cadres, to the fronts, areas and tasks.

(5) Fifth, systematic assistance, which should take the form of careful instruction, comradely control, rectification of shortcoming and mistakes and concrete guidance.

(6) Sixth, proper care for the preservation of cadres which not only implies protecting them and safeguarding them against the possible concentrated attacks of the class enemies, but also properly ensuring their minimum livelihood and the welfare of their families and children.

After laying down the above six points, he raised the question as to “what should be our main criteria in selecting cadres”, and answered thus :

(1) First, absolute devotion to the cause of the working class, loyalty to the Party, tested in face of enemy— in battle, in prison, in court.

(2) Second, the closest possible contact with the masses who are wholly absorbed in the interests of the masses, feel the life pulse of the masses, know their sentiments and requirements, and respected by the masses.

(3) Third, ability independently to find one’s bearings and not to be afraid of assuming responsibility in making decisions, as one who fears to take responsibility is not and cannot be a leader. The people who say, “I will do only what I am told” are not Bolsheviks.

(4) Fourth, discipline and Bolshevik hardening in the struggle against the class enemy as well as well as in their irreconcilable opposition to all deviations from the Bolshevik line or in other words the political line of the Party worked out and accepted by the Party after a thorough discussion and decisions at the Party Congresses, Conferences, Plenums and Central Committee and Polit Bureau meetings.

Such are the guiding lines on which a correct cadre policy can be worked out and a proper line of selection, grading, promotion, education, etc., can be pursued.

### **Cadre Policy**

But the worst and consistent failure of our Party, as pointed out above, has been in its cadre policy. We do not know our cadres at different levels, nor has our Party leadership at different levels any common understanding or assessment of each of our cadres. Without knowing the strong and weak points of each cadre, how can any leadership allot duties and tasks and get them carried out efficiently to achieve the best of results in the development of mass movements and the Party organisation?

Further, the Party has not been devoting sufficient attention to look after the minimum needs of our cadres (or whom we call wholetimers). We do not know whether they have families and dependents, and if so how many— how they earn their living— whether the Party wages paid enable them to have even a basic existence, if not how they are supplementing the Party wage, are they resorting to devious methods which ultimately affect the development of revolutionary consciousness of the person concerned and even cause tremendous damage to the Party itself.

We know, that in most of the states, most of our cadres (wholetimers) are mostly left to their own resources or efforts. The Party may give him a small amount which covers his expenses partially. The difference has to be made up by him, by replying on his property if any, or on his relatives or friends. In this system, those who have greater contacts and can get more money can manage some satisfactory living, while others are left struggling hard even to maintain a subsistence existence. This breeds unhealthy tendencies or bickerings in the Party organisation quite harmful to the discipline and smooth running and efficient functioning of the Party.

The worst aspect of this neglect of the cadre is our inability to recruit even the absolutely minimum number of them to man even the existing mass or Party organisation. Without full-time cadre, the various activities on different fronts by the different units cannot be coordinated only on the basis of part-time functionaries, however large they may be. If the work has to be stable and planned, and even to allot and check up the work among the part-time functionaries, it is absolutely essential that we have full-time cadre. Let us recall Lenin's words— it is wrong to expect workers or peasants or other Party members to toil hard in a factory, field or office for 8 hours and more, and then expect them to satisfactorily carry on the revolutionary organisational jobs.

Because of the failure to assure even a bare existence to our full-time cadre we hesitate to recruit new full-time cadre to coordinate the expanding mass movement or to recruit, train and develop more and

more new militants that are being thrown up, nor do we have cadre to work among students or key industrial and educational administrative centres, or in developing the agricultural labour and peasant movement in contiguous belts. Everything is left to spontaneity and chance development.

Every other activity of the Party has to be subordinated to that of choosing and training and developing and deploying our cadre. Otherwise the whole Party activity will face serious failure and the whole progress of the mass movement is bound to fail inevitably.

The state and district committees should, first, draw up lists of cadres, then proceed to assess them and verify the records at the committee level; and then proceed to tackle all other questions connected with the cadre policy as indicated above. These lists and the reports covering the lists about state committee and district secretariat level should be forwarded to the Central Committee by hand.

### **Uneven Development of The Party And The Organisational Problems it Poses**

The Party has developed very unevenly in our country. There are states like "West Bengal, Andhra and Kerala with Party membership of around 15,000 each. On the other hand there are states like Karnataka, Rajasthan, Assam, Maharashtra, Bihar, U.P. or Tripura (Union Territory of 15 lakh population) where our membership varies between 1,000 and 3,000. (In Punjab and Tamilnad we have about 5,000 Party members.) We have Union Territories like Delhi, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh and states like Orissa, Gujarat, Haryana or Madhya Pradesh with less than 500 members each. And in each state, in various districts or sub-divisions and in various tehsils or thanas we have equally uneven development of the Party.

The Party membership does not correctly reflect the level or depth of mass movements; in Bengal (16,000), though the membership is only a little more than that of Andhra (15,000), the intensity of mass struggles is the greatest and the most widespread than in any other

state in India; Kerala state follows next in mass activity with a membership of 20,000. Andhra cannot claim mass activity and struggles as in Kerala or Bengal.

This uneven development is also reflected if we analyse in which class, sectors or areas, our movement is strong or weak. In Bengal, in the Calcutta industrial belt, we are very strong but in rural belts, especially as we go further and further from the Calcutta belt, it becomes weaker and weaker. We are far stronger among middle class employees than in jute or in some other important industries. Similarly in Andhra, we are weak in towns and the working class centres, and practically do not exist in the Hyderabad or Adilabad industrial belts. We are strong in the central districts of West Godavari and Krishna, Guntur, Nalgonda and Khammam and the movement is weak as we move away from these districts.

In most of the states, except in Bengal and Kerala, we are weak among the student mass or student centres, though during the last two years, especially during the last few months, widespread student struggles are bursting out in various states.

This uneven development is again reflected in the character of the mass struggles, whether they be on purely economic or sectional class demands or whether they be on political demands or in support of the demands of other classes or of general democratic demands. It is mainly in Bengal we see the working class going on general strike in sympathy with the demands of other sections and on general democratic and political demands along with its own class demands.

Naturally, the level and political consciousness and disciplined strength of Party members in different states vary tremendously. Apart from the different standards of Party recruitment, the experience of mass struggles in key industries and strategic centres, the experience of political mass actions as different from that of economic struggles, have their own impact on the political and ideological levels of the Party members and organisational discipline of the Party members and Party units.

So, how wrong we were when we gave up the earlier constitutional provision for weightage in the delegations to be elected to Party conferences and congresses on the basis of the strategic importance of the Party movement in certain areas and on the basis of mass struggles launched and made membership (members) as the only basis for deciding the quota of delegates to various conferences. This had led to over-representation of states with loose but large membership and smaller states (in membership) as against big states (in membership) and thus enabled the revisionists to control quite a considerable proportion of such delegates and win majority in most of the states and at the centre. Instead of the most politically conscious section that is leading mass struggles being in the leadership of the Party, we have to witness the most backward sections of our Party, with no deep mass struggle experience being at the head of the Party. If this has bred and encouraged the growth of revisionism which ultimately forced the split, one need not be surprised.

This uneven development poses a number of problems before us and unless we solve them, we will not make headway in removing the revisionist concepts in our Party organisation as such or in developing the Party and mass movement.

1. Firstly, our tactics of partial mass struggle cannot be of the same uniform pattern throughout India. It must vary from state to state, and in each state from district to district or region to region depending upon the organisational strength of our Party and of the mass organisation and of the tempo of mass movement and even in the district from area to area.

Similarly it must vary on different fronts, the working class front, agricultural labour and peasant front, student and youth front. In one front in one area we may be heading militant mass general strikes for specific political or economic demands, while in another area or front, we may have to be content with submitting petitions, holding rallies or even only building up links with the masses even in more elementary

forms, like night schools and cultural activities or mere humanitarian social service.

2. Secondly, today, we have some key (or big) industrial and educational and administrative centres in some states as the focal point of our activity and organisation. To sustain and develop the movement and organisation even in these industrial and educational centres, it must be coupled with developing kisan work around these industrial and educational centres to larger and larger areas in a contiguous belt. Without developing such kisan work, especially work among agricultural labour and poor peasantry, there can be no development and defence of the people's partial struggles either in towns or in the rural areas, nor is there going to be any hegemony of the working class over the democratic movement and advance towards people's democracy.

Similarly where we have scattered kisan areas in a district or state, consolidate them into contiguous areas and develop them to be strong and capable of defending on their own the people's struggle in that area. Further try to link up these areas with industrial and educational centres nearest to it. And till we can build up such a contiguous belt of movement, the scattered pockets must be nursed carefully with elementary forms of agitation, organisation and on elementary partial struggles or elementary demands of the people in a total and narrow sphere.

3. Thirdly, in our choice of fronts priority is for the working class and students in the cities and agricultural labour and poor peasants in rural areas. In working class, too, the priority is for key and major industries and then the scattered small-scale or household industries.

4. Fourthly, consequent on the above three priorities the organisational structure of our Party must correspond to the realities of our existence and mass movement and not as a set pattern like government administration.

Today irrespective of the number of Party members or Party units, we set up tehsil or district units, without even considering whether



setting up such committees is necessary to coordinate and even expand our Party work in that locality and whether setting up such committees create new layers of Party units, unnecessary and even obstructive tiers of Party structure. We have tehsil committees for a membership of about 20 to 30 and even district units for a similar number of Party membership, even if we do not have 5-10 branches or units!

So, no local or intermediate committees should be set up unless there are at least 5-10 branches or units existing in an area, and unless the higher committee (district or state committee) feels it absolutely essential to set up an intermediate committee to effectively coordinate the activities of the Party units, existing in that area or district. It would be a far better way of Party functioning if the district or the higher committee itself continues the co-ordinating and guiding work rather than setting up tehsil units which cannot meet without some district committee member convening it, attending it and guiding its discussions, while the tehsil committee members are no more than branch secretaries.

The same thing applies to district committees with small membership, and few Party units. We need not set up such committees and give them the political and organisational status of a district committee. Such districts may be clubbed in convenient groups or regions, and a regional committee can be constituted with direct links with local units without intermediaries of district or tehsil committees.

The principle that must guide us in setting up tehsil or district committees is whether it is absolutely essential to have such committees for co-ordinating the existing Party branches or Party units and their activity. Merely because we have something in a tehsil or district, we need not at once set up a committee. As a general rule we can say that there need not be a tehsil committee or local committee, as long as the district committee members or district organiser comrades can directly attend the branches and guide them. A minimum of 5-10 units before a local or tehsil committee is formed has to be insisted.

Similarly a district committee need not be formed unless the state committee cannot coordinate a group of small districts, directly through its organisers or through a regional committee, for a group of districts, the regional committee members going directly to the local committees in that region.

Similarly small states (with little membership or with little mass influence) should not be given the status and rights of a state committee but those of a district or local committee, though it may be called a Gujarat or Haryana or Madhya Pradesh Party Committee. Their work has to be guided and coordinated either by the neighbouring big state committee or by Central Committee organisers.

There is similarly another wrong organisational practice which we are following. If in one corner of a district there is some mass movement, and all around it for a great distance in the same district, no mass movement exists but across that district boundary, adjacent to this area, in the neighbouring district there is another mass movement area, we refuse to evolve a common Party organisational structure to combine and lead the movement on a united base, but would rather keep it separate under two separate districts and the coordination to be done by the state committee through the two separate district committees.

Here the point to be noted is that one must be ready to form suitable Party committees (organisational form) that would help to build the movement in contiguous belts than to stick to the so-called government administrative divisions without looking to the needs of the movement itself.

The lesser the number of intermediate committees between Party members and district and state leadership the better it is for efficient Party functioning.

## **The Principle Of Democratic Centralism And The Rise Of Federal Tendencies**

A Communist Party, unlike other bourgeois and petty bourgeois political parties, is a fighting revolutionary organisation of the proletariat in its struggle for power, and as such it stands in constant confrontation with the bourgeois state, which is the most centralised force of violence and oppression. Unless the political party of the proletariat is organised, united and conducted on a highly centralised manner it cannot stand up against its most powerful class enemies and discharge its destined revolutionary tasks. The principle of democratic centralism, so evolved, elaborated and insisted upon by Lenin and which has come to be universally accepted by all the Communist Parties as an absolutely correct principle, is the only organisational principle that can keep the Communist Party in fighting trim and can sustain the Party as a real revolutionary Party.

It is precisely against this basic principle of Party organisation, besides other vital ideological-political issues, that the modern revisionists direct their vicious attacks. As sharply pointed out by the Moscow Declaration of 1957: "The revisionists try to kill the revolutionary spirit of Marxism, to undermine faith in socialism among the working class and working people in general. They deny the historical necessity for a proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat during the period of transition from capitalism, deny the leading role of the Marxist-Leninist Party, reject the principles of proletarian internationalism and call for rejection of the Leninist principles of Party organisation and above all, of democratic centralism, for transforming the Communist Party from a militant revolutionary organisation into some kind of debating society. The experience of the international Communist movement shows that resolute defence by the Communist and Workers' Parties of the Marxist-Leninist unity of their ranks and the banning of factions and groups sapping that unity is a requisite for successful solution of the tasks of the socialist revolution for building socialism and communism". This attack of modern revisionism on the principle of democratic centralism on an international scale has had its additional devastating effect on the then

united CPI, in which this salutary principle not only had not yet taken firm roots, but also got undermined in the long process of a right reformist political line and organisational practices since the year 1951-52. As such, this is a deep-rooted malady, haunting our Party as one of the evil legacies and demanding of us determined and presistent struggle to restore it properly.

At the same time, we have to take note of another manifestation of the same tendency, which is raising its head today. In the name of fighting revisionism, it claims that every Party member or a group of Party members has a right to advocate what it considers to be the revolutionary line and that they have a right to form groups inside the Party, with freedom to advocate their own views against the Party line. This tendency is also a negation of the principle of democratic centralism and is only an expression of petty-bourgeois anarchism in the Party organisation. If it is permitted, it destroys the very fabric of Party organisation and immensely harms the people's revolutionary struggles.

### **What Does Democratic Centralism Mean?**

Centralism in our Party means : leading bodies are elected by the Party membership and enjoy their confidence. It is this that gives them the authority to manage all Party affairs and command the obedience of the individual to the organisation of the minority to the majority, of the lower organisation to the higher, and of all constituent bodies to the Central Committee. The Party's centralism instead of being separated is based on democracy.

Democracy in our Party means : Party meetings are convened and carried through under proper leadership; resolutions are adopted after thorough preparation and careful deliberation; elections are held after carefully prepared list of nominations. In our Party democracy is neither democracy without leadership, nor is it ultra-democracy nor anarchy within the Party.

It is only by bringing out a high degree of inner-Party democracy, and on that basis that a high degree of centralism in Party leadership can be achieved. To develop a high degree of inner-Party democracy:

— The Party committees must include cadres in charge of various lines of work and who maintain good connections with the masses of the people. Decisions have to be reached collectively, assignment of individuals to carry out these decisions and check up whether actually they are carried out are to be made.

— Fostering of criticism and self-criticism is a crucial factor in broadening democracy. Leaders at all levels must be the first to practise thorough-going self-criticism on the defects and errors of their work, accept criticism from others, and never become impulsive or insolent when so criticised.

—Leading bodies must submit reports on their work to Party members and lower bodies, containing not only accomplishments but also defects, weaknesses and mistakes and invite criticism and comments. Party members and lower organisations must make their comments along with their own self-criticism and they must also regularly send reports of their work and activity to higher bodies.

—Meetings must be well conducted and be permeated with a spirit of democracy, criticism and self-criticism. Meetings must not be lifeless and undemocratic, dull with repetitive speeches and routine voting. Too many meetings do not in itself constitute democracy.

—Promote the initiative and activity of the Party membership and raise their sense of responsibility to the cause of the Party, to the cause of the people. Enable them to use their reasoning power and raise problems boldly and properly and fully express their opinions.

—When decisions and instructions from a higher body are received, a serious study of both the instructions and the local circumstances under which they are to be implemented is necessary and is to be encouraged. Resolutely carry out what is practicable, report back what is impracticable giving detailed reasons and requesting amendments. This is the only approach and sincere and intelligent manner of carrying out decisions. We should encourage this kind of creative power and activity on the part of Party members. But the tendency to carry out only those decisions that suits one's taste and disregard others is autonomism and is impermissible. Similarly blind and mechanical

carrying out of decisions without taking the trouble to examine whether particular decisions or instructions are applicable to the circumstances prevailing is also impermissible.

— A leading body should allow its lower organisations and members to set forth their suggestions and questions and to propose revisions to its decisions and instructions which when found really to contain mistakes or defects should be corrected accordingly. If the lower committees are wrong, satisfactory explanation should be given to strengthen their ideas. If the higher body insists on the execution of a decision despite appeal for revision then it should be carried out.

There are comrades who divorce their actions from the Party's leadership and from the Party as a whole; they pay no attention to the overall situation and to the long-range interests of the Party, but act freely without restraint, guided solely by their own interests and views. They indulge in all kinds of unorganisational, non-political and unprincipled utterances and actions; deliberately resort to exaggeration to spread discussions within the Party, or engage in endless gossip or wrangling; they even try to take advantage of the Party membership's temporary lack of understanding due to insufficient consideration to take votes on their own proposals to fulfil their own designs in the name of majority. This is ultra-democracy. The root of this lies in petty-bourgeois lack of cohesion which when brought into the Party becomes the idea of ultra-democracy, politically and organisationally. It is fundamentally incompatible with the fighting tasks of the proletariat and is, indeed, objectively a kind of counter-revolutionary ideology.

However, our discussion on the principle of democratic centralism remains abstract and academic and the struggle to restore it inside the Party organisational functioning fails to achieve the desired results, if the manifestations of its distortion and violations in our Party are not correctly dealt with. We will take some of these manifestations below.

One can certainly demand reopening of an issue even in the Party Programme on the basis of one's experience gained in the course of implementing the Party's line. And if his opinion is supported by a substantial minority of the Central Committee or by Party units

representing one-third of delegates at the previous Party Congress, an inner-Party discussion has to be allowed as per our Constitution. Distortion of this right of inner-Party discussion and democracy manifests itself in a demand for unrestricted right for a Party member to reopen discussion on the basic issues including the Party Programme whenever any decision of the Party goes against his own opinion. Such a demand if accepted encroaches on the right of the entire Party to have any firm line to implement for any considerable period of time.

But if such an unrestricted right for any individual Party member or a committee is allowed, the principle of the minority abiding by the majority decision will be reduced to a mockery; the Party as such will be thrown into a position of a debating club, with no firm line of its own to implement; the political line itself gets evolved, from time to time, not in the process of its correctness tested in practice, but on the basis of abstract discussion; and finally such a right for the individual Party member or committee, if conceded, would place the 'right' of the individual above the right of the Party.

Take another example. Today, because of a number of difficult conditions obtaining in our Party regarding adequate number of cadres to man different committees at different levels, most of our central committee members, state committee members and district committee members happen to be members, simultaneously, of two, and at times, even three Party committees. A demand is raised that in the course of inner-Party discussion on the problems of ideological issues in the international Communist movement, the central committee, state committee and district committee members should be permitted to express their individual views on the Central Committee's draft in the respective lower committees in which their major functioning and working take place.

It is argued that the demand for such a right to express differing views by members in the committees, besides the respective top committees in which they are members and where they are completely free to discuss the questions, is made because the subject is still being discussed in the Party and hence such expression of differing views

alone will “stimulate” healthy discussions below without which the discussions may not be effective and lively. That is, in plain words, first to raise the demand that those comrades who are members in two Party committees, of the central committee and state committee or state committee and district committee, are not satisfied with their right of discussion in the respective higher committees but want to express their individual views on the subject in both the committees; secondly, to propose that healthy inner-Party discussions are possible only when there are two opposing documents, majority and minority, and when the opposing minority opinion or draft is absent its place can be substituted by respective top committee members taking their individual differing views to the next committee below. These are incorrect views and are fraught with harmful consequences for the functioning of a revolutionary Party. First of all, it is totally wrong to say that the Party’s resolutions are properly discussed only when there are two opposing views presented either in documents or orally. Every resolution of the higher committee should be discussed, normally, by all lower committees or units, and all comrades participating in the discussions at their unit level are expected to contribute to them from their own experience and the understanding they derive on their own in the course of their work and study. Secondly, the discussion ‘stimulation’ concept through the process of higher committee members taking their differences to the next lower committees, in practice, adversely affects the cohesion and unity of top committees and paralyses them from functioning as policy-shaping and leading Party bodies. Thirdly, inner-Party discussions, if such a practice is introduced, become ‘free’ discussions without the proper guidance of the central or the state committee. Lastly, such a practice deprives the Party of a political line to implement during the period of discussion, as the defence and implementation of the line does not become obligatory for all the leading personnel.

Apart from the tendencies cited above which are currently observed, there were a number of erroneous ideas that came to prevail in the Party during the period of 1952-64. The practice of submitting a panel, i.e., a list of names sponsored to be elected at the Party conferences



and congresses by the outgoing Party committee was subjected to furious attack on the ground that such a method would 'influence' the the election of committees and thus affect the 'democratic' process. The constituting of Party sub-committees for the effective functioning of Party fractions in the mass fronts, etc., by respective committees was opposed on the ground that they are nominated by the committee instead of being elected by the fraction. In the matter of selecting Party candidates for contesting general elections for state legislatures and Parliament the right of the Central Committee and state committees to select them was questioned and the demand that they be decided by the local or constituency Party units below was raised. The Party groups in the state legislatures and Parliament, in their functioning, tended to develop the tendencies of autonomism while resenting the Central Committee's or state committee's political-organisational control as unwarranted interference.

All these and similar other wrong tendencies are clear manifestations of an incorrect and mistaken understanding of the principle of democratic centralism, and if they are not corrected, the Party cannot grow and function as a fighting, revolutionary organisation of the proletariat. A systematic education to correct all such alien class tendencies is necessary, and then alone the principle of democratic centralism can be restored, in theory and practice, to its proper place inside the Party organisation.

### **Federal Tendencies**

Closely connected with the principle of democratic centralism inside the Party organisation is the question of proper Party relations between the Central Committee and the state committees. It is in theory admitted that a centrally well-organised Communist Party alone can lead the Indian revolution by confronting the centrally organised and powerfully built state apparatus of the bourgeois-landlord combine. But in practice, this awareness is found often lacking while the tendencies of a federal outlook are gaining ground. A sort of 'state exclusiveness' and the absence of all-India consciousness is gaining currency in the Party leadership, let alone among the bulk of our Party members.

Before we proceed to deal with the subject in detail, it is necessary to sharply point out the special peculiarities present in the Indian situation which need be taken into account while discussing the issue of building a centralised and powerful all-India Communist Party.

It is easy to build a well-centralised Communist Party in a single-nation state when compared with the task of building it in a multinational state. But there are states and states with a multinational character, and the present Indian state is distinguished from the rest by many complex problems it poses. There is not a single big modern state in the world with so many distinct nationalities, with distinct and developed languages of their own and with such big population, each comprising anywhere between 20 and 80 millions, as is our Indian Union with its peoples numbering more than 500 millions. In the case of Russia, both in pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary conditions, it was the Russian nationality that comprised nearly two-thirds of its total population while the rest of the nationalities, though many in number, were small in their population strength. Similarly, in China, the single biggest nationality, covering more than 9/10th of its entire population, is the Han nation, with one common language, despite varied dialects. The main forces of the proletariat and revolutionary movement came from these predominantly big nationalities, and their agit-prop could, in the main, be conducted respectively in the Russian and Chinese languages. But the case in India is entirely different.

For all practical purposes the class and mass organisations are based on states and nationalities and their day-to-day work, agitation and propaganda are conducted in the respective languages, even though all-India organisations exist and function under severe limitations imposed by the multiplicity of language. Similarly the Communist Party, like all other political parties in the country, is state-and state-languages-based in its day-to-day work and agit-prop. It is curious and interesting to note that while the Central Committee of the CPI(M) is compelled to be content with running an English weekly as its organ, in a language not known to 99 per cent of the people in any state, several state committees run their language weeklies and three among them run

their daily organs. Another peculiarity is that the proletarian revolutionary movement and the Communist Party are extremely weak in the states and areas in which Hindi and its dialects are spoken by the people, and their number is anywhere near 200 millions out of the total of 500 millions of the country's population. This multiplicity of languages, the extreme unevenness in the development of the revolutionary movement and the Communist Party, the compelling conditions and the dire necessity for the Central Committee to run its central organs and routine work in the English language, and the language bar that prevents the central leadership from coming into direct and close contact with the cadres and their day-to-day work in different states— all this stands today as big impediments in building the unitary Party organisation that is demanded of a Communist Party. Hence it is all the more necessary to consciously attempt to overcome these difficulties instead of giving way to despair and accepting the principle of federalism inside the Party as an inevitable evil.

The dailies and weeklies run by state Party committees neither realise the need to adequately popularise the news and reports of the people's struggles in other states, nor do state units send regular reports of mass and Party work to the Central Committee so that it might distribute the same to different states through its weekly organ or other news-bulletins. Consequently Party members and the people are kept quite uninformed about the development of the revolutionary movement in the different states of the country and are made to depend upon the bourgeois newspapers which suppress and distort the news of popular mass struggles. In the absence of a concerted effort by all the state Party units to freely and widely exchange the views and experiences of their respective movements, their widespread popularisation among Party members and the people, a common consciousness based on the common experience of movements in different states, neither real unity of thought and action inside the Party nor a unitary type of Communist Party is ever possible to be realised.

Similarly, in the matter of any assignment of cadres to central work, in appreciating the financial needs of the centre and responding to its Party fund calls, on questions of assisting the weaker states and units

and a host of other things, what predominates today in most of our state committee leaders is one's own state consciousness rather than all-India Communist Party consciousness. In this connection, we cannot forget the facts of past history as to how different state committees tended to rally behind the respective chauvinist demands of the bourgeoisie on issues of inter-state dispute of an all-India character, clean forgetting the proletarian character of our movements and Party. It is an illusion to think that our Party has overcome these weaknesses.

The crudest form in which it is expressed, at present, is that no state committee considers it its bounden duty to send periodical reports of its activities to the Central Committee, and even Central Committee members attached to the state committees' work never deem it their duty to keep the Party centre informed of the activities at the state level. Most of them do not even write letters to the Central Committee occasionally on issues of mass movement and Party activity, except what they might orally report during the Central Committee meetings after every four months or so.

What we have to realise is that the tendencies of federalism and erroneous concepts of democratic centralism are neither crudely formulated and upheld by any amongst us, nor can they be eliminated by simple directives of 'do's and dont's' from the top committees. They are present in the objective class conditions surrounding us and they so constantly corrode our consciousness as to undermine the principle of democratic centralism and all its rich content and thus obstruct the bulding of a really centralised, unitary Communist Party. Hence the need for constant education and check-up over this principle and its practice.

Similarly, another manifestation of giving up democratic centralism is the dropping from our Constitution, and in practice, of the principle that the editor of a district or state paper and the secretary of district or state committees must be approved by its next higher committee, though they have been elected by their respective committees to fulfil these jobs. This principle was enunciated in the earlier constitution of our Party because it incorporated the principle that these two key Party

positions through which the central political and organisational line has to be implemented can be guided and checked up by the higher committee and Central Committee directly.

### **Localism**

Another aspect of negation of the principle of democratic centralism is the development of localism. It expresses itself sometimes in comrades pleading that he is not capable of taking the higher responsibility in a wider area, or responsibility of higher mass organisation or in a different mass front where he has not sufficient experience. This arises from the failure to understand that a Communist must give his utmost and constantly struggle and rise to cope up with the increased responsibilities which the Party is asking him to shoulder from time to time. He does not see that his hesitation and refusal to take up responsibilities is only harming the development of the movement.

The worst manifestation of this localism is the refusal to leave his own locality, with the hope that by continuing his work there, he would at some time or other be able to become a panchayat or panchayat samiti or zilla parishad member, if not an MLA or MP. It is no wonder that this hankering for some positions, the result of corrupting influence of bourgeois parliamentary life and its corroding appeals on the Party cadres, leads ultimately to sheer opportunism and careerism.

It is the right of a Party member to express his difficulties to take up a particular job and his preference for some other, but he must willingly and gladly undertake to fulfil the job allotted ultimately by the Party committee and it is for the Party committee to help him to overcome his difficulties, personal or otherwise, and to help him to master and discharge his new responsibilities.

### **Proper Functioning of Party Committees**

The success or otherwise of building the revolutionary mass movement and the Communist Party is in no small way dependent on the correct or incorrect lines that our Party committees function, and in particular the Central Committee and the state committees. A self-

critical examination of their functioning would reveal, that the preparations for these important committee meetings is very inadequate, that necessary reports are not prepared and presented, that priority is not given to discussion of the main mass fronts' work on the agenda, that the Central Committee rarely discusses the work of its parliamentary and states their respective legislators' groups, that issues are not formulated sharply and business-like discussion is not conducted on them and that too much time is spent in committee meetings with repetitive speeches by many and with no corresponding beneficial outcome to take the movement and Party forward.

The decisions taken in one meeting are not pursued and followed up, and new decisions are taken in the next meeting without checking up as to how far the old decisions were implemented or not, and the reasons for it.

No precise rules of functioning for the committees are made, even though the Party has been functioning for decades by now, and business is transacted in the most unbusiness-like fashion leaving the behaviour of every committee member to his own 'good sense'.

The Central Committee and the different state committees should go into the question and devise means and methods to rectify the shortcomings in this regard.

The Central Committee and the state committees which are in charge of running Party organs, weeklies or dailies as the case may be, should make it a point to submit short, periodical reports about the circulation, financial position, the campaigns run, the quality of the writings and reportage and criticism and self-criticism to the committee meetings for discussions and decision. This is now rarely done or not done at all.

The Central Committee and state committees should see that the work on the trade union and kisan fronts necessarily forms the subject matter of discussion on the agenda for their meetings held at every three or four months interval. The Party sub-committees constituted by the Central Committee and state committees for these fronts should

be directed to submit written reports, posing the problems, giving concrete suggestions for the improvement of work and narrating the work done.

No new item on the agenda is to be permitted, except those that are circulated and earlier decided upon, and the necessary preparations made to discuss them; new items on the agenda, if some urgent issues demand, should be accepted only if the committee in question does also simultaneously take a decision either to extend the time of the meeting or to cut short one or the other item or the earlier fixed agenda.

### **Our Tasks**

#### *Hence to sum up*

To root out all reformist and revisionist understanding and practices in Party organisation :

Begin by regrouping and activating Party members and cadres and educate them to discharge their tasks on mass, political and organisational fronts.

1. (a)— Tighten up the recruitment of Party members— auxiliary groups of militants- candidates (lengthen the period of candidatureship to one year) — then regular Party membership (insist on all the minimum jobs enumerated in the report). All Party members must be grouped in compact branches of not more than 9 before December 1967 end.

(b)— Constant struggle against alien habits and practices in personal life as well as in mass organisations and in Party life — give up soft and easy life— strengthen body and mind. Be ready to defend yourself and the Party against goonda and counter-revolutionary assault.

2. Know your cadre— their strong and weak points, in all conditions and circumstances —age, how long in the Party—education—class origin and present vocation or profession—amount of income for livelihood—family members—problems of personal life.

—Choose cadre for full-time work at different levels and educate and train them. Deploy them in the industrial, educational centres and among the peasantry around these centres.

3. Educate the whole Party membership and train up branch secretaries and local cadre by organising schools; for imparting elementary theory of Marxism-Leninism—Marxist economics, Marxist political theory— historical materialism and dialectical materialism based on Indian conditions— International working class land revolutionary movement, Russian Revolution and Chinese Revolution— Our Party Programme, Party history and history of the Indian people's class struggles and revolutionary movements—and our present general political line and tasks. By June end 1968, all Party members and especially the branch secretaries must be covered by these classes.

—Bring out and make available minimum classics and booklets on current political events in India and of the world and insist on constant study of them by having individual or branch libraries.

—Party weeklies and dailes and a central theoretical organ to educate the mass of our militants, Party members and cadres.

4. Build up strong trade unions and organisations of rural poor (agricultural labour unions and kisan sabhas), on correct Marxist-Leninist lines and improve the class composition of the Party membership by making special efforts for recruiting into auxiliary groups and educating the militants thrown up in class struggles from the working class and the rural poor.

— Special attention to youth and especially students and the composition of the Party must reflect the ever-growing percentage of youth of 18-30 years age group.

—Work among women as auxiliary to and part of trade union, kisan and middle class employees' organisations and recruiting them into the Party.

5. Streamline Party organisational structure—auxiliary groups of militants—branches of candidates and Party members (factory, village, ward or town); local (thana or tehsil) or district committees depending on the necessity for such units for coordinating the work and not merely



because these are government-created administrative units; while consolidating the existing areas of our movement, our direction must be to link up these areas into big contiguous areas.

### **Bye-Laws**

1. The Party Congress, by a special resolution authorised the Central Committee to use the name of Communist Party of India (Marxist) for election purposes, if the Election Commission refused to recognise us as the CPI and allot a symbol to us. After the election, the Central Committee with the consent of all state committees decided to use the name of CPI (Marxist) for all purposes and in fact as our Party's name.

2. The Central committee at its session at Tenali in June 1966 decided to suspend the issue of Party cards, till the whole Party membership was properly checked up and regrouped and reorganised.

3. Annual Party membership fee of one rupee to be paid by January end of each year to the branch or unit secretary by the member concerned. If he does not clear it by March end, his name shall be removed from the Party rolls.

4. Further, the Central Committee decides that every Party member must pay a monthly levy of the following percentage of his income. Those whose income is of annual or of seasonal character have to pay their levy at the beginning of the year or at the beginning of the season or at the beginning of every quarter on the same percentage basis. If a member's levy dues accumulate for six months, then his name is to be removed from Party rolls. Levy system will be implemented from January 1968.

| <i>Monthly Income</i> |                | <i>Levy</i>            |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Below                 | Rs. 100        | $\frac{1}{4}$ per cent |
| Between               | Rs. 100 - 200  | $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent |
| Between               | Rs. 200 - 300  | 1 per cent             |
| Between               | Rs. 300 - 500  | 2 per cent             |
| Between               | Rs. 500 - 1000 | 5 per cent             |
| Over                  | Rs. 1000       | 10 per cent            |

5. As regards granting full Party membership to candidates, the present constitution lays down that after six months, the concerned Party branch or unit can review the work and can admit him into the Party as full members if it considers his record of work and of development satisfactory, otherwise it can extend it for another six months after which he has to be admitted or dropped. The Central Committee considers that six months period is too short a period to evaluate the record of any candidate, and advises all units to take a final decision for admitting not after the first review after six months, but after the second review at the end of twelve months.

6. In case of emergency and in face of large-scale arrests, the Central Committee, the state committees, and the district committees shall be reorganised into smaller compact bodies. The names for such reorganisation of committees are prepared by the remaining members of the PB or of the secretariat of state committees or district committees, respectively. These should be approved by the numbers of respective members inside and outside. And these are to be further approved by their next higher committees. They can form sub-committees, as they deem it necessary, to discharge their functions and responsibilities.

7. In article XIX, clause 9, which enumerates certain grave anti-Party activities, the clause merely lays down that they are liable for disciplinary action. The Central Committee makes it specific by the following bye-law that "such persons can be summarily suspended from Party membership and removed from all responsible positions in the Party by the Party unit to which he belongs or by a higher Party body, pending giving the charge-sheet and getting an explanation".

8. All other changes that are necessary in the Party Constitution to restore the Marxist-Leninist principles of organisation, are to be circulated to the Party units and their opinion got before a Party Congress finally adopts the changes in the Constitution.

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE (1) To be filed up by Party Member or Party cadre

1. Name and address :
2. Age :
3. (a) Education up to which class :  
(b) Basic Marxist classics and Party literature read :
4. Class origin (worker, agricultural labourer, poor, middle or rich peasant, landlord, artisan (define actual vocation) small trader or small industrialist, intelligentsia or other
5. (a) Present profession or vocation :  
(b) Annual income & value of property held :  
(c) Other means of livelihood including earnings of other members of family :  
(d) Total annual family income:  
(e) Total annual family expenditure :
6. (a) Wife's or husband's name :  
Wife or husband educated to what standard :  
(b) Number of children, boys and girls; their age; studying in what class; whether married :  
(c) Other dependents like parents, grandparents, or brothers and sisters :
7. (a) Date and circumstances under which you started work among the people or started public and political life :  
(b) date and circumstances of joining the Party:  
(c) How many years in jail?  
How many years underground?
8. (a) In what mass organisation are you now working ?  
For how many years a member of the mass organisation?  
(b) What is your position or office which you held?  
In which mass organisation and at what level— village, tehsil, district, state or all-India and for how long?  
(c) What are the struggles you have participated in?
9. What is your present position in the Party— branch member or secretary, local, district, state or central

committee member? For how long have you been holding the position?

10. (a) Some incidents in your mass activity or political and party life of which you are proud :
- (b) Some incidents when you showed vacillation with regard to participation in mass struggles or vacillation before enemy attack, either landlord or police and government attack :

### QUESTIONNAIRE

(2) To be filled by party committees at different levels to be forwarded to next higher committee.

1. Number of branches ?

Number of villages where party branches exist?

| <b>Men</b>          |                         | <b>Women</b>            |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Full members</b> | <b>Candi-<br/>dates</b> | <b>Full<br/>members</b> | <b>Candidates</b> |
| No. of units :      | Vocational              |                         |                   |
|                     | Territorial             |                         |                   |

2. Number of auxiliary Number Men Women branches (of militants)

Vocational :

Territorial :

3. (a) Number of Party organs being sold in a branch area or local area, district or state area :

(b) Number of copies of party literature sold :

4. Number of units and total membership of mass organisation locality-wise or district-wise or state-wise

| <b>Kisan Sabha</b> | <b>Number of units</b>  | <b>Membership</b> |              |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
|                    |                         | <b>Men</b>        | <b>Women</b> |
| <b>5.</b>          | <b>Number of unions</b> | <b>Membership</b> |              |
|                    |                         | <b>Men</b>        | <b>Women</b> |

- 6. **Students Unions**      **Number of units**      **Men**      **Women**  
     **College**  
     **High School**
- 7. **Party Fund Collected**      **Number of Branches**      **Amount**  
     **Collected**      **Collecting**
- 8. Funds collected for mass organisations and for mass-campaigns.
- 9. **Number of leaflets and pamphlets issued**  
     **Branch-wise · Locality-wise      District-wise      State-wise**

This table to be filled by branches; from branch returns by local committees then by district and then by state-committee. State committees must forward to the centre, district-wise and state-wise table.

**APPENDIX II**  
**TABLE I**

Tables of Party members in a branch; or in a locality or in a district or in a state or in all India according to sex and age

|              | <b>18 - 35<br/>Years Old</b> | <b>35 - 60<br/>Years Old</b> | <b>Over 60<br/>Years Old</b> |
|--------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Men</b>   |                              |                              |                              |
| <b>Women</b> |                              |                              |                              |
| <b>Total</b> |                              |                              |                              |

TABLE II

## CLASS ORIGIN OF PARTY MEMBERS

| Working Class | Agricultural labour | Poor peasant                         | Middle peasant | Rich peasant | Landlord |
|---------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------|
| 1             | 2                   | 3                                    | 4              | 5            | 6        |
| Artisan       | Intelligentsia      | Small trader and Small industrialist |                | Others       |          |
| 7             | 8                   | 9                                    |                | 10           |          |

In compiling this table note : Poor peasant is one who does not employ any wage-labour and even in those cases where one employ in seasonal work, he or his family members go for wage-labor. His normal income is not enough to meet both his ends or just enough to give him a bare subsistence.

Middle peasant is one who along with his family members do heavy labour in the fields and get an income that may suffice to make both ends meet or at the most an income that only in very good year leaves him a surplus that can be converted into capital. The essential character of a middle peasant is that his family labour predominates over wage-labour.

The rich peasant or member of his family does heavy manual labour in the fields like the middle peasant, but unlike the middle peasant, he has surplus in even normal years. In those cases where wage-labour predominates over his family labour, even if one does not have surplus income, he has to be classified as rich peasant and not as middle peasant.

All those who do not do usual heavy manual labour in the fields but only supervise or manage are to be classified as landlords (though capitalist) along with absentee rentiers.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF PARTY MEMBERS WORKING ON DIFFERENT MASS FRONTS

|                         | For less than 5 years | 5-10 years | 10-20 years | Over 20 years | Total | Number of whole-timers now working. |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------|-------------|---------------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| Trade Unions            |                       |            |             |               |       |                                     |
| Agr. Labour Unions      |                       |            |             |               |       |                                     |
| Kisan Sabhas            |                       |            |             |               |       |                                     |
| Women                   |                       |            |             |               |       |                                     |
| Other multi-class Orgs. |                       |            |             |               |       |                                     |
| Party Orgs.             |                       |            |             |               |       |                                     |
| Party whole-timers      |                       |            |             |               |       |                                     |

TABLE IV

ECONOMIC POSITION OF PARTY MEMBERS OR CADRES

| Whose family net assets after deducting debts are | Number of PMs. | Whose family annual income is | Number of PMs. | Families with              | Number of Party Members |
|---|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Less than 5000                                    |                | Less than 1200                |                | upto 3 children            |                         |
| 5000-10000  |                | 1200-3000                     |                | 3-5 children               |                         |
| 10000-50000                                       |                | 3000-6000                     |                | over 5                     |                         |
| 50000-100000                                      |                | 6000-12000                    |                | (incl. children & wife 5-7 |                         |
| Over 1 lakh                                       |                | Over 12000                    |                | over 7                     |                         |

TABLE V  
NUMBER OF PARTY MEMBERS WITH

|               | * Political<br>life | Party<br>life | jail<br>life | Under-<br>ground<br>life | jail and under-<br>ground life<br>combined |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------------------|--|
| Upto 5 years  |                     |               |              |                          |  |
| 5-10 years    |                     |               |              |                          |  |
| 10-20 years   |                     |               |              |                          |  |
| 20-30 years   |                     |               |              |                          |  |
| 30-40 years   |                     |               |              |                          |  |
| 40-50 years   |                     |               |              |                          |  |
| Over 50 years |                     |               |              |                          |  |

\* Political life includes the period of one's mass and political activity before joining the party and the actual number of years after joining the party

### PARTY CONSTITUTION

*At the time of the Seventh Party Congress at Calcutta, along with the adoption of the Party Programme, we wanted to make the necessary changes in the Party Constitution. But we could not do it, except for a few absolutely urgently necessary ones. The Central Committee has now made certain bye-laws and decided to circulate all other changes necessary in the Constitution before the convening of the next Party Congress.*

—POLIT BUREAU

#### Article I NAME

The name of the Party shall be Communist Party of India.

#### Article II EMBLEM

The emblem of the Party shall be a crossed hammer and sickle in white against a red background with a circular inscription in white :  
"Communist Party of India."



*Article III*

**FLAG**

The flag of the Party shall be a red flag of which the length shall be one-and-a-half times its width. At the centre of the flag there shall be a crossed hammer and sickle in white.

*Article IV*

**MEMBERSHIP**

1. Any Indian citizen, eighteen years of age or above who accepts the Programme and Constitution of the Party, agrees to work in one of the Party organisations, to pay regularly the Party membership dues and to carry out decisions of the Party shall be eligible for Party membership.

2. New members are admitted to the Party on individual application and through a Party Branch on the recommendation of two Party members. Party committees at local, town, taluk, district, State and Central levels also have the power to admit new members to the Party. Party members who recommend an applicant must furnish the Party Branch or the Party Committee concerned, truthful information about the applicant, from personal knowledge and with due sense of responsibility. All applications for Party membership must be placed before the appropriate committees within a month of their presentation and recommendation.

3. The General Body meeting of the Party Branch shall decide on the question of admission and, if the applicant is admitted to the Party, he or she shall be regarded as a candidate member for a period of six months commencing from the date of such admission.

4. If a leading member from another political party of local, district or State level comes over to the Party in addition to the sanction of the Local Party Committee or District or State Committee, it is necessary to have the sanction of the next higher committee of the Party before he or she is admitted to membership of the Party.

5. Members once expelled from the Party can be readmitted only by the decision of the Party Committee which confirmed their expulsion or by a higher committee.

6. Candidate members have the same duties and rights as full members except that they have no right to elect or be elected or to vote on any motion.

7. The Party Branch or the Party Committee admitting Candidate members shall arrange for their elementary education on the Programme, Constitution and the current policies of the Party and observe their development, through providing for their functioning as members of a Party Branch or unit.

8. By the end of the period of candidature, the Party Branch or Party Committee concerned shall discuss whether the Candidate member is qualified to be admitted to full membership. The Party Branch or the committee concerned may admit candidates to full membership or prolong the period of candidature for another term not exceeding six months. If a candidate member is found unfit, the Party Branch or committee may cancel his or her Candidate membership. A report of recruitment of candidates and of recommendations for admission to full membership shall be regularly forwarded by the Branch or the Party committee concerned to the next higher Party committee.

9. The higher committee may, on scrutiny of the report, alter or modify any such decision after consultation with the branch or the Party Committee which has submitted the report. The district and State committee will exercise supervisory powers over the recruitment of Candidates and over admissions to full membership and have the right to modify or reject the decision of the lower committees in this respect.

10. A Party member may transfer his or her membership from one unit to another with the approval of the unit from which transfer is sought and by presenting a letter of introduction from the same to the new unit he or she wishes to join. In case of transfer outside the district or State, approval by the District or the State Committee concerned shall be necessary.

#### *Article V*

#### **PARTY PLEDGE**

All Candidates as well as full Party members shall sign the Party Pledge. This Pledge shall be :

“I accept the aims and objectives of the Party and agree to abide by its constitution and loyally to carry out decisions of the Party.

“I shall strive to live up to the ideals of Communism and shall selflessly serve the working class and the toiling masses and the country, always placing the interests of the Party and the people above personal interests.”

*Article VI*

**PARTY MEMBERSHIP CARDS**

1. On admission to membership, every Party member shall be issued a Party Membership card.

2. Party cards shall be uniform throughout the country and shall be issued by the State committees. Their form and contents shall be decided upon by the Central Committee.

*Article VII*

**RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP CARD**

1. There shall be an annual renewal of Party Membership Cards. Renewal shall be made on the basis of a checkup by the Party organisation to which the Party member belongs. No Party card shall be renewed in the case of any Party member who, for a continuous period of more than six months and without proper reason, has failed to take part in Party life and activity or to pay Party membership dues.

2. A report on such renewal of Party cards by a branch or a Party Committee concerned shall be sent to the next higher committee for confirmation and registration.

*Article VII*

**RESIGNATION FROM PARTY MEMBERSHIP**

1. A Party member wishing to resign from the Party shall submit his or her resignation to the Party branch concerned, which by a decision of its General Body meeting may accept the same and decide to strike his or her name off the rolls and report the matter to the next higher committee.

2. The Party Branch or the Party Committee concerned may, if it thinks necessary, try to persuade such a Party member to revoke his or her wish to resign.

3. In the case where a Party member wishing to resign from the Party is liable to be charged with serious violation of Party discipline which may warrant his or her suspension or expulsion and here such a charge is substantial, the resignation may be given effect to as expulsion from the Party.

4. All such cases of resignations given effect to as expulsion shall be immediately reported to the next higher Party committee and be subject to the latter's confirmation.

### *Article IX*

#### MEMBERSHIP DUES

All Party members, full as well as candidates, shall pay a Party Membership due of one rupee per year. This annual Party due shall be paid at the time of admission into the Party or at the time of the renewal of the Party Card. (the Party member's dues may, if the State committee concerned so decides, be realised in quarterly or half-yearly instalments.)

### *Article X*

#### DISTRIBUTION OF PARTY DUES

Party dues collected from Party members by Party Branches or Units shall be distributed as follows :

10 per cent for the Central Committee;

40 per cent for the State Committee; and

The remaining 50 per cent shall be divided among the District Committee, the Party Branch and the Local Committee where it exists, in such proportions as decided by the State Committee concerned.

### *Article XI*

#### PARTY LEVY

The Central Committee and the State Committees in accordance with the guiding rules approved by the Central Committee may fix levels on the Party members.

*Article XII*

**DUTIES OF PARTY MEMBERS**

**1. The duties of the Party members are as follows :**

- (a) to regularly participate in the activity of the Party organisation to which they belong and to faithfully carry out the policy, decisions and the directives of the Party;**
- (b) To study Marxism-Leninism and endeavour to raise their level of understanding;**
- (c) To read, support and popularise the Party journal and Party publications;**
- (d) To observe the Party Constitution and Party discipline and behave in the spirit of proletarian internationalism and in accordance with the noble ideals of Communism;**
- (e) To place the interests of the people and the Party above personal interests;**
- (f) To devotedly serve the masses and consistently strengthen their bonds with them, to learn from the mass and report their opinions and demands to the Party, to work in a mass organisation, unless exempted, under the guidance of the Party;**
- (g) To cultivate comradely relations towards one another and constantly develop a fraternal spirit within the Party;**
- (h) To practise criticism and self-criticism with a view to helping each other and improving individual and collective work;**
- (i) To be frank, honest and truthful to the Party and not to betray the confidence of the Party;**
- (j) To safeguard the unity and solidarity of the Party and to be vigilant against the enemies of the working class and the country;**
- (k) To defend the Party and uphold its cause against the onslaught of the enemies of the Party, the working class and the country;**

- (1) To deepen their understanding of the noble traditions of the Indian people and their rich cultural heritage.
2. It shall be the task of the Party organisations to ensure the fulfilment of the above duties by the Party members and help them in every possible way in the discharge of these duties.

### *Article XIII*

#### **RIGHTS OF PARTY MEMBERS**

1. Rights of the Party members are as follows :
  - (a) To elect Party organs and Party committees and be elected to them;
  - (b) To participate freely in discussions in order to contribute to the formulations of the Party; policy and of the decisions of the Party;
  - (c) To make proposals regarding one's own work in the Party, to get work assigned to themselves in accordance with their ability and situation in life;
  - (d) To make criticisms about Party Committees and Party functionaries at Party meetings;
  - (e) To demand to be heard in person when a Party Committee or any Party organisation discusses disciplinary action against any Party member or evaluates their personal character or work in connection with serious mistakes which he or she is alleged to have committed;
  - (f) When any Party member disagrees with any decision of a Party Committee or organisaion, he or she has a right to submit his or her opinion to the higher committee, including and up to the central committee and the Party Congress. In all such cases the Party members shall, of course, carry out the Party decisions and the differences shall sought to be resolved through the test of practice and through comradely discussion;
  - (g) To address any statement appeal or complaint to any higher Party organisation up to and including the Central Committee and the Party Congress.

2. It shall be the duty of Party organisations and Party functionaries to see that these rights are respected.

#### *Article XIV*

#### **PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM**

1. The structure of the Party is based on, and its internal life is guided by the principles of democratic centralism. Democratic centralism means central leadership based on full inner-Party democracy and inner-Party democracy under the guidance to the centralised leadership.

In the sphere of the Party structure, the guiding principles of democratic centralism are :

- (a) All Party organs from top to bottom shall be elected;
- (b) The minority shall carry out the decisions of the majority; the lower Party organisations shall carry out the decisions and directives of the higher Party organs, the individual shall subordinate himself to the will of the collective. All Party organisations shall carry out the decisions and directives of the Party Congress and of the Central Committee;
- (c) All Party Committees shall periodically report on their work to the Party organisation immediately below and all lower Committees shall likewise report to their immediate higher committees;
- (d) All Party committees particularly the leading Party Committees shall pay constant heed to the opinions and criticisms of the lower Party organisations and the rank-and-file Party members;
- (e) All Party Committees shall function strictly on the principle of collective decisions and checkup combined with individual responsibility ;
- (f) All questions of international affairs, questions of all-India character or questions concerning more than one State or questions requiring uniform decisions for the whole country, shall be decided upon by the all-India Party organisations.

All questions of a State or district character shall be ordinarily decided upon by the corresponding Party organisations. But in no case shall such decisions run counter to the decisions of a higher Party organisation; when the Central Party leadership has to take a decision on any issue of major state importance, it shall do so after consultation with the State Party organisation concerned. The state organisation shall do likewise in relation to districts;

- (g) On issues which affect the policy of the Party on an all-India scale, but on which the Party's standpoint is to be expressed for the first time, only the Central leadership of the Party is entitled to make a policy statement. The lower committees can and should send their opinions and suggestions in time for consideration by the Central leadership.
2. Basing itself upon the experience of the entire Party membership and of the popular movement, in the sphere of the internal life of the Party, the following guiding principles of democratic centralism are applied :
- (a) Free and frank discussion within the Party Unit on all questions affecting the Party, its policy and work;
  - (b) Sustained efforts to activate the Party members in popularising and implementing the Party politics, to raise their ideological-political level and improve their general education so that they can effectively participate in the life and work of the Party;
  - (c) When serious differences arise in a Party Committee every effort should be made to arrive at an agreement. Failing this, the decision should be postponed with a view to resolving differences through further discussion, unless and immediate decision is called for by the needs of the Party and the mass movement;
  - (d) Encouragement of criticism and self-criticism at all levels, from top to bottom, especially criticism from below;
  - (e) Consistent struggle against bureaucratic tendencies at all



levels;

- (f) Impermissibility of factionalism and factional groupings inside the Party in any form;
- (g) Strengthening of the Party spirit by developing fraternal relations and mutual help, correcting mistakes by treating comrades sympathetically, judging them and their work not on the basis of isolated mistakes or incidents, but by taking into account their whole record of service to the Party.

*Article XV*

**ALL-INDIA PARTY CONGRESS**

1. The supreme organ of the Party for the whole country shall be the All-India Party Congress.
  - (a) The regular Party Congress shall be convened by the Central Committee ordinarily once every two years.
  - (b) an extraordinary Party Congress shall be called or when it is demanded by the state Party organisations representing not less than one-third of the total Party membership.
  - (c) The date and venue of the party Congress or of the Extraordinary Party congress shall be decided by the Central Committee at a meeting especially called for the purpose.
  - (d) Regular party congress shall be composed of delegates elected by the State Conferences as well as by Conferences of Party Units directly under the all-India Party Centre.
  - (e) The basis of representation at a Party congress shall be decided by the Central committee.
  - (f) The basis of representation and the method of election of delegates to the Extraordinary Party Congress shall be decided by the central committee.
  - (g) The members of the Central Committee and of the central Control Commission shall have the right to participate as full delegates in the Party Congress, whether regular or extraordinary.
  - (h) The number of membership from any state for which the membership dues quota to the Central committee has been fully paid shall be taken as the basis for calculating the

- number of delegates from that State at the Party Congress.
2. Functions and powers of the regular party Congress are as follows :
    - (a) To discuss and act on the political and organisational report of the Central Committee;
    - (b) To revise and change the Party Programme and the Party on the current situation;
    - (c) To determine the tactical line and the policy of the Party on the current situation;
    - (d) To elect the Central Committee by secret ballot;
    - (e) To hear and decide on the report of the Central Control Commission as well as on appeals;
    - (f) To hear and decide on the audit report submitted by the Control Commission;
    - (g) To elect the Central Control commission.
  3. The congress shall elect a Presidium for the conduct of its business.

### *Article XVI*

#### CENTRAL COMMITTEE

1. (a) The Central Committee shall be elected at the Party Congress the number of members being decided by the Party Congress.
  - (b) The outgoing Central Committee shall propose to the Congress a panel of candidates.
  - (c) The panel of candidates shall be prepared with a view to creating an broad-based, capable leadership, closely lined with the masses, firm in the revolutionary outlook of the working class and educated in Marxism-Leninism. The panel shall bring together the best talents, experience from the States, from mass fronts and other fields of Party activity.
  - (d) Any delegate can raise objection with regard to any name in the panel proposed as well as proposed any new name

or names.

- (e) Anyone whose name has been proposed shall have the right to withdraw.
- (f) The panel finally proposed, together with the additional nominations by the delegates shall be voted upon by secret ballot, and by the method of single distributive vote.

2. The Central Committee shall be the highest authority of the Party between two all-India Party Congresses.

3. It is responsible for enforcing the Party Constitution and carrying out the political line and decisions adopted by the Party Congress.

4. The Central Committee shall represent the Party as a whole and be responsible for directing the entire work of the Party. The central committee shall have the right to take decisions with full authority on any question facing the Party.

5. The Central Committee shall elect from among its members Polit Bureau including the General secretary. The number of members in the Polit Bureau shall be decided by the Central committee. The Polit Bureau carries on the work of the Central Committee between its two sessions and has the right to take political decisions in between two meetings of the Central Committee.

- 6. (a) The Central Committee shall remove any member from itself for gross breach of discipline, misconduct or for anti-Party activity by two-thirds of the members present and voting and in any case by more than half the total strength of Central committee voting for such removal.
- (b) It can fill up any vacancy occurring in its composition by simple majority of its total members.
- (c) In case a member or members of the Central Committee are arrested the remaining members of the committee by a two-thirds majority can co-opt substitute members and they shall have full right as the original members but should vacate their places as the arrested members

get released and assume their duress.

7. The Central Committee shall fill up any vacancy that may occur in the Control Commission by two thirds of the members present and voting and in any case by more than half the total strength of the Central Committee voting for the candidate.

8. The time between two meetings of the Central Committee shall not exceed three months and it shall meet whenever one-third of its total members make a requisition.

9. The Central Committee shall discuss and decide political and organisational issues and problems of mass movement and guide the State Committees and all-India Party fractions in mass organisations.

10. The Central Committee shall submit its political and organisational report before the Party Congress, whenever it is convened.

11. The Central Committee shall convene an extended session of the Central Committee (or Plenum), at least once in a year and place before it a review of the work of the Party during the year from its approval. The Central Committee may convene this extended meeting whenever it feels that an issue or issues have arisen on which a decision from a wider body is necessary. The number of representatives to be called to this extended session and the number from each State or from mass fractions shall be decided by the Central committee, and the various State and Fraction Committees shall elect them.

### *Article XVII*

#### **STATE, DISTRICT PARTY ORGANS, PRIMARY UNIT**

1. The highest organ in the State or district shall be the State or District Conference which elects a State or District Committee.

2. (a) The organisational structure, the rights and functions of the State or District Party organs are similar to those enumerated in the articles concerning the Party structure and functions at the all-India level, their functions being confined to the State or district issues and their decisions being within the limit of the decisions taken by the next

higher Party organ;

- (b) The State or District committee shall elect a Secretariat including the Secretary.

3. The State Committee shall decide on the various Party organs to be set up between the primary unit (the Branch) and the District and shall make necessary provisions relating to their composition and functioning.

4. (a) The primary unit of the Party is the Party Branch organised on the basis of profession or territory;

- (b) Party members are to be organised on the basis of their occupation or vocation, when they are working in a factory or an institute or any industry. When such Branches are organised the members of such Branches shall be associate members of the Party Branches in place of their residence or organised as auxiliary Branches there. The work to be allotted in their place of residence shall not be detrimental to the work allotted to them by their basic units in the factory or institute or occupation;

- (c) The number of members in a Branch, the structure and functions and other matters relating to a Branch will be determined by the State Committee.

### *Article XVIII*

#### **CENTRAL AND STATE CONTROL COMMISSIONS**

1. There shall be a Central Control commission of three members elected by the Party Congress.

2. The Central Committee shall propose a panel of names for the Central Control Commission to the Party Congress. In proposing the names for nomination, the Party standing of the candidate, which shall not be less than ten years, and his experience in Party organisation and personal integrity shall be taken into account.

3. The procedure of election shall be the same as in the case of Central Committee.

4. The members of the Central Control Commission shall

participate in the meetings of the Central Committee with right to vote.

5. The Central Control Commission shall take up :

- (a) Cases referred to it by the Central Committee or the Polit Bureau;
- (b) Cases where disciplinary action has been taken by the State Committees;
- (c) Cases involving expulsion from the Party decided upon by any Party Unit against which an appeal has been made by the comrade concerned;
- (d) Cases against which an appeal has been made to the State Control Commission and rejected.

6. The Central Control Commission shall report its decisions to the Central Committee. These decisions shall be ordinarily final and be implemented by the Central Committee unless they are set aside by two-thirds majority of the members present and voting and in any case by more than half of the total strength of the Central Committee.

7. In all cases there shall however be the right to appeal to the Party Congress.

8. The same rules apply to the composition and functioning of the State Control Commission, but there will be no appeal to the State Conference as the member of Committee concerned can go in appeal to the Central Control Commission.

### *Article XLX*

#### **PARTY DISCIPLINE**

1. Discipline is indispensable for preserving and strengthening the unity of the Party, for enhancing its strength, its fighting ability and its prestige, and for enforcing the principles of democratic centralism. Without strict adherence to Party discipline, the party cannot lead the mass in struggle and actions, nor discharge its responsibility towards them.

2. Discipline is based on conscious acceptance of the aims, the Programme and the policies of the Party. All members of the

Party are equally bound by Party discipline irrespective of their status in the Party organisation or in public life.

3. Violation of Party Constitution and decisions of the Party as well as any other action and behaviour unworthy of a member of the communist Party shall constitute a breach of Party discipline and are liable to disciplinary actions.

4. The disciplinary actions are :

- (a) Warning;
- (b) Censure;
- (c) Public censure;
- (d) Removal from the post held in the Party;
- (e) Suspension from full Party membership for any period but not exceeding one year;
- (f) Removal from the Party rolls;
- (g) Expulsion.

5. Disciplinary action shall normally be taken where other methods, including methods of persuasion, have failed to correct the comrade concerned. But even where disciplinary measures have been taken, the efforts to help the comrade to correct himself shall continue. In cases where the breach of discipline is such that it warrants an immediate disciplinary measure to protect the interests of the Party or its prestige, the disciplinary action shall be taken promptly.

6. Expulsion from the Party is the severest of all disciplinary measures and this shall be applied with utmost caution, deliberation and judgement.

7. No disciplinary measure involving expulsion or suspension of a Party member shall come into effect without confirmation by the next higher committee. In case of suspension or expulsion, the penalised Party member shall, however, be removed from the responsible post that he or she may hold pending confirmation.

8. The comrade against whom a disciplinary measure is proposed shall be fully informed of the allegations, charges and other relevant facts against him or her. He or she shall have the right to be heard in person by the Party Unit in which his or her case is discussed.

9. Party members found to be strike-breakers, habitual drunkards, moral degenerates, betrayers of Party confidence, guilty of financial irregularities, or members whose actions are detrimental to the Party and the working class, shall be dealt with by the Party Units to which they belong and be liable to disciplinary action.

10. There shall be right of appeal in all cases of disciplinary action.

11. The State Committee has the right to dissolve or take disciplinary action against a lower committee in cases where a persistent defiance of Party decisions and policy, serious factionalism, or a breach of Party discipline is involved.

### *Article XX*

#### **PARTY MEMBERS IN ELECTED PUBLIC BODIES**

1. Party members elected to Parliament, State Legislature or Administrative Council shall constitute themselves into a Party group and function under the appropriate Party committee in strict conformity with the line of the Party, its policies and directives.

2. The Communist legislators shall unswervingly defend the interest of the people. Their work in the legislature shall reflect the mass movement and they shall uphold and popularise the policies of the Party.

The legislative work of the Communist legislators shall be closely combined with the activity of the Party outside and mass movements and it shall be the duty of all communist legislators to help build the Party and mass organisations.

3. The Communist legislators shall maintain the closest possible contact with their electors and mass, keeping them duly informed of their legislative work and constantly seeking their suggestions and advice.

4. The Communist legislators shall maintain a hushing standard of personal intergity, lead an unostentatious life and display humility in all their dealings and contact with the people and place the party above self.

5. Communist legislators shall pay regularly and without default a levy on their earnings fixed by the appropriate Party committee. These Party leves shall be the first charge on their earnings.



6. Party members elected to corporations, municipalities, local bodies and gram-panchayats shall function under the appropriate Party Committee or Party branch. They shall maintain close day-to-day contacts with their electors and the masses and defend their interests in such elected bodies. They shall make regular reports on their work to the electors and the people and seek their suggestions and advice. They shall make regular reports on their work to the electors and the people and seek their suggestions and advice. The work in such local bodies shall be combined with intense mass activity outside.

7. All nominations or Party candidates for election to Parliament shall be subject to approval by the Central Committee.

Nominations of Party candidates to the State Legislatures or the councils of centrally-administered areas shall be finalised and announced by the State Committee concerned.

Rules governing the nomination of Party candidates for corporation municipalities, district boards, local boards and panchayats shall be drawn up by state Committees.

### *Article XXI*

#### **INNER-PARTY DISCUSSION**

1. To unify the Party and for evolving its mass line inner-Party discussion shall be a regular feature of Party life. Such discussion shall be organised on an all-India scale or at different levels of the Party organisation depending on the nature of the issues.

2. Inner-Party discussion shall be organised :

(a) On important questions of all-India or State importance where immediate decision is not necessary, by the Central or the State organ of the Party as the case may be, before the decision is taken;

(b) Where over an important question of Party policy, there is not sufficient firm majority inside the Central Committee or in the state Committee;

(c) When an inner-Party discussion on an all-India scale is demanded by a number of State organisations representing one-third of the total Party membership or at the State level by district organisations representing the same proportion of the total membership of the State concerned.

3. Inner-Party discussion shall be conducted under the guidance of the Central or the state committee which shall formulate the issues under discussion. The Party Committee which guides the discussion shall lay down the manner in which the discussion shall be conducted.

*Article XXII*

DISCUSSION PREPARATORY TO PARTY CONGRESSES AND CONFERENCES

1. Two months before the Party Congress, the Central committee will release draft resolutions for discussion by all units of the Party. Amendments to the resolutions will be sent directly to the Central Committee to be assorted and placed before the Party Congress.

2. The meeting of the Central Committee which circulates documents for the Party congress will take after the State Conferences are over.

3. At each level, the Conference shall take place on the basis of reports and resolutions submitted by the respective Committees.

*Article XXIII*

PARTY MEMBERS WORKING IN MASS ORGANISATIONS

1. Party members working in mass organisations and their executives shall organise themselves into fractions or fraction committees and function under the guidance of the appropriate Party Committee. They must always strive to strengthen the unity, mass basis and fighting capacity of mass organisations concerned.

*Article XXIV*

BYE-LAWS

1. The Central Committee may frame rules and bye-laws under the Party Constitution and in conformity with it. Rules and bye-laws under the Party Constitution and in conformity with it may also be framed by the State Committees subject to confirmation by the Central Committee.

*Article XXV*

AMENDMENT

1. The Party Constitution shall be amended only by the Party Congress. The notice of proposal for amending the Constitution shall be given two months before the said Party Congress.

## **Congress Conspiracy To Subvert Parliamentary Democracy \***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the C.P.I. (M) in  
October 1967**

The following is the text of the statement on the conspiracy against the UF Government in West Bengal adopted by the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) meeting in New Delhi on October 11 and 12, 1967.

. The conspiracy that had unfolded itself in the full view of the people of West Bengal during the last week of September and the first week of October 1967 has unmasked the pretensions of the Government of India to parliamentary democracy.

The Congress party could not reconcile itself to the loss of its monopoly of power in several States as a result of the last General Elections and has been throughout manoeuvring to topple the non-Congress Governments by every means.

The United Front Government of West Bengal, in which our Party is a big force, is naturally the target of its most ferocious attacks.

It is well known that our party and our Ministers have been making the most strenuous efforts to see that the State Government is not utilized to suppress the struggles of the workers, peasants and middle class employees, against the furious attacks of the monopolists and jotdars. On the contrary, the UF Government had guaranteed democratic and trade union rights, and given relief to various sections of the people. It is but natural that these reactionary vested interests find the UF Government a very big obstacle to their plans of attacks on the working people in order to transfer the burdens of the crisis on the common people.

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, October 22, 1967

In these conditions, the Congress Government at the Centre sees in these policies of the State Government and in the developing mass democratic struggles a serious threat to its own policies of protecting the monopolists and their vested interests. Unable to find a way out of the deepening economic crisis within the framework of its basic policies of building capitalism, it sees in the UF Government a powerful weapon of struggle in the hands of the people against the anti people policies of the Central Government.

From the very beginning, the Central Government started a campaign of vilification against the West Bengal Government. Gherao and other forms of struggles of the working class in defence of their working conditions, Naxalbari and other struggles of the peasants in defence of their lands from which the jotdars were striving to illegally evict them, were all painted as a question of law and order, and the cry of "breakdown of law and order" was continuously raised. All this was deliberately indulged in with a view to creating the political climate for Central intervention in the State. Five members of non-Congress parties, including three members of the Bangla Congress, were weaned away by bribery into the Congress party.

Finding all these attempts had not succeeded due to the vigilance of the people, a new desperate conspiracy was hatched, in which the Government of India, the Governor of the State, the Inspector-General of Police and other top bureaucrats had all their part. Lies and slanderous stories against our Party were put out in the Press and given to the Chief Minister. The Government of India talked of the possibility of an imminent attack by China and Pakistan, and fabricated reports that the Party was planning to create a situation of lawlessness, in order to facilitate such an attack.

The Chief Minister, without any information to his colleagues in the Ministry, was to tender the resignation of the Ministry on October 2 at 8.00 p.m. Immediately a minority Government was to be installed. The congress party was to lend its support to such a minority Ministry.

To facilitate all this, and as a bait to the Chief Minister, Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda dramatically announced in the last week of September in Calcutta the decision to replace the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee by an Ad Hoc Committee.

Only a few days before, the Co-ordination Committee had agreed upon a Code of Conduct for the Ministers, and had decided to meet shortly to thrash out differences on policy matters. Naturally the people had expected that these measures would lead to greater unity in the United Front Ministry and among the parties of the UF. In this background, they were shocked to see on October 2 the deployment of the Army and Special Police from neighbouring States in the Greater Calcutta area. They were shocked that the Chief Minister had succumbed to the bamboozlement of the Central Government and to fabricated reports of slander against the CPI (M).

Had this conspiracy succeeded, it would have been a betrayal of the solemn pledges given to the people at the time of the General Election. It would have been a betrayal of the pledges given to the people and the constituent parties when the UF Ministry was formed with the common 18 point programme. Had this succeeded, the people of West Bengal would certainly have demonstrated their anger and protest against the betrayal of all pledges given to them.

It was to ruthlessly suppress any demonstration of protest by the people that the Army and Special Armed Police had been deployed. Over 2,000 activists of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and other democratic parties were to be arrested in a swoop. The Congress party had kept in readiness goonda gangs for murderous attacks on workers of the CPI (M) and others.

In fact what had been planned was a military regime after toppling the United Front Government.

The efforts of the constituent parties of the UF and the heightened vigilance of the people saved the situation and frustrated this diabolical conspiracy.

It is true that recently strains and stresses had developed in the United Front as a result of divergence of views on a number of issues between the constituent parties, particularly between our party and certain other parties like the PSP, SSP and sections of the Bangla Congress, who unfortunately had succumbed to anti-Communist slanders. All these differences could have been thrashed out in the meeting of the UF Co-ordination Committee already decided upon, provided all the parties adhered to the 18 point common programme.

The fact is that although all the parties to the Coalition had agreed upon the common programme, class interests often obstruct its implementation. Our Party has always insisted and will continue to insist upon adherence to and implementation of the programme. The Polit Bureau wants to make it clear that only steadfast loyalty to the programme and earnest efforts to implement it by all concerned will be conducive to the unity of the Ministry and the parties constituting the UF. Any vacillation on the part of anyone to implement the agreed common programme under pressure of the vested interests will disrupt the United Front.

These recent events in West Bengal have underlined the fact that when forced with the challenge of the popular forces, the ruling classes will not hesitate to crush all democratic rights and institute military rule in order to save their class rule. They are a vivid demonstration of the truth of the warning given by our Party in its Programme :

“The threat to the parliamentary system and to democracy comes not from the working people and the parties which represent their interests. The threat comes from the exploiting classes. It is they who undermine the parliamentary system both from within and without by making it an instrument to advance their narrow interests and repress the toiling masses. When the people begin to use parliamentary institutions for advancing their cause and they fall away from the influence of the reactionary bourgeoisie and landlords, these classes do not hesitate to trample underfoot parliamentary democracy. When their interest demands they do not hesitate to replace parliamentary democracy by military dictatorship.”

The Polit Bureau emphasizes the fact that the conspiracy of the Central Government and the Congress party, though foiled for the time being, still continues. In view of all that has happened and if uncertainty and instability of the Government continue due to the moves of some elements within the United Front to bring back, directly or indirectly, the rule of the Congress party which had been rejected by the people at the polls, the Polit Bureau considers that mid-term election is the only democratic solution. Democracy and respect to the people's will demand that an opportunity should be given to the people to judge every party and individual on the basis of their actual performance during these eventful months.

The conspiracy of the Congress party and the Central Government to topple the UF Government of West Bengal, if allowed to succeed, will have far-reaching consequences on the course of political developments throughout the country. It will be not only the reversal of the democratic process and the process of the weakening of the monopoly of power of the Congress party set in motion at the last General Elections, but also will be the beginning of the end of parliamentary democracy itself in the country. It should, therefore, be the concern of all democrats in the country to prevent the subversion of democracy.

The Polit Bureau appeals to all parties and democratic people throughout the country to raise their voice against these conspiracies of the Congress party and the Central Government and demand a democratic solution.

The Polit Bureau is confident that heightened vigilance and rallying of the people in West Bengal and throughout the country will smash the conspiracy to subvert parliamentary democracy and the will of the people.

## Mammoth Meeting in Brigade Parade Ground, Calcutta, in Protest Against Congress Conspiracy to Subvert Democracy\*

*The vast sprawling area of the Brigade Parade Ground turned into a seething mass of humanity as massive rallies, most of them several miles long, converged from the four corners of the city on the Maidan on the afternoon of November 5, in response to the call of the West Bengal State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Even according to bourgeois Press reports, the rally was more massive than the mammoth post-election rally of April 9—a fact which gives the lie to the inspired whisperings of detractors that the Party has lost its influence among the militant masses of West Bengal.*

The workers and other sections of the toiling people from the industrial belt of Durgapur came by eleven chartered buses to join the historic rally. Peasants from the distant, drought-stricken Purulia had collected five and ten paise bits to pay for five buses to bring them down to Calcutta. Similar rallies of peasants and other sections of the toiling masses came from Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura, Midnapur, the 24-Parganas, Nadia, etc. One could see among the processionists capped peasant youths, grey-haired men walking with lathis and mothers with babes in their arms.

The maidan was aflame with red flags and astir with militant slogans: Know the traitors, Down with the Congress fifth columnists who are breaking the U.F. Ministry, Raise high the banner of worker-peasant unity. From the dias poured forth songs by IPTA squads.

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\*This meeting was held on November 5, 1967.

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The nip of early winter could not dampen the militant anger in the hearts of the people against the traitors led by the former Food Minister Dr P. C. Ghosh, who were conspiring to oblige the bourgeoisie and the landlords, local and foreign reactionaries by toppling the United Front Government so that the vested interests in the State, aided and abetted by the Union Government and the Congress, could attack with a free hand and with the aid of the repressive state apparatus and their hired toughs and vigilantes the forces of democracy.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad presided over the meeting.

### **Rotten Stuff**

Referring to the nefarious role of Dr P. C. Ghosh, comrade B. T. Ranadive said, "Having finished blackmarketing in steel and cement, the capitalists are now purchasing ministers. As in the blackmarket you always get rotten kind of things, here also they are buying rotten kinds of ministers, as no honest man can sell himself like that." He strongly criticized the Governor or his complicity in this matter. The professed right in the Constitution of free election and to have Government of one's own choice is being trampled underfoot, he said.

Analysing the cause of this crisis and the all-out effort of the vested interests to topple the U.F. Ministry in West Bengal, Comrade Ranadive said that it is because our Party has a fair share in the Ministry and because we "Cannot be turned into docile tools of the capitalists."

U.F. Ministries of West Bengal and Kerala, of all the non-Congress ministries in the country have become targets of attack by vested interests. He said, we were yet to embark upon the amelioration of crisis faced by the people in a big way. We did not attack the monopolists for lowering their profits or landlords for ending their exploitation in the countryside.

We simply began something which is far short of the mark.

## **Grim Class Struggle**

But every action today becomes the beginning of a grim class struggle. The food procurement, for example, was only transfer of food from one class to another—from hoarders and profiteers to common man.

“Anybody who thinks that the misery of the people can be alleviated without class struggle is fooling himself.” The vested interests are in a hurry to topple the U.F. Government because their paymasters, the big moneybags, the Tatas, Birlas and Mukherjees cannot wait any more. “They want that the Ministry is dispensed with and a terror regime is installed in West Bengal.” Our Constitution framed by the bourgeoisie provides protection of private property. “It does not matter whether thousands of workes die, their families starve, but right of private property must be safeguarded.”

Comrade Ranadive warned that this was not only a matter of West Bengal people alone but “this is the beginning of attack on Indian democracy itself.” He said that the deepening of class struggle in the country is usually associated with the onslaught upon democracy by the ruling classes and this is the avowed policy of the Congress.

Praising the role of masses in West Bengal, he said that they have set a glorious example by virtue of their consciousness. Nowhere in India the people have so much say in the affairs of Ministry and nowhere the vigilant democratic movement can intervene so effectively when the vacillating elements begin to waver as in West Bengal.

He challenged the vested interests in a trial of strength in the mid-term election. He said that the election of CPI (M) candidates is not any trick of ballot box. The mighty struggle launched by the West Bengal people in the March-April last year and the heroic role played by our Party was alone responsible for it. He said that in any mid-term election the CPI (M) will return with flying colours and added strength. The bourgeoisie proclaim the virtue of the verdict of ballot box. Comrade Ranadive said, “Come to this magic box, gentlemen ! and

try your luck once again. You will see that you have absolutely no luck in West Bengal.”

Comrade Ranadive warned that “in any backward country when the condition becomes serious for the vested interests, they attack the rights of people, their right to vote”. Presidential rule, which is advocated by some, will be a negation of all democratic rights. We do not know how long will this last and this will mean untold privations for the people, will mean throwing thousands of people behind the bars and trampling upon other elementary norms of democracy. Any future election after that will be farce. He warned that the ruling classes also try to take lesson from international affairs. Indonesia is a glaring example before them.

### **People To Decide**

Comrade Ranadive concluded by saying that people of West Bengal must strengthen their unity on the basis of the 18-point programme, and must voice the demand that “the people of West Bengal alone will decide who will rule them”. He warned about the danger of anti-communism and said that any one attacking U.F. or our Party virtually plays into the hands of Congress alone.

Comrade Jyoti Basu said, “It is our proud privilege that we, the people of the West Bengal, are in the frontline of the struggle waged for safeguarding democracy in our country.” He said that we never believed that we will carry on smoothly for five years because the vested interests will not allow it. The CPI(M) acted in accordance with the verdict of the people who wanted unity of anti-Congress forces on the basis of some programme.

We understood the difficulty of working with certain elements but we did not hesitate to unite, because that was what the people wanted. We decided that the differences which are there can be overcome to some extent if some minimum programme acceptable to all are adopted and if we carry out some relief to the suffering masses, he said.

“Our main ‘offence’ is that we did not try to suppress the mass movements ruthlessly with the help of police”, he said. So the numerous

attempts to dislodge the U.F. ministry. First by purchasing some MLAs, then by creating trouble so as to invite Presidential rule and lastly by misguiding Ajoy Mukherjee by framing cock-and-bull stories about imminent foreign invasion and our alleged complicity in the matter by creating so-called troubles within the country. An atmosphere tantamount to that of military *coup d'etat* was created on October 2, anti-social elements became restive and lists of thousands of cadres of the CPI(M) were ready for arrest.

### **A Dishonest Gandhian**

Referring to Dr P. C. Ghosh, he said that this Gandhian has set an example of dishonesty which is unparalleled. This was boasted at the time of the October crisis that he will not head any minority Government and his only grievance was why Ajoy Mukherjee did not take him into confidence while entering into dialogue with the Congress leaders.

He said, it is heard that some officers who always had a dislike of the U.F. have advised the Centre to act quickly. They fear that delay might prove fatal as popular anger might force some of the traitors to retreat.

Comrade Jyoti Basu appealed to the masses to be prepared for bigger struggles, for bigger sacrifices. He asked them to be prepared for a General Strike at a short notice. He asked them to isolate the traitors who have unmasked themselves.

### **Onslaught On The People**

'Comrade Harekrishna Konar characterized the present crisis as a serious onslaught on the people. He said that the U.F. in the last eight months had refused to use the police as in the past. He said that this conspiracy was not simply aimed changing the Ministry. It has much deeper roots. The anti-social elements, the hired thugs who came in the open during the October crisis would rise their heads once again. He revealed that Dr P. C. Ghosh in the last Cabinet meeting still tried to advocate free trade in foodgrains and objected to coercion to jotdars.

Relating the mighty struggles launched by the peasant masses throughout West Bengal, he said that wherever the peasants stood firm in most cases they established their rights. A grim struggle is ahead at the time of harvesting. Peasants will give the owners their due share but they will not allow them to loot the share belonging to them.

He pledged that the CPI(M) will never retreat from struggle. The Communists have never betrayed the masses and that is why no one can wipe them out.

## Foil This Criminal Plot \*

*Editorial of "People's Democracy", November 12, 1967*

Within a month of the attempted coup in October the reactionaries led by the Congress leaders attempted yet another coup last week. Once again the plotters and conspirators have been frustrated for the time being, their attempt to topple down the Ministry this week itself, and usher in a Congress coalition ministry frustrated by the vigilance and the united strength of the people.

The October attempt had exposed the sordid role of the Congress leaders, the Union Ministers and the Central Government in the plot to undermine democracy, upset the popular electoral verdict and instal an anti-popular ministry with the aid of the bayonets of the military and the police and by means of hundreds of arrests of our Partymen. Those who for years denounced us as opponents of democracy, of popular rule, revealed themselves as the open and avowed enemies of democratic norms and principles, of the democracy permitted under the Indian Constitution. As soon as the facade of democracy became inconvenient to them, as soon as it began to go against their immediate class interests, they were prepared to discard it as a soiled and worn-out garment.

This time they were less ambitious—they sought to split a small group from the United Front and upset the majority of the Front in the Assembly. For this treacherous purpose the man they had chosen was P.C. Ghosh—who from the beginning has been acting as Congress fifth-column inside the United Front. This hypocritical Gandhite, this pretended devotee of truth and *ahimsa*, went on sabotaging the food policy of the United Front Ministry, paying

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\* This relates to the conspiracy of the then Union Government in India to topple the first United Front Government in West Bengal and instal in its place a minority Government of motely combination with the support of Congress Party. This minority Government was installed in power but survived only for a few days.

compliments to the Central Government when it was starving the people of Bengal, and frustrating all effective attempts at procurement to satisfy the big landlord and trading interests. Thanks to him, today there is no rice in the ration shops of Calcutta. The Central Government failed to meet its full quota last month and Ghosh did not divulge it to the Ministry. There is no doubt that he deliberately conspired with the Centre to create a critical situation for the Ministry.

Last time they had chosen the Chief Minister himself to attack the unity and integrity of the United Front. Last time their game was mainly to isolate our Party and carry as much of the United Front with them as possible, so that the whole affair could be represented as a mere split inside the United Front, a split in the unity of the popular forces themselves.

Constitutional procedure demanded that the resignation be submitted to the Chief Minister. But Ghosh went to the Governor. Why? The conspirators were in a hurry to announce that Ghosh had resigned, that the Ministry could not function. They wanted to put the initiative in the hands of the Governor. Had the resignation been given to the Chief Minister, there would have been at least discussions in the Cabinet, Ghosh would have had to explain his stand—a very embarrassing position—and the whole conspiracy would have been delayed.

Hence the resignation to the Governor, and following that letters from sixteen members of the Legislative Assembly to the Governor, saying that they had withdrawn their support to the United Front Government. Some of these letters had been signed as early as August and a few were signed on November 3 and 4. It shows how some people had turned traitors as early as August itself. In the list of sixteen the majority of signatures come from the dissident Bangla Congress group—the gang which follows the traitor Humayun Kabir and calls itself Bhartiya Kranti Dal.

It is amazing that four of the signatories are from the PSP and that Party has not yet condemned this treacherous crowd. The statement issued by one of the PSP Ministers on the resignation of P.C. Ghosh is more an alibi for Ghosh and criticism of the parties in the United Front, than a condemnation of Ghosh. Besides it does not condemn the treachery of the members of his own Party. The statement issued by the General Secretary of the Party from Delhi also condemns only Ghosh, while it is silent on the defection of the members of the PSP. It should be clear that the people will not forget the treachery of the PSP members, and the PSP leadership will not succeed in escaping suspicion if it does not disown the traitors and makes its position absolutely clear.

P.C. Ghosh and the sixteen signatories having thus placed the initiative in the hands of the Governor, the latter began to act with indecent haste.

This shows that the Congress controlling the Centre, the State Governors carry out the party policy of the Congress and do not flinch from violating the constitutional provisions. Has the Governor any right to call for resignation, just because a few people say they are no longer with the ministry ? The forum for expressing confidence or lack of confidence in the Ministry is the Assembly and not the Governor. Members of the Assembly who feel that the ruling party has lost its majority, may demand a session of the Assembly; but the Governor comes nowhere in the picture. He has no business to opine whether the Ministry has the confidence of the Assembly in the absence of a clear verdict from that body.

The Governor by arguing as if the Ministry has lost its confidence and demanding its resignation acted only as one of the conspirators, to further the designs of the Congress to form a coalition ministry with Ghosh. It also appears that the Governor was unwilling to allow the Assembly session to be convened and was preparing to dismiss the Ministry. It would have been an illegal coup if the Governor had acted that way. In fact, that is what the Congress



leaders were wanting. With the resignation of Ghosh and letters of the sixteen, they wanted the Ministry to be dismissed without an Assembly session, a coup from the top to instal the Congress in power. They were not confident that in an Assembly session the Congress party would remain united; that in the interval their gangster allies—the sixteen—would remain steady. In fact, it is known that the Congress Legislature Party in West Bengal stands divided on this issue; in the meeting called to consider the crisis, the Chief Whip of the party resigned in protest against the ruling clique's attitude on the question and its eagerness to form a coalition with Ghosh. That is why the clique wanted the coup to be over within a few hours.

Ghosh was ready to form a coalition ministry; his treacherous sixteen who have been promised ministerial portfolios were there, waiting anxiously to gather the price of their betrayal; the Congress leaders had already had confabulations with Ghosh and had settled everything. Ghosh had given out that he wanted a coalition with the Congress. The Governor was very ready to oblige. And New Delhi was waiting to hail the new Ministry and take revenge for its failure in the October coup.

But the people of West Bengal decided otherwise and the second coup was scotched, though for the time being only. The widespread commotion among the people over the crisis culminating in the biggest ever rally organized by our Party, and the continuous demonstrations convinced the reactionaries that dictatorial steps will be fought and countered effectively. The West Bengal Committee of our Party, the Rashtriya Samgram Samiti, the Bengal State TUC—all had given a call for a General Strike and mass protests if the Ministry was dismissed. The rally of November 5 gave a clear warning to the conspirators that the fate of the Ministry will not be decided by a handful of traitors who have chosen to betray the people. The people have faith in the United Front and its Ministry must continue.

Due to this intervention of the people the conspirators had to give up their plan of dismissing the Ministry immediately and agree to accept a session of Assembly to test the strength of U. F. This is no doubt a big retreat for the reactionaries; their immediate plan is defeated. But the evil day had been postponed. If the sixteen continue their treacherous activities, the U. F. may find itself in a minority and the coup may appear to have parliamentary sanctions.

Even now the Ministry seems to be in imminent danger. A number of MLAs belonging to the Congress have written to the President alleging that there is a breakdown of law and order in West Bengal and demanding President's rule. Calcutta is thick with rumour that the Ministry may be dismissed any time under the plea of breakdown of law and order.

But popular vigilance and movement can remove this danger. Therefore, in the intervening period, people must organize their full strength behind the Ministry, popularize the slogan of General Strike of all industries and mass protests in defence of the Ministry when it is attacked. It is only in this way that the Ministry can be saved against the machinations of the big capitalists, the big landlords, the Congress leaders, the Union Government and traitors like Ghosh.

At the same time, it must be realized that the defection of a handful of opportunists from the United Front does not in reality change the popular character of the Ministry; its popular support has not declined in the last eight months; on the other hand, it has increased. The defections, therefore, do not arise out of a growing lack of support for the Ministry, but are engineered by the vested interests, the big capitalists and Congress bosses, to stem the tide of popular feeling round the Ministry. If the United Front Ministry finds itself in a minority inside the Assembly, it will have at the same time the overwhelming support of the majority of the electorate outside. The equation between representation in the Assembly and popular support outside has changed tremendously in favour of the United Front in the eight months. If the defectors, who represent

certain pro-landlord, pro-capitalist elements and certain corrupt individuals, were to stand for election, they will be completely routed, each one of them forfeiting his deposit.

Therefore a vote in the Assembly with the defection of the traitors will not correspond to the wishes of the people. The Congress and the vested interests seek to exploit the situation to deny the popular Ministry its right to continue. Their conception of democracy does not permit them to look to the people and their support; the people are, according to them, simply voting cattle who are to perform their job only once in five years. For the rest, things are to be manipulated with the aid of the adventurist and opportunist elements in the Assembly.

This paradox of loss of majority in the Assembly and complete majority among the people can be solved only by direct reference to the people—the real repository of Indian sovereignty.

Taking this situation into consideration, knowing that some of the parties in the United Front contain unscrupulous pro-landlord and pro-capitalist elements, which may create a crisis any time, knowing also that the narrow majority inside the Assembly does not correctly represent the strength of the United Front among the people, our Party had called for mid-term elections—a direct reference to our masters, the people—as early as July itself. It was a slogan of confidence on the people, a slogan based on people's support for our Party and the United Front. It was a slogan for adequate representation of the United Front in the Assembly and deflating the strength of the Congress which got so many seats just because a single united front could not be achieved in the elections.

And yet almost all the other parties in the United Front, including the revisionists, opposed this demand of ours. Had it been accepted at that time, the popular forces would have by now created enough sanctions to ensure its implementation. The people have to pay heavily for the vacillating attitude of these parties including the Dangeites, who were afraid of a popular verdict.

Today it seems that most of the parties accept the demand as correct. Even now the SSP, for reasons best known to itself, still opposes it. There cannot be a more consistently democratic demand than immediate elections to expose and unmask the reactionary conspiracies hatched under the guise of parliamentary principles and democratic norms. Appeal to the people is the best democratic procedure and whosoever opposes it shows that he is afraid of the verdict of the people.

The people, therefore, must insist on mid-term elections. They must demand the right to intervene against the opportunist manoeuvrings of the Congress and the vested interests and give fresh mandate to the parties of their choice. The Congress blabbers about a participating democracy. Well, let it accept this participation of the people in the solution of the crisis.

The demand comes because in West Bengal the struggle round the Ministry has become the symbol of the class struggle among contending classes. The vested interests and the Congress consider the Ministry to be their enemy; they see that the forces of the people are getting strengthened under the Ministry; getting better organized and that in the near future it will be difficult to suppress them; the people on the whole, though they realize that the Ministry has not been able to give them much economic relief, consider the Ministry to be the symbol of their political strength. Hence the struggle just now, partially at least, centres round the Ministry. To rouse the people for mid-term elections means to organize their strength and vigilance and prepare them for routing the Congress.

The attack against the Ministry is coming when it has announced a procurement programme and there is every chance that with the aid of the people the procurement drive will be successful and the landlords will have to part with their surplus. That is why the big landlords are up in arms and are in a hurry to get rid of the Ministry.

The attack is coming when the capitalists, under the impact of recession, want to launch onslaughts against the workers and require

a docile stooge Ministry which will crush the resistance of the workers at their bidding. The Tatas, Birlas and Mukerjees are in haste to liquidate the Ministry. These capitalists have already delivered a threat that they will close down their concerns if the Ministry does not act according to their bidding.

Once more we find the vested interests attacking democracy, violating the Constitution, to protect their selfish class interests. Last eight months have proved that by democracy this crowd means democracy for the capitalists and slavery for the people.

The entire Indian people must understand the full implications of these constant attacks against the West Bengal Ministry. It is a part of the growing onslaught on people's democratic rights, on the limited democracy that exists under the present Constitution. In fact, it is an attack on their right to vote. It is a warning that the exploiting classes of India are finding themselves unable to maintain their class rule with a show of democracy; that they are setting on a course to establish an open dictatorship in the near future in India.

It is not accidental that a few months earlier Shri Jai Prakash Narain gave open support to the idea of a military dictatorship in India. The West Bengal developments are a grim forecast of things to come. The people, the masses, must see the danger, rally to fight against it and frustrate the would-be dictators in time. The West Bengal Ministry has become a symbol of this grim fight.

Let people all over India rise in its defence and frustrate the conspirators and rebuff all attempts at undermining their democratic rights.

## Get Ready For Direct Political Struggle Against The Ruling Classes\*

*(Editorial of "People's Democracy", December 3, 1967.)*

The Ghosh Ministry, whose illegal installation was paraded by the Congress bosses as an act in the spirit of the Constitution and democracy took no time in revealing its brand of democracy. Deployment of the army, declaration of Section 144 throughout the cities and rural areas of West Bengal, compulsory closure of all educational institutions, banning of processions and meetings, imposition of curfew, police shootings killing several, arrests of thousands, and finally, police brutalities inside the houses of the people and university campuses—these were the measure which announced its formation.

The ushering in of the Ministry was thus a declaration of war against the people, a military-cum-police coup organized by the ex.-I.C.S. Governor, a lackey of the former British rulers, under the direct instruction of the Centre. This is no ordinary change of Ministry— with one bourgeois party replacing another—the usual game of musical chairs. This is no Haryana either where the masses are nowhere in the picture, though the Congress Government is attempting to confuse the two. In West Bengal the minority classes—the capitalists and landlords—are stifling the will of the people with

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\* *The Governor of West Bengal issued an order on November 21, 1967 removing the first United Front Government in this State and installed a minority Government with notable combination supported by the Congress Party with Dr. P. C. Ghosh as Chief Minister. The people of West Bengal immediately resorted to protest General Strike and Hartal on 22 and 23 November, 1967 throughout the State and it was a massive success. The minority Government installed in power headed by Dr. P. C. Ghosh survived only for a few days. The Speaker of West Bengal Assembly gave a ruling about formation of this minority ministry and it is given under item No. 86 of this volume.*

the aid of the bayonet and rifle. They are trying to settle the issue in the streets so that they can parade their fake numbers in the Legislature as representing the popular will.

The struggle around the Ministry has reached a climax with the capitalist-landlord clique committing one outrage after another against the declared provisions of the Constitution, and are attempting the solve to issue through force.

The valiant people of West Bengal accepted this challenge of the reactionaries, and by their unprecedented general strike and two days' hartal, their heroic fight against police terror, have already sealed the doom of the *shikhandi* Ministry and the newly laid plans of the Congress bosses.

The streets of Calcutta were once more red with the blood of martyrs, the jails in West Bengal were once more crammed with those who defended democracy and people's rights, people's sovereignty against its usurption by the Governor; the hated P.D. Act was once more used against political leaders who stood by the people, and police terror once more stalked the people of the State. No wonder Atulya Ghosh lost no time in announcing full Congress support to P. C. Ghosh. What else does the Congress require to protect the interests of big money and big landlord interests ?

We offer our greetings and congratulations to all those who braved the police repression and terror, all those who worked to make the general strike a great and mighty success. It is their unity and steel resolve that will finally chase Ghosh out of the Ministry.

The Killings of November 22-23 and terror have created an impassable gulf between the people and the ministerial crowd and its supporters. There can be no peace with Dr P. C. Ghosh, the butcher of the people, there can be no recognition of the fake Ministry, no negotiations or talks with it under the guise of observing democratic procedure. After the November 22 events, the numbers which Dr Ghosh may parade in the Assembly have ceased to have any meaning.

Everyone who sides with Ghosh is a traitor and has no right to speak on behalf of the people. The firing and killings have made it

clear. A Ministry which even before formally assuming office starts killing people has no right to exist whatever the number of traitors and hangers on it may gather round itself. A power higher than the Assembly—the people—have already spoken and they have spoken unmistakably and unequivocally in face of bullets and sure death. And they have repudiated Ghosh with his Congress supporters. If anyone now attempts to create an impression that the democratic verdict about the Ministry is yet to be delivered, that the strength of the Ghosh Ministry and the United Front is yet to be tested, he is just cheating the people.

And it is precisely this that the Governor, Ghosh and the Congress are trying to do by convening the Assembly on November 29. They want the people to forget the happenings and popular verdict on the 22nd and 23rd. For them the struggle of the people, their martyrdom is nothing. For them the vote of turncoats in the Assembly is the only real thing. They are convening the Assembly to give a democratic garb to their military-police coup, to the pocket Ministry of Ghosh. They want to misrepresent to the people outside West Bengal that the popular protests were momentary outbursts, while the sober democratic verdict is to be had in the Assembly. That is why this whole farce of the Assembly session has to be completely unmasked. The fact that supporters of Ghosh has no locus standi among the people, has to be reasserted. Against the crowd of traitors that seek to nullify popular will, the people, the electorate—their real master—must appear in person in tens of thousands before that Assembly and repudiate them. The United Front has given a call to the people to demonstrate before the Assembly on the 29th. Let that call be obeyed by everyone, by every house, and let the real power in the land speak in the streets, round the Assembly—the real parliament denounce the turncoats and foil the game of faking a majority for P. C. Ghosh and the Governor.

This is the only way to deal with the Assembly session that is being illegally called by the Governor. Being illegally called it has no right to meet and decide anything. Any other approach—any illusion about the Assembly itself—will just sidetrack the main



struggle of the people and help the reactionaries to bolster themselves.

On November 29, expressing their democratic verdict against the coup, the people must raise the slogans : dismiss the Governor, dismiss the Ghosh Ministry and forward to fresh elections.

The Congress bosses and others pretend to defend democracy when they support the minority group of P.C. Ghosh. But they are afraid of facing the people of West Bengal. Their democracy is afraid of a popular verdict. Will P. C. Ghosh face the electorate after enacting his recent blood-bath? Will the Congress leaders face the electorate after starving the people of Bengal for the last so many months? And does P.C. Ghosh think that his promise to raise ration by 100 grams will make the people forget the murders of innocent people on November 22? The demand for mid-term poll is not one which sows constitutional illusions but one which will help to dispel them by routing the Congress and creating a new balance of power among the people—a shift against which the vested interests will find it difficult to struggle with any pretence of democracy and constitutional propriety. It is a demand for putting in their place the whole crowd of traitors and Congressmen who today claim to represent part of the electorate.

The demand for a mid-term poll, for immediate fresh elections as a weapon of mobilizing popular resistance against the Ghosh Ministry should unite all parties in the United Front. If any party shows vacillations it means it is willing to accept the vote of the defectors as a democratic and sacrosanct vote and seeks to make peace with the treacherous crowd. Let the people be vigilant against such vacillators which may lead to treachery.

The dismissal of the Ministry, the recall of the Governor and fresh elections—these demands cannot be secured without tremendous mass sanctions backing them. The United Front has correctly called for resistance struggle to oust the Ministry for, without such a continuous struggle, the aims cannot be achieved. The most dogged and persistent struggle, combined with militancy

and courage alone can lead to the desired objective. The reactionaries who have usurped authority will try to unleash repression and terror on the people and drown their protest in blood. For they know that the struggle is not just for a minor change, for a minor constitutional adjustment but for imposing a major defeat on the clique of vested interests and dictatorial usurpers. It is a major part of the battle against the capitalist-landlord clique, a battle which in West Bengal is no longer fought with fine parliamentary phrases and constitutional banalities, but with the aid of police rifles and bayonets and in utter disregard for constitutional provisions. It is a grim class struggle in which the exploiting classes are using every means to stem the march of the people under the very rights formally permitted under the Constitution.

It should be realized that there is no going back from the battle. The issue has been joined in Bengal between the people and the reactionaries—the bourgeois-landlord clique, led by the Congress Government. The parliamentary strength of the people of West Bengal, their strength in the legislature backed by their mass struggles, is too much for Congress bourgeois democracy to bear. Such weakening the system, such fissures, cannot be permitted when the economic system is collapsing. The luxury of formal democratic rights, of franchise can no longer be sported with safety by the big bourgeoisie. An open and formal attack on people's rights will be finally launched if the Bengal onslaught succeeds. India under Congress leadership must travel the same way as many newly-liberated countries have done—the capitalist class must abrogate all democratic labels if the masses fail to rise and defeat it. Capitalist path, though embellished by the revisionists as non-capitalist path, must end its honeymoon with formal democracy.

This is the grim meaning of the struggle in West Bengal. This is its import for the people of India. And yet the capitalist class and its spokesmen in the Central Government will not find it easy to meet the people's challenge. The ruling clique stands divided, afraid

to face the consequences. Barring the kept men of Congress, the legal pimps who are always at its service, every decent person has expressed his revulsion at the outrage on democracy in West Bengal. The Supreme Court lawyers have attacked the dismissal as unconstitutional; Sri Chagla, ex-Chief Justice of Bombay and former External Affairs Minister, has opined that the Governor has no power under the Constitution to dismiss the Ministry; P.N.Sapru, another ex-Judge, and a Congress member of the Rajya Sabha, holds the same opinion; prominent advocates of the Calcutta High Court and a host of other legal luminaries, men of letters, persons from all walks of life, have denounced the action of the West Bengal Governor. The Chief Ministers of Madras and Bihar have expressed similar opinions. Comrade E. M. S. Namboodiripad had demanded that hence forth like the President the Governors should be elected. Large sections of the Press, usually favourable to the Congress, have also expressed their strong dissent against the dictatorial move.

Never since the dismissal of the Kerala Ministry in 1959 was the Congress party and the Central Government so isolated from the people and from wide sections of the intelligentsia as now.

On the other hand, the popular forces in West Bengal are more solidly united than before. After the ugly episode of October 2, the earlier sniping at our Party by some parties, the United Front of the popular forces stand together to face the common attack. The attempt of the Congress to create a big breach in the Front, to isolate us and form a non-Congress Government with the rest, has ended in failure and it has to be content with a discredited splinter group whom everyone regards as utterly worthless. P. C. Ghosh's defection, the Governor's conspiracy and the mass indignation following it have brought the parties together. Their unity today is cemented and strengthened by the blood of the common people of Calcutta which freely flowed in the streets to defend the United Front and democracy. No party worth its salt can now think of turning its back on the growing resistance of the people unless it wants to be stamped as a traitor party.

This is an excellent situation for the popular forces. All parties in the United Front must now throw off their weaknesses and address themselves firmly to the task of organizing the people's resistance movement. It cannot be carried on the basis of spontaneous response of the people to calls given from time to time by the leadership. There must be a widespread network of organization with local initiative to the ranks below. Any attempt to curtail the initiative of the ranks and the masses in narrow party interests will be harmful to the movement. A few months ago, when people's committees were proposed to be organized in connection with the procurement drive, a number of parties opposed the move and they even criticized our Party for starting them. Now everyone realizes how easy it would have been to organize the struggle if such committees had already been set up. Every factory, every village, every locality must have its organizational network so that resistance continues everywhere at all times and the Ministry has no respite. It is especially necessary that the organizational network should spread over the rural areas where the main mass of people, the peasants, resides.

The United Front and the political parties have been called upon to discharge a vital responsibility towards the people of West Bengal. November 29 promises to open a new phase in the political movement of West Bengal—a phase of direct political struggle against the ruling class. In recent years West Bengal has seen many a political upheaval, with mass shootings and incarcerations. But these centred round either economic demands like food, etc., or questions of civil rights, liberties or protest actions. Sustained political agitation and activity was to be seen mainly in the elections. There was very rarely a continuous struggle round a major political issue, like the present. Very rarely were the masses drawn into a discussion and action on a directly political question affecting the struggle between the two classes. By dismissing the U.F. Ministry, by using police bullets to sustain an illegally constituted Ministry, the ruling classes have asked the masses to decide the constitutional

question. This is creating a new situation in West Bengal, leading to a qualitative transformation of the struggle waged by the masses.

For eight months the United Front Ministry held the field and was the centre of political attention of the masses. The saw it being attacked by the vested interests; they began to realize the role of the various parties and the limitations of the Constitution. Their expectation of quick achievement through an electoral success being denied, they began to understand the necessity of a deeper struggle and shed their illusions of an easy victory. Deterioration in their conditions opened their eyes still further and the final assault on the Ministry came to them as the challenge of the exploiting classes. Thus the big bourgeoisie and its policies are teaching the working class and the people to understand the class character of the state and the Constitution. In this background the direct political struggle for ousting the Ministry and fresh elections, sets a qualitatively new meaning and may well become the beginning of an entirely new phase in the people's struggle in our country.

It is precisely this development that our Party had in mind when it gave the slogan of alternative Ministries in West Bengal and Kerala and when it agreed to participate in such Ministries. Some foolish people, proclaiming themselves to be Left, saw nothing but compromise in these tactics and began to shout hoarse about opportunism. But our Party, knowing the stage of political consciousness of the people, was determined to be patient with them and lead them to the next stage of the struggle. The formation of the U.F. Ministry and our participation in it accentuated the class contradictions to such an extent that the bourgeois-landlord clique had to come out in the open, oppose every relief to the people and finally attack their own handiwork, the Constitution. In these eight months the masses in West Bengal belonging to all parties learnt their political lessons with extreme rapidity and are now getting ready for the next stage of the struggle. That is why in the *New Situation and Party's Tasks*, the Central Committee stated, "In a word, the U.F. Governments that we have now are to be treated and

understood as instruments of struggle in the hands of our people, more than as Governments that actually possess adequate power, that can materially and substantially give relief to the people. In clear class terms, our Party's participation in such Governments is one specific form of struggle to win more and more people and more allies for the proletariat and its allies in the struggle for the cause of People's Democracy, and at a later stage for Socialism."

It is in this new situation that our Party and the United Front have to lead the people and lead them to victory. The Bengal developments are merely a dress rehearsal for the rest of India. The ruling class, forced to come out in its true colours, will launch the same offensive elsewhere as soon as it sees the mass movement getting strengthened there, the challenge of the masses getting more menacing. West Bengal is in the front rank of the fight for democracy, repelling the attack that is soon to be launched all over India. Our Party, other democratic parties and forces and all progressive people in other State must take up the question and launch a broad agitation in defence of the people of West Bengal and against the dictatorship of the Governor. The leaderships of all Left parties—except the PSP—all central trade union organizations—except the INTUC—have given a call to organize solidarity action and demonstrations on the 29th of this month. That day the people of West Bengal will launch their fight against the illegal Ministry of Ghosh. That day the whole of India must reverberate with the cry of support to West Bengal, defence of people's sovereignty and demand recall of the Governor, dismissal of the Ministry and immediate fresh elections in West Bengal.

The Congress camp is in jitters. Notwithstanding the rifles and bullets, the ruling class is shaking in its boots. It stands divided and isolated on this issue. A firm and united protest movement on an all-India scale will force it to retreat and bring about the debacle of all its plans. Let the multimillion army of the people denounce with one voice the sinister conspiracies of the Central Government and assert that they will have the last word.

November 28, 1967

## **Historic Ruling of the Speaker of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly on Removal of the First United Front Government in West Bengal in November 1967 (As published in “People’s Democracy”, December 10, 1967)\***

The Speaker, Mr Bijoy Kumar Banerjee, in his ruling said : “This House meets under extraordinary circumstances. I am *Prima facie* satisfied that dissolution of the Ministry headed by Ajoy Mukherjee, the appointment of Dr P. C. Ghosh as Chief Minister and the summoning of this House on his advice is unconstitutional and invalid since it has been effected behind the back of this House.”

“The only authority competent to decide whether or not a Council of Ministers should continue in office is this House” Mr. Banerjee added.

Quoting a precedent, he said : “In March 1945 the then Government of Bengal was defeated in a vote taken on the demand for a grant in respect of Agriculture. The question arose as to the constitutional consequences of such a defeat.

“At that time my predecessor in office, Mr Nausher Ali, put the essence of the matter in clear terms. To quote him : “Sir Nazimuddin (the then Chief Minister) said yesterday that he would treat this as a snap division and not a censure. I am afraid the constitutional position has not been properly conceived. The Ministry is the creation of the House; this House can make and unmake the Ministry and the Governor is but the registering authority of the House. Any other course, I am afraid, would strike at the very root of democracy”.

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\* This is connected with Item Nos. 84 and 85 published in this volume.

“No doubt”, the Speaker continued : “the circumstances facing Mr. Nausher Ali were different. But the essence of the matter, that this House is the supreme authority in regard to making and unmaking Ministries, is the same. And this statement came from the lips of a presiding officer of this House when India was not free. Today when a sovereign Indian people has given to itself a Constitution, surely the authority of this House has increased and not diminished.

“This is why I find it extremely difficult to recognize Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh as Chief Minister and his colleagues, Mr Harendra Nath Majumdar and Dr Amir Ali Mollah as members of the Council of Ministers. Neither the text of the Articles of the Constitution nor the precedent quoted above recognizes any discretion in the Governor in respect of the appointment of the Council of Ministers. He is merely a registering authority, to use the expression of my predecessor, an authority whose constitutional duty is to recognize and implement the decisions of this House.”

“To an extent”, Mr Banerjee went on, “I have attempted to examine the method by which, behind the back of this august Assembly, the Council of Ministers responsible to it has been removed.” But on a *prima facie* examination of the constitutional questions involved had found it impossible to recognize as legal, valid and constitutional the dissolution of the Ministry headed by Mr Ajoy Mukherjee. It followed then, he said, that the appointment of the Ministry headed by Dr Ghosh as a Chief Minister was invalid and unconstitutional.

Mr Banerjee further said : “The order by which the council of Ministers headed by Mr. Mukherjee was dissolved is dated November 21. This assembly however, has been summoned under an order of the Governor which was issued on November 22. In view of this I am unable to appreciate how this session of this assembly can have any constitutional or legal validity. For if the order of the Governor of November 21 is illegal and unconstitutional



evidently the Council of Ministers headed by Mr Ajoy Mukherjee not only continues in office, but it alone is competent to advise the Governor on the manner in which he is to exercise his powers under Article 174 (i), to summon this Assembly. And only an Assembly summoned by the Governor acting under such advice would be validly and properly summoned. I must, therefore, confess my grave doubts about the validity of this session of the assembly.”

Concluding, the Speaker observed : “The matters in issue are of the highest constitutional importance. It is my regret that when an attempt was made to refer them for the opinion of the Supreme Court under Article 143 it was frustrated. It is beyond dispute that the issue goes to the very root of democracy. It is obvious, therefore, that if I am to find out how exactly I should act to preserve and protect the privileges of this House I should need more time to give a considered ruling on the grave issue at stake. This is why I have adjourned the House *sine die*.”

## West Bengal People Battle Against Police Raj\*

Twelve killed--- more than three hundred people injured ---more than three hundred rounds of tear-gas shells fired ---lathi-chagres galore----arrests exceeding five thousand : this is the record of the first nine days of office of the immoral, renegade Ghosh-Molla-Majumdar gang in West Bengal. Deeply resented by the overwhelming majority of people and isolated from all sections of democratic opinion, this clique of traitors stays in office, relying solely on brute force and brutal repression.

According to *The Statesman's* staff correspondent, "there are 42000 policemen in the districts of West Bengal in an area covering 30,000 sq. miles which work out 1.4 per sq. mile". The deployment is much larger in Calcutta -- 18000 policemen covering an area of 34 sq. miles. "In addition to these", the correspondent says, "there are six battalions of the Central Reserve Police in the State-- three in the districts and three in Calcutta." Add to this the men of the Border Security Force and the National Volunteer Force and the alert order on the Army, and the picture of a police state is complete.

### More Like A Military Occupation

This elaborate security arrangement is required, it is said, to maintain law and order. What kind of law and order? "Sometimes, indeed, the so-called law and order might be more justly called the absence of law and order. Any achievement that is based on widespread fear can hardly be a desirable one, and 'order' that has for its basis the coercive apparatus of the state, and cannot

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\* Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, December 10, 1967. This covers a report on the struggle of the people of West Bengal against Police Terror created in the State after undemocratically and unconstitutionally removing the first United Front Government of West Bengal in November 1967 and installing a minority and illegal Government in the state.

exist without it, is more like a military occupation than civil rule.” This was said by Pandit Nehru in his days of innocence when he was in the anti-imperialist camp. The Indian bourgeoisie have grown wiser and are ready to throw overboard all the pledges they once had made to the people. But history, they forget, is against them. History will ride rough-shod over them as it did over the British imperialists.

The clique of defectors who remain in office by the grace of the bourgeoisie and landlords and their organization, the Indian National Congress, and by employing the coercive apparatus of the state, made elaborate arrangements to silence the people's voice of protest on November 29, when they planned to 'legitimize' the patently arbitrary act of the Governor, a today of a bureaucrat, by a vote of confidence in the Assembly. A ring of steel was thrown around the Assembly House. All approaches to the building were guarded by several thousands of policemen, mounted and on foot, complete with fire-arms, lathis, tear-gas shells, etc.

### **Dr Ghosh's Strange Requests**

The Gandhite P. C. Ghosh, and his Congress bosses did not feel secure even with such elaborate police arrangements outside the Assembly. Dr. Ghosh wanted the Speaker Mr. Banerjee to permit posting of plain-clothes policemen inside the Assembly. He also requested the Speaker to close the galleries to visitors and to allow reinforcements to the usual strength of police force, in the Assembly. This old man and his cronies were scared stiff of people to whom he now reads frequent sermons from a safe distance --- over the AIR. This 'popular' Chief Minister wanted the Chamber to be turned into an 'armed camp', as the Speaker said later in his broadcast, replying to the Dr Ghosh's veiled allegation against the Speaker that he was assaulted in the Speaker's presence.

But despite Sec. 144 and the massive deployment of police force outside the Assembly building, people in response to the call of the U. F. had started gathering long before the Assembly

session was to start. They shouted slogans in support of the United Front and denouncing the traitors. The police made repeated lathi-charges and fired tear-gas shells several times. The crowd retreated only to come back again. According to a report in a vernacular daily, the police made lathi-charges and arrests at every ten or fifteen minutes' interval between 11 a.m. and 4 p. m. in the areas around the Assembly building. The mounted policemen charged into peaceful assemblies. The police made numerous and frequent arrests and beat up savagely whomever they could lay their hands upon. But the crowd swelled in number every minute. A large procession of students was lathi-charged on the way to the Assembly.

### **Historic Ruling**

While outside the Assembly the people were voicing their deep hatred and anger against the traitors and demanding the recall of the Governor for arbitrarily dismissing the U. F. Ministry and installing the traitors in office, the speaker, Mr. Banerji, was giving his ruling inside the Assembly ---2 ruling which will go down in history as an act of courage in defence of democracy and the sovereignty of the popular will, which is now sought to be repressed by exploiters and vested interests.

The Speaker ruled that the dissolution of the U. F. Government, the appointment of the Ghosh Ministry and the summoning of the assembly by the governor were unconstitutional and invalid. He adjourned the Assembly *sine die*.

### **People acclaimed Speaker's Ruling**

It took the Speaker less than fifteen minutes to read out his speech. People who had been on tenterhooks to know what was happening in the Assembly heard over the AIR news-broadcast at 1-30 p.m. that the Speaker had called a spade a spade. He had acted as the tribune of the people, voiced what they had felt in their heart of heart, The traitors had been denounced for what they are! The Governor had been put on the mat! The Congress conspirators had got what they had deserved--- a slap on the face! This was what the people felt. They did not care for constitutional

niceties, the sophistry of philistine pundits and the lackeys of the money bags. They had found the reflection of their own will in the Speaker's statement. If ever there was a really popular decision, here was one.

The news of the Speaker's ruling spread rapidly like a bush-fire. and all on a sudden the tension which had cramped people's hearts relaxed. Joy spilled over into the streets. Crowds appeared at the street-crossings and accosted the policemen: "Pray, who are your masters, now! why dont make yourselves scarce?" The mood of joy, gradually, gave way to a more chastened mood as the realization came that while the people had won a moral victory, the traitorous clique, the Judas gang, continued in office.

In the districts also processions and demonstrations took place before Government offices and courts, and five hundred persons were arrested. At Sonarpur, 24-Paraganas, the police lathi-charged and tear-gassed a large demonstration. The police beat up mercilessly a well-known CPI(M) worker of the locality and trampled upon the women demonstrators. The police charged tear-gas shells on the back of a young boy, causing him severe burns. There were lathi-charges also in Howrah and several other places.

### **General Strike On November 30**

The United Front and the Rashtriya Samgram Samiti had earlier given a call for a general strike and hartal on November 30, despite an appeal, couched with threats, by Dr Ghosh over the AIR on the previous night, to the people not to respond to the strike call, the strike was a magnificent success all over West Bengal.

The success of the general strike call was of great significance. It succeeded against widespread intimidation and repression. It was the third general strike on a political issue to succeed in course of seven days and marked a higher stage in the development of democratic struggle in the State. The bourgeois organs had campaigned against the strike posing as champions of the wage-earners and the so-called 'neutral' masses, who suffer hardships because of the 'tug-of-war between political parties'. But they failed to confuse the mass of the toiling people, who knew clearly

what was at stake. The peasants knew that their right to a legitimate share of the produce of their own labour was at stake. The workers, the employees in factories, mercantile firms and Government institutions knew that their hard-won trade union rights were at stake. The people knew that their life and bread were at stake. The general strike on November 30 reflected this awareness of the people.

In Calcutta all transports were off the streets. Dr. Ghosh's offer of a special allowance of Rs. 20 for each non-striking worker in the State Transport Corporation was coolly ignored and even the Government had to admit that they could put on the road not more than thirty buses out of the usual complement of seven hundred and that too on a couple of routes in non residential areas and with heavy police escorts. City life was completely paralysed. The railways tried to maintain a skeleton service and ran an ridiculously paltry number of local trains with virtually no passengers as a mere face-saving measure.

### **Magnificent Response From The Districts**

In Durgapur where there had been fifteen demonstrations on the previous day, the strike on November 30, even according to *The Statesman*, was more complete than in the previous week. It was the same story in the industrial areas of Burnpur, Kulti and Ondal.

In Krishnagore, Santipur and Nabadwip in Nadia district, a 22-hour curfew had been in force since November 28 and the police had been on the rampage, making numerous lathi-charges. The figure of arrests exceeded five hundred.

In the districts of Hooghly, Howrah and the 24-Parganas, the response to the strike call was as massive as on the 22nd and the 23rd.

Incomplete reports from North Bengal point to the same story, a story of magnificent demonstration of support for the United Front's call and strong denunciation of the Governor's arbitrary action and the Government of Congress stooges 'which needs.'

to quote the Speaker, 'police and troops every five yards' to sustain it.'

### **Attempt To Kill The Speaker**

Their conspiracy frustrated by the ruling of the Speaker, Mr. Bijay Banerji in the West Bengal State Assembly, the agents of the vested interests in West Bengal, in true CIA fashion, are plotting against his life.

Around midnight on Thursday, after he had broadcast his speech, replying to the allegations Dr. P. C. Ghosh made on the previous day over the AIR, two bombs were thrown from a jeep at the Speaker's residence. The bombs were 'heavy' and the explosion shook the entire locality. The Speaker was about to retire for the night after listening to his recorded radio talk. The bombs, fortunately, fell on the garden, facing the room on ground floor, and, according to a police official, could have caused fatal injuries, if anyone was near by. Window-panes of the room on the ground floor were broken. Two tall betelnut trees were completely uprooted by the blast.

A few days back there had been a report in a vernacular daily of two Congress workers in South Calcutta suffering serious injuries while manufacturing bombs.

Comrade Jyoti Basu who visited the Speaker on Friday said that the local people had told him the miscreants had come under police protection.

Strangely, with 500 policemen to every square mile in the City, the miscreants could disappear without being noticed by the police.

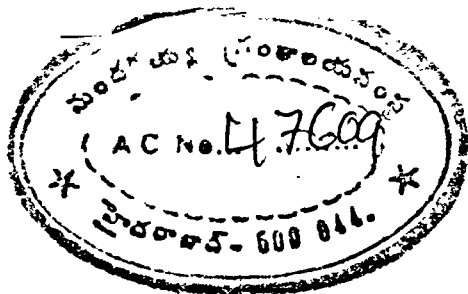
The United front Committee, in a statement, pointed out that "it is reasonable to infer that it [the bomb attack] was instigated by Dr. Ghosh's repeated broadcasts over the AIR in which he made a completely false statement about an assault on him in the speaker's presence which might 'have killed him'."

On the same day at midnight a bomb was exploded in front of the office of the Right CPI daily, *Kalantar*.

It is clear as clear can be that the people in West Bengal—an overwhelming number of them—have rejected this stooge Ministry, led by the archrenegade Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh. A vernacular daily editorially observed that, after the performance of the ex Chief Minister P. C. Sen and Dr. P. C. Ghosh parents would from now on be chary of the name Prafulla while naming their children. Between the two of them they have made the name stink.

The demonstration on November 29 and the hartal and strike on November 30 have been fitting rebuff, given by the people, to the conspiracy of the vested interests to foist their stooges and use them as pliant instruments to drown in blood the growing resistance of the people against the policies of the bourgeois-landlord regime. The people of West Bengal are preparing for further struggles in defence of their rights and liberties to roll back the drive towards a police state. Their slogans are :

- Dismiss the Ghosh Ministry.
- Remove the Governor.
- Release The Prisoners.
- Hold Mid-Term Elections.
- Fight Against Police Raj In Towns And Villages,  
In Fields And Factories.





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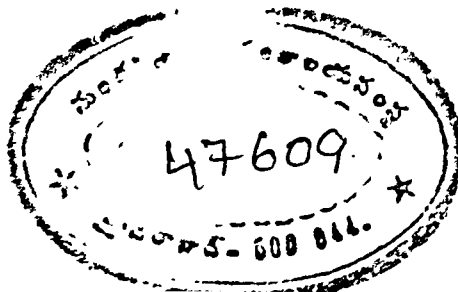
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