

DOCUMENTS OF  
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT  
IN INDIA

VOL. XVI



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(1973-1974)



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## **Introductory Note**

**This Volume (Volume No. XVI) includes important documents for the period 1973-74. During this period significant developments took place in the international arena, the most significant being the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. The U.S. imperialism with all its resources and mighty war machinery could not escape defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese people under the leadership of the Communist Party, inspired by the lofty ideals of national liberation and this opened up the scope for fulfilment of their national aspiration for unification of Vietnam. The victory of the Vietnamese people once again proved that imperialism with all its power cannot suppress the urge for national liberation of the people of any country. Our Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), carried on consistent campaign in favour of the liberation struggle of the Vietnamese people and against U.S. Imperialists' intervention in Vietnam and our campaign was successful in drawing thousands of people from rural and urban areas all over India. We have included in this Volume a number of documents, resolutions and statements of the Central Committee and Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism.**

**In Indian politics we saw during this period developments of far-reaching consequences. Smt. Indira Gandhi's Government, in spite of its massive victory in the Lok Sabha elections in 1971, could not rely on the support of the common**

people and took recourse to most authoritarian measures to promote and strengthen its one-party rule. In consequence terror and repression were carried on in large parts of India as a matter of policy. We have given a number of documents on these developments in this Volume.

Two very important documents were adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its Muzaffarpur Session in March, 1973, namely, (i) On Certain Agrarian Issues, and (ii) Immediate Organizational Tasks. Both these documents are included in this Volume.

We have also given a number of important documents on the Mulki issue in Andhra Pradesh, language issue in Assam, Karnataka-Maharashtra border issue, atrocities of Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, on the disturbing situation in Punjab and also on the atrocious role of the Congress-Right C.P. Coalition Government in Kerala.

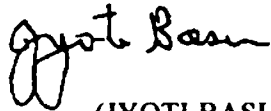
The historic Railway Workers' Strike in India in 1974 was the most significant development of this period. This was the biggest trade union action in India since the British days. The Railway Workers' Strike revealed how ruthless the Union Government run by Smt. Indira Gandhi could be in suppressing the strike. At the same time it showed the unity of the common people—both in rural and urban areas with the struggling Railway workers and the unique and inspiring achievement of this solidarity movement. Though due to betrayal of some political parties and trade union leaders the Railway Workers' Strike had to be terminated, the struggle continued against mass victimisation of Railway Workers with the solidarity support of the trade unions and democratic people all over the country.

During this period our Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), initiated discussions with the Socialist Party and the socialist leaders with a view to developing joint movement for an alternate path, alternate to Congress rule, and joint meetings were held between the leaders of the CPI(M) and the Socialist Party and also with Loknayak Jaya Prakash Narayan. Relevant documents on this initiative are given in this Volume.

The movement in Bihar against misrule of Congress, which took a significant turn in course of time, was initiated during this period and important documents on it are also included in this Volume.

We lost during this period Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, one of the builders of Communist movement in India. We also lost Comrade Harekrishna Konar, the most versatile leader of the Indian Kisan Movement. The demise of Comrade Rajani Palme Dutt was also a painful event of this period. Comrade RPD—as he was popularly known—made most extensive and valuable contributions for developing and strengthening Communist movement in India and Indian Communists will remember him with gratitude for all times to come.

The documents included in this Volume will prove most useful to understand the political developments India during this period and I am confident the readers will find them most useful for assessing the political developments of this period.



(JYOTI BASU)  
*Chief Editor*

April 22, 1998



## Foreword

Some of the focal aspects in the period of 1973-74 include firstly, unprecedented attacks on democratic rights perpetrated by the ruling Congress Party that showed the teeth of authoritarianism. In the distressing economic situation fight for democracy, however, remained to be one of the major things of the day. Secondly, the bourgeoisie was engaged in diverting the attention of the people to caste and communal division, linguistic, chauvinistic regional troubles as seen in language riot in Assam, Mulki agitation in Andhra and many other states in order to meet the growing challenge of democracy which, in turn, strengthened the most reactionary forces. Left and democratic unity had to be reforged in the pressing situation. In the third place anti-imperialist struggle got up to a new height with the final victory of the Vietnamese people—the fraudulence of American Imperialist unmasked, their vaunted military powers defeated who were unleashing unheard of savagery on the people of Vietnam. The victory both on the battlefield and at the negotiating table had importantly enhanced the anti-imperialist struggle to a new peak so as to give in a tremendous confidence among the people worldwide, giving a new fillip to national liberation movements the world over.

The Congress Party ruling West Bengal after the rigged election in 1972 embarked upon extending the semi-fascist terror into the civil liberties of all sections of the common people. With the use of the entire administrative machinery,

the police and CRP apparatus and the Congress hoodlums, forcible evictions of sharecroppers, loot of the crops of the peasants, snatching away of benami land of the landlords that were occupied by the peasants, dispossessing the old poor peasants who had been allotted land during the United Front Government period, killings, arrests and repression etc. were of daily occurrences. Thousands of families had been driven away from their houses in the urban areas. Not satisfied with the forcible capture of hundreds of party offices and trade union offices, the Congress government devised a new means of derecognising recognized trade unions. All democratic norms, all laws, all legality were sought to be abrogated. In Kerala too, massive strike struggles were meted out by the unprecedented attacks and terror by the CPI-Congress coalition government in a way that put the most hardened ruler of the Congress to shame. Repressions, reminiscent of the worst period of British rule were going on in other parts of India and our Party while passing through this grim ordeal, was in the forefront to launch vigorous movements of the people across the country.

Reviewing the situation arising out of the growing authoritarianism of the Indira Congress which could not tolerate any opposition, the Central Committee of our Party that met in March, 1973, noted : "The ruling Congress will be resorting to intense repression, authoritarianism and drive to one-party dictatorship will intensify. This is the great menace facing the country." The party called for immediate forging of a front of Left and democratic forces to defeat this menace.

The period saw fratricidal riots in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and in many parts of the country, a dangerous aspect persisting during the entire period after independence with the ruling Congress resorting all the time to utilize it for its narrow gains despite loud talk of secularism. It has, however, been creating a menacing situation in which ultra-chauvinist and communal forces can thrive on what is happening today, at the end of the century is for all to perceive at.

In this respect, it would not be exaggerating, I hope, to stigmatize the rise and growth of communal politics in India. To quote some of the assertions of the noted historians in their book "Freedom struggle" published by Government of India on the occasion of celebrating twenty-fifth anniversary of Indian Independence in 1972: "Before the British came and gradually set up a foreign government on Indian soil, the Hindu and Muslim masses had on the whole lived together without antipathy or bitterness though there had existed certain religious trends which were exclusive and antagonistic. The divisions of the society were class-wise. There were the rich and the poor; there were the educated and the uneducated; there were the rulers and the ruled. Among these classes and groups there were both Hindus and Muslims. This was so during the Mughal period also. Even at the time of the 1857 revolt, Hindus and Muslims fought together side by side and their anger was directed against the common enemy, the foreign rulers at whose hands all India suffered alike.

After the revolt had been put down, the British were particularly hard on the Muslims because they had come to the conclusion that the revolt was led by the Muslims and that they were primarily responsible for it. It is estimated that in Delhi alone 27,000 Muslims were sentenced to death during the revolt and the short period immediately following. For years the Muslims were viewed with suspicion by the British.

With the rise of the nationalist movement, however, the British attitude changed. During the 1870's this became more and more noticeable. As everything else the British did or attempted to do, this change was politically motivated and was the result of the new tactics the British began following to safeguard their own interests. As the national movement spread and grew there was the threat that it might unite the people and pose serious problems for the Empire. A united people cannot be kept under subjugation for a long time. So in addition to repression and stringent action to control, and if possible, completely dry-up rising tide of nationalism, the

British decided to do all they could to keep the people dis-united and quarrelling and competing among themselves. They decided to divide the people in the name of their different religions and to encourage communal and separatist tendencies in Indian politics.

“Even legitimate demands of different sections of Indian society and the problems of democratization of the Indian society were exploited to create disharmony among Indians. The Indian social situation was quite complex. In many internal, social and cultural questions rights and wrongs were inextricably mixed and had to be carefully and patiently separated. This complexity was utilized by the alien rulers for their own purposes.

“There was one other important reason for the growth of a communal way of thinking during the period. Indian history had been presented by British historians with a special slant and, later, their Indian counterparts unfortunately followed in their footsteps, and, wrote, and taught in such a way as to arouse and foster communal feelings.

“The rulers, nobles, chiefs, and zamindars, whether Hindu or Muslim, treated the masses, both Hindu and Muslim, alike, that is, with the same contempt and disregard, as inferior creatures to be made use of for their own benefit. The Muslim masses were as poor and as oppressed by the taxes as the Hindu masses. These historians did not realize that politics in India during the ancient and medieval periods were like anywhere else, and followed the dictates of the economic and political interests of the rulers and seldom any religious considerations.

“The British and communal historians did not lay stress on the composite culture of India. The cultural pattern of India was, undoubtedly, diverse, but, there was a common thread running through, and, what is more important, the diversity was primarily class-wise and region-wise. By introducing the false concept of distinct and separate Hindu and Muslim cultures the communal approach to history came to generate divisive tendencies. The religious reform move-



ments also had a similar impact. These movements made an important contribution as they opposed irrational and obscurantist thinking, spread rational and humanistic ideas, weeded out many of the corrupting elements from the 19th century religious beliefs and practices and fostered greater self-respect among the Indian people. At the same time many of them tended to divide Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsees as also high caste Hindus from low caste Hindus. Any over-emphasis on religion in a country of many religions was bound to have a divisive effect.

“In a poor, backward country which was being actively under-developed under colonial domination, employment opportunities were limited especially to the educated classes. There was, therefore, stiff competition for the limited number of available jobs in the country at that time. The far-sighted Indians worked for the economic and political uplift of the country. But the situation was also exploited by vested interests, both Indian and British, to arouse communal, religious, as also caste and regional feelings. There was clamour for reservation of seats and jobs for all sorts and kinds of sections and groups. Narrow minded, short-sighted Muslims and Hindus alike began talking about their own nationalisms, as though nationalism was divisible and could be of many sectarian kinds and economic welfare could be promoted other than by a common struggle against imperialism and the vested interests.

“Thus, Muslims and the Hindu communalism inter-acted and provided sustenance to each other.”

Further, “The pride and joy in the achievement of freedom was diluted by the pain and sadness of partition and the consequences of partition.”

After independence it was almost commonplace that the Congress Party and its government pursued the policy of compromise with the communal forces rather than fighting back in pursuit of secularism, thus aggravating the communal situation on a faster pace. Although since its inception our Party has been consistently fighting for defending

national unity and stands firmly for not mixing religion with politics and the state, an obligatory directive of the Constitution. The Congress Party paid scant respect to this noble principle in the interest of the class rule it was perpetuating.

One of the important issues that was dealt with by the Party in this period was the review of our position on certain agrarian issues. Since 1966 when we adopted "Tasks on the Kisan Front", different views came to the surface in the Party in course of developing the kisan movement. These relate to the questions of a) land ceiling, our stand towards non-cultivating owners other than landlords b) the rights of share croppers vis-a-vis non-cultivating small owners c) struggle for land and wage: attitude of the kisan movement towards advanced agricultural machineries d) defining the fair prices e) the stand to be taken with regard to land legislations and the relation between the mass struggles on concrete immediate demands and the propagation of the Party's programmatic agrarian demands.

The Central Committee at its session in Muzaffarpur from March 9 to 15, 1973, made useful contribution on these issues but on certain areas divergent opinions remained simultaneously. There were, however, some sectarian conceptions in the document relating to fair prices for peasant produce and creation of base areas which were subsequently corrected.

The said period had seen unbroken wave of bitter struggles breaking out all over the country on the issues of prices, of short supply, collapse of distribution system, of wages and salaries, for democratic rights and against repressive measures drawing new and newer sections into action such as teachers, doctors, and nurses, engineers, officers etc. The indignation of all sections of the people against the misrule of Congress had burst out into innumerable mass actions whose tempo was daily rising with powerful struggles in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar in the forefront, leaving apart invaluable sacrifices of the people of West Bengal and Kerala. Significant in this context was

the new awakening among Harijans who were mostly agricultural labourers and the scheduled tribes against ruthless exploitation and inhuman social oppression.

The most important development in the history of the working class struggle occurred during this period with two million railway workers conducting one of the longest strikes for three weeks in the latter half of 1974, which was repressed by the government with unparalleled victimisation and savagery unheard of in the case of any civilised government in the world. The heroism, courage, spirit of self-sacrifice displayed by the railway workers had written a glorious chapter in the history of the working class movement. The unity of action, movement of solidarity from workers, peasants and all sections of the people throughout the country was never seen before. The open betrayal by the Right Communist Party-AITUC leadership at a time when the historic strike was about to succeed defeating the heinous repression of the Congress rule had subdued the high morale of the strikers which seemed to have precipitated the decision for withdrawal of the strike by the wrong assumption and false propaganda that the strike had virtually collapsed. The misguided action of precipitous withdrawal of the strike did not, however, undermine the great and historic role of the strike.

The period witnessed a steep fall in popular support for the Indira Congress. This was observed in the humiliating defeats it suffered in a number of by-elections and Assembly elections in several states including Uttar Pradesh, the biggest state in India. But disturbing was the fact that this loss of popular support to the Indira Congress had been taken advantage of by avowed communal and reactionary forces like Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party and others, mainly due to the weakness of the Left and democratic forces, a weakness further accentuated by the disruption of the Communist Party and some others who rallied behind the Congress Party. Our Party appealed to all Left and democratic parties to draw proper lessons from such developments and

intensify their efforts to forge a united platform to lead the masses. "To defeat the Congress policies and frustrate the advance of extreme reactionary parties, it is absolutely essential to build a front of Left and democratic forces as a viable alternative to the ruling Congress party."

The December, 1974, meeting of our Central Committee reiterated this crying need of unity. Meanwhile, the leaders of Socialist Party and CPI(M) met and agreed that both the parties would work together towards forming a viable radical alternative through the development of mass struggles. But it lasted for a while inasmuch as the Socialist Party leadership had started retracing back. The basis of that viable radical alternative was that Left and democratic forces should not come into any political alliances with Right reactionary forces. The leaders of the Socialist Party disregarded this position and joined hands with those Rightist forces.

Bihar movement drew attention of the whole country at that time where Jaya Prakash Narayan took a leading part against the corrupt and despotic Congress government. Advisory committees of four political parties, the Jana Sangha, Congress(O), Socialist Party and SSP had been constituted at the behest of Jaya Prakash Narayan. Undoubtedly we had initial hesitations about the JP movement. Overcoming it and rejecting the proposal of joining the four-party Advisory Committees we had decided to mobilize the people independently in cooperation with Jaya Prakash Narayan and the Socialist Party and other Left and democratic forces, and to synchronise it with the Bihar people's movement to fight corruption, misgovernance, blackmarketing, hoarding and for democracy.

We had discussions with Jaya Prakash Narayan on that basis. The joint statement issued thereafter by P. Sundarayya and Promode Dasgupta (CPI-M). Madhu Dandavate (Socialist Party) and Jaya Prakash Narayan concluded that "We agreed that we shall have frequent consultations among ourselves to radicalise and intensify the movement in Bihar

while adhering to our respective ideological stances.” The pledge and declaration of Jaya Prakash Narayan to defeat Congress in every constituency was applauded by all and they started consultations with all those who responded to the call which culminated into a conference of Opposition leaders at the end of 1974 in view of the ensuing elections. Although we demarcated ourselves from such “all-in unity of the Opposition against Congress”, we made it clear in course of several round of discussions with Jaya Prakash Narayan that we were as concerned as other Opposition parties that the ruling Congress should be defeated effectively. It is to be noted that JP had shifted from his stable position of Sarvodaya and partyless democracy to active mass political movement.

We had been, however, working for breaking the polarization between Congress-Communist Party alliance on the one hand and the so-called Grand Alliance on the other which was the characteristic feature of the 1971-72 election. Only the consolidation of Left and democratic forces can make it meaningful for which we have been working for. The political situation had sharply changed in the following months which would be dealt with in the next Volume.

On the international plane, the American imperialism having suffered the ever-biggest defeat in its history from Vietnam resorted to detente conferences and manoeuvres. In Moscow and Washington heads of the States came into agreements to avoid war and initiate certain relaxation of tension. While welcoming the agreements, the Central Committee of our Party rejected outright the fantastic claim of the Soviet leadership in this behalf that these agreements would denote the world’s transition from the era of cold war to a new era of peace, detente and fruitful cooperation among countries of different social systems and that the fate of the world depends on peaceful competition only and not on intensification of class struggle in each country. The Central Committee in its meeting in July, 1973, considered that, “the objective situation is more favourable for a great advance of the

forces of democracy, peace and socialism. The imperialist camp is weakened and is unable to adopt old postures. What is urgently needed is the unity of the socialist camp and the revolutionary movement. Unfortunately, the Sino-Soviet differences have developed into open conflicts and they are being used by the imperialist forces to save themselves. The Central Committee appeals to all parties believing in Marxism-Leninism to bend their efforts to forge the unity of the socialist camp so that the favourable situation can be used to advance the cause of national liberation, democracy, peace and socialism."

In this subcontinent, the decision of Indian and Pakistani Governments to resume bilateral trade, suspended a decade earlier, was a welcome development. We warned at that time that if either India or Pakistan tried to take the help of imperialism to secure some advantage for itself against the other, the gain would be neither for India nor for Pakistan, but for imperialism. The problem of normalization of relations can only be solved by the realization of fighting the common enemy.

In all such international developments, our stands based genuinely on proletarian internationalism which we ever adhere to.



(Harkishan Singh Surjeet)

*General Secretary*

*Communist Party of India (Marxist)*

April 30, 1998

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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
CPI(M)	:	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
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
Polit Bureau	:	Political Bureau
INC/Congress	:	Indian National Congress
Govt	:	Government
AITUC	:	All India Trade Union Congress
INTUC	:	Indian National Trade Union Congress
CITU	:	Centre of Indian Trade Unions
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
SFI	:	Students' Federation of India

<b>DYFI</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Democratic Youth Federation of India</b>
<b>RSS</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha</b>
<b>SP</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Socialist Party</b>
<b>FB</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Forward Bloc</b>
<b>RSP</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Revolutionary Socialist Party</b>
<b>JP</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>Janata Party</b>
<b>EMS</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>E. M. S. Namboodiripad</b>
<b>BTR</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>B. T. Ranadive</b>
<b>PS</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>P. Sundarayya</b>
<b>PR</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>P. Ramamurti</b>
<b>MB</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>M. Basavapunnaiah</b>

## **Develop Joint Actions : Defend Common People\***

**Call Given in the Statement of the Polit Bureau of  
the CPI(M)**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), meeting in Calcutta from January 10 to 14, 1973, issued the following statement to the Press :*

The Bidhan Nagar session of the ruling Congress party shows that far from being able to “banish poverty” and solve all other vital problems of the life of the people, as its leaders promised to do, the policies pursued by them are creating dangerous new problems, while accentuating all the old problems.

The session was being held against the background of an unprecedented crisis of the economy which could not be wished away, as the Prime Minister and her colleagues tried to do six months ago. Instead of “holding the price line” as was promised by them, the Central and State Governments were themselves taking decisions which directly or indirectly led to the still further rise in the cost of living. During the very few weeks that preceded the Bidhan Nagar session, the Central Government took the universally condemned step of raising the price of sugar, while taking not a single step to bring prices of other essential commodities down as was promised at the earlier session of the AICC.

This performance on the price front, together with back-sliding on even the thoroughly inadequate decision on the take over of wholesale trade in wheat and rice, failure to implement even those few measures of land reforms that were

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promised to be implemented without delay, and the still further worsening of the employment situation in the urban and rural areas, led to acute discontent among the people. Lakhs of people—workers and middle class employees, peasants and agricultural labourers, urban and rural poor—all have come into action protesting against the growing misery that has been their lot. Not even the most ardent supporters of the Congress regime could fail to admit that the situation was getting out of control. No less a person than the Defence Minister of the country, Sri Jagjivan Ram, warned the delegates assembled at Bidhan Nagar that, unless they were able to find solutions for the problems, a revolution was inevitable.

The 'High Command' of the Congress had, under these circumstances, to make an appearance of giving serious thought to the economic situation in the country. A long statement on the same was prepared and placed before the session. While repeating many of the promises made earlier, it laid down a so-called 'time-bound programme' with regard to the various measures to be taken.

### **Broken Date-lines**

It is, however, well known that similar date-lines had several times before been fixed for various measures and every one of them has been broken. The three-year old decision of the 73rd session of the Congress held in Bombay in 1969, remains to be fulfilled. As for the implementation of land reform, date-lines have been fixed and changed several times before. The five-lakh target of new jobs to be created is a repeatedly-made and repeatedly-violated promise of the ruling party. It is also well known that Chief Minister after Chief Minister has been busy finding alibis for bypassing the solemn promise made after the countrywide State Assembly elections of March 1972 with regard to ceiling legislation, as well as with regard to the taking over of the wholesale trade in rice and wheat. The 'time-bound programme' of the Bidhan Nagar session, therefore, cannot deceive even the most gullible among the Indian people.



This lag between the promise and performance of the ruling party is not accidental. It arises out of the class character of the regime, the socio economic essence of the policies which the ruling classes want to impose on the people. Championing the interests of a narrow stratum of monopolists collaborating with foreign capitalists, big landlords and other sections of the urban and rural rich, the ruling party wants to shove the burden of the ever-mounting economic crisis on to the shoulders of the common people; they have at their disposal no other method of solving the problem of rise in prices except squeezing the peasant and the artisan even while giving 'incentives' to landlords and capitalists in the name of 'helping further production'; they have no way of finding resources for the development of the economy except heaping ever-increasing burdens of taxation and deficit financing on the common people; they cannot 'fight inflation' except by forcing down the living standards of the common people.

Every one of these methods adopted, together with the generous terms offered to foreign monopolists to induce them to make investments in India and the refusal to undertake genuine land reforms calculated to give land to the landless poor free of cost, becomes the basis of a further accentuation of the crisis, rather than solving it.

### **All-round Bankruptcy**

This bankruptcy of the economic policies pursued by the leaders of the ruling party is matched only by a similar bankruptcy on the political and organizational fronts. Within the very first few months after the March 1972 elections, in which they won spectacular victories in every State, the leaders of the ruling party found that the lakhs of people who had voted for them rapidly got disillusioned and started fighting for their rights while a serious organizational crisis was gripping the ruling party in State after State.

The manner in which the new 'progressive radical' leaders of the ruling Congress had reconstituted their party after the 1969 split led to an apparent consolidation and

strengthening. In reality, however, disruptive and disintegrating forces were corroding the party from top to bottom. Unprecedented factional manoeuvring and shameless horse-trading for positions of power within the party organization and now the administration became as widespread as, if not more than, in the old undivided Congress. Such terms as 'progressive' and 'reactionary' denoting individual leaders were used as the cover behind which persons loyal to the Prime Minister were chosen for positions of power, while less reliable persons were being thrown out. Since, however, this test could not be applied under the normal democratic functioning of the organization, elected PCCs and leaders of State Legislature Parties were discarded with. Chief Ministers and PCC Presidents were arbitrarily replaced, so that every one of these positions of power would be held by some one in whom the "Supreme Leader" could repose her trust. At the level of the central leadership, too, it became a matter of factional manoeuvring among a few at the top, who together could control the organization as a whole. Never before in the history of the Congress has the entire authority of the organization and of administration been so centralized in the hands of one person as it has been during the last three years.

This state of affairs had its impact on the organizational elections that preceded the Bidhan Nagar session as well as on the election of the ten members of the Working Committee at Bidhan Nagar itself. Behind the formality of 'unanimous' elections was the reality of the most shameless manoeuvring, of factional quarrels and patched-up agreements. Beginning with the enrolment of ordinary and active members of the organization and right up to the formal election (where no 'unanimity' could be brought about), the whole process involved such malpractices that the notorious methods of the rightly condemned organizational bosses of the old Congress, such as S.K. Patil and Atulya Ghosh, pale into insignificance. This was so widespread that allegations of corrupt practices have been made in almost every State. Such a well known

leader of the ruling party as D.N.Tiwari resigned in protest from the Working Committee of the Congress; another well known leader of the Congress, Sashi Bhusan, M.P.,too, resigned from the PCC to which he was elected.

### **Menace to the People**

The evil consequences of the factional manoeuvrings resorted to by the leaders of the ruling party however, do not remain confined to the limited field of the functioning of their party organization. They, on the other hand, have already become a menace to the people of the whole country and threaten to become a greater and greater menace as time passes. For, the unscrupulous men and women that they are, the leaders of the various factions in the ruling party do not stop at anything in their mutual factional quarrels. The 'haves' and 'have nots' in the ruling party and in the Government are all using the explosive issues of caste, religious community, language, regionalism and so on, in order to weaken the other factions and strengthen their own. Behind the recent Assam riots on the language issue and the Mulki Rules agitation in Andhra Pradesh, for instance, are the factional quarrels among the Congress leaders in the respective states and the unscrupulous use made of these quarrels by the "Supreme Leader" to strengthen herself. The displaced and dispossessed factions lay low till the aura around the Prime Minister lasted, since it was not prudent to protest at that time. They, however, took the earliest opportunity to wreak vengeance on those who took their place.

The way in which the problem of language in Assam and of Mulki Rules in Andhra Pradesh are today being dealt with by the "High Command" will still further worsen matters in relation to both these problems, since the solutions offered are calculated to do nothing but strengthen particular factional groupings. The "High Command" is not prepared to deal with these problems on the basis of any democratic principle; the peoples concerned will therefore be made to fight one another giving still more opportunities

for each of the factions to set the common people against one another. This mode of handling serious national problems has made continuance of this regime, headed by such an unscrupulous leadership, a danger to the people of the entire country.

The dangerous developments in Assam and Andhra Pradesh are only the culmination of a series of developments which are the inevitable consequence of the bankrupt policies adopted by the ruling party in relation to particular problems and of the unscrupulous exploitation of people's passions on these issues as weapons in factional struggle. It is well known that such factors as caste, religious community and regionalism are used by the various factions in the ruling party against one another.

### **A Pernicious Slogan**

Added to the evil consequences of these manoeuvres are the demands made in State after State that jobs in the respective States should be reserved to the so-called "sons of the soil". The Prime Minister of the country should normally be expected not to countenance any such parochial outlook and stand for the right of any Indian citizen to get employed in any part of the country. She, however, has taken it into her head to give her blessing to this disruptive demand because it serves the purpose of hiding the fact that the problem of unemployment is becoming ever more and more serious because of the class policies pursued by the ruling party for the last 25 years.

The CPI(M), together with other democratic parties and groups, has always looked upon the problem of unemployment to be countrywide rather than the local problem of any single State, the result of the class policies pursued by the ruling Congress party. The 'solution' of reserving jobs for the 'sons of the soil', therefore, is highly injurious to the very sons of the soil in whose interests it is supposed to be suggested. For the disruption that will be caused to the democratic movement by the agitations around this slogan would

prevent that unity of the Indian people against the class policies of the ruling Congress party which alone will provide the real and lasting solution to the problem of unemployment all over the country. No democratic party or organization, therefore, can countenance the movements for the realisation of this slogan which has now received the blessings of even the Prime Minister.

The Polit Bureau, therefore, appeals to all such organizations, parties, groups and individuals who are alarmed at the emergence and growth of these disruptive forces to come together in an organized struggle against the class policies which led the country to such a perilous situation. Let them all realize that the class policies pursued by the ruling party constitute a menace not only to the living conditions of the common people but to the unity and integrity of India. The longer the ruling classes are allowed to continue to pursue these policies, the more will be the sufferings of the common people, the greater will be the disruption caused by all the fissiparous forces. The Polit Bureau assures all other democrats that our Party would do its best to develop unity in action both for resisting the attacks on the living standards of the common people as well as fighting back the regional, chauvinistic and separatist forces.

### **United Actions of Left Forces**

The P.B. welcomes the declaration made by the leaders of the Socialist Party who met in Bulandshahar that they would like to have a dialogue and joint action with our Party. We are aware that, on a number of basic theoretical and ideological questions, the Socialist Party and the CPI(M) hold views which are in conflict with each other. This, however, does not make it impossible for the two parties to come together and join other Left and democratic parties, groups and individuals on the basis of practical plans of joint mass action both in order to realize the immediate partial demands of the people as well as to resist the dangerous moves of the ruling party.

The P.B. is confident that, despite the differences that undoubtedly persist between our Party and some other constituents of the Left Front in West Bengal as well as in some other States, those Left and democratic parties which are fighting together in any part of the country today would continue to do so and, in fact, further strengthen and consolidate the unity so far achieved. The Socialist Party's declared intention of having meaningful dialogues and joint action with the CPI(M) should help further broaden and consolidate the unity in action that now exists in some parts of the country.

### **Right C.P.'s Policies**

It is in this context that the policy being pursued by the Right Communist Party deserves to be sharply criticized. It is an irony of fate that the leaders of this party who had made tall claims of their policy leading to the emergence of a "united front of Left and democratic forces inside and outside the Congress" should today talk of "backsliding by the leaders of the Congress", "reactionaries getting the upper hand in the Congress organization", and so on, and yet, their leaders at the Centre and in the various States are having talks with the Congress leaders in order to "remove misunderstandings", and reforge their unity. While they talk of the unity of the Left and democratic forces, it may be noted, not a single party which is traditionally considered to be Left and democratic join them in pursuing the policy of uniting with the Congress. They have thus become the one party which claims to be Left and democratic but has ranged itself against the Left and democratic movement and with the worst and vicious enemy of the Left and democratic movement in the country. The P.B. calls upon all those within the Right Communist Party who have anything of their radicalism left and who remember that whenever in the past they had to be in confrontation with the ruling classes they had to join all other Left and democratic parties against the Congress, to think seriously where the policies now being pursued by their leaders are taking them.

### **Develop Joint Actions**

The P.B. appeals to every Party member and sympathizer to do his or her best to develop joint action with all other Left and democratic elements in defence of the living conditions of the common people and against the attacks launched by the ruling Party.

## **On Indo-Pak Relations\***

**Resolution adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on January 10-14, 1973**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its concern over the stalemate in the Indo-Pakistan negotiations. With the delineation of the line of control having been successfully accomplished with mutual give-and-take, and the withdrawal of troops of the two countries from each other's territory, hopes rose of a quick settlement of other issues and disputes.

Unfortunately they remain yet to be fulfilled. President Bhutto has been unable to fulfil his promise of recognition of Bangladesh by August last year.

The stalemate and deadlock resulting from the situation is being effectively used by reactionary forces to exacerbate national feelings, rouse rabid chauvinistic passions and create enmity among the people of the three countries.

They have found the most explosive issue in the thousands of Pakistani war prisoners in India's prison camps and lakhs of Bengali civilian detainees in Pakistan. There is no doubt that genuine anguish is felt by the peoples concerned in the two countries about the fate and condition of the prisoners and detainees. This feeling of anxiety, of human consideration, is being exploited to create a war-like atmosphere and dissipate the goodwill following the Simla Agreement.

It is also more than clear that the detainees and prisoners of war have become pressure points in the hands of the

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negotiating parties to extract a favourable compromise from each other. The Polit Bureau considers this to be a dangerous course and warns against using them as pawns in the political game. Considering the explosive character of the issue, and the disastrous consequences likely to follow from a delay in agreement over it, the Polit Bureau considers it essential that the parties concerned should immediately settle the question of repatriation of prisoners and civilian detainees.

The Polit Bureau considers it vital that the question of recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan should be settled expeditiously. It welcomes the fact that progressive and democratic forces in Pakistan are courageously advocating recognition of Bangladesh despite opposition and threats from reactionary forces.

Delay in accepting this realistic and democratic cause helps the reactionary forces in Pakistan and American conspiracies in the sub-continent.

The Polit Bureau is of the opinion that the statesmen of the two countries should meet without any conditions to settle the issue. Any rigid position will harm the cause of amity and friendship in the sub-continent and harm the cause of Bangladesh and Pakistan.

## **On Relations with Bangladesh\***

**Resolution adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on January 10-14, 1973**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its warm greetings to the people of Bangladesh, to the toiling workers and peasants who, after the great holocaust of 1971, are now facing great economic difficulties, privations and starvation. They are the victims of rapacious blackmarketeers and traders from both sides of the border and a corrupt bureaucracy. The Polit Bureau expresses its sense of horror and indignation over the firings and other acts of governmental repression against the same fighting people that brought about the downfall of Yahya Khan. It especially condemns the wanton firing on students who were legitimately protesting against the genocidal American bombings in Vietnam.

The Polit Bureau warns that suppression of the democratic forces and of democratic opposition parties, will inevitably compromise the freedom and independence of the country which is yet to be consolidated. The agents of the former military regime are active and they are financed and supported by the American imperialists who have enlarged their activities; pretending to be busy with rendering economic aid, their agents are undermining the freedom and independence of the country.

In such a situation, those who forget the machinations of the American imperialists only render aid to them and other reactionary forces. The U.S. imperialists are making a per-

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sistent attempt to drive a wedge between the democratic movements in the two countries of India and Bangladesh as they know the understanding and solidarity between them has been helpful in securing the victory of the Bangladesh people.

The misdeeds of some Indian traders and some actions of the Government of India are exploited to undermine the solidarity between the two democratic peoples, which only helps the real enemies of Bangladesh's freedom.

The Polit Bureau is confident that the democratic forces in Bangladesh will be vigilant and, while not relaxing their efforts against some unconscionable traders from India or certain actions of the Government of India, will do everything to preserve the solidarity of the two movements. It is also confident that they will fight all hidden or open appeals to communalism and reject them, as dangerous to their freedom. And above all, they will do everything to unmask the designs of American imperialism while protecting their democratic and civil liberties.

## **On the Separatist Mulki & Anti-Mulki Movements in Andhra Pradesh\***

**Resolution adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on January 10-14, 1973**

The Polit Bureau denounces the brutal shootings resorted to at various places in Andhra which has already taken a toll of more than three dozen lives, the virtual handing over of imposition of civil administration in the Andhra area to the CRP and military, the mass lathi-charges, the blanket Section 144 over all towns in the State and continued curfew in various towns in Andhra, hundreds beings detained under the MISA and other preventive police measures. This has become the normal feature of the Central Government and its State Government in Andhra Pradesh. The Central Congress Government tries to justify these actions as necessary to suppress the separate Andhra and separate Telangana State movements and to preserve the integrity of Andhra Pradesh State and to further the progress of the Telugu speaking people.

The Polit Bureau emphatically declares that the full responsibility for the present state of affairs in Andhra Pradesh squarely rests on the Central Congress Government which has been continuously backing the reactionary separatist forces in Andhra Pradesh all along by its policies over the past two decades.

The Mulki Rules, promulgated by the Nizam over half a century ago to preserve Hyderabad State as his personal feudal preserve, were continued by the Congress rulers, even when they were forced to form Andhra Pradesh, abolishing

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the Nizam's state in 1956. The Central Government never took a democratic stand on the issues facing Andhra Pradesh's unity and integration. It played one group of the vested interests of one region against another group of vested interests of other regions. It allowed these groups, both belonging to the Congress, to fan regional feelings and mislead the masses into fratricidal strife. The Prime Minister's latest five-point proposal, and the Mulki Act passed by Parliament by Congress majority only a few days ago, are a further step that goes to strengthen the separatist forces.

The present 'Mulki Act' extends the scope and time-limit of the so-called "safeguards" for the "backward" Telangana region, which were introduced in 1956 and were initially intended only for a period of five to ten years, till 1977 in Hyderabad City and till 1980 in the rest of Telangana. The reservation of jobs in Telangana area for Telangana Mulkis only (those born to Telangana parents or having a domicile Mulki certificate of 15 year's residence) is now extended to all gazetted posts, in practice, through regionalization of these services. The separate Regional Council of Telangana would continue (no time limit prescribed) exercising full legislative powers on all subjects, with a separate budget and with a separate additional Chief Secretary.

The twin city of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, would continue to be administered as part of Telangana area, where all jobs continue to be reserved for "Mulkis" except in the Secretariat, in offices of heads of department and in certain common institutions intended for the whole State where recruitment would be based on 2 : 1 as per the population ratio between the Andhra and Telangana areas. The police force does not come under either of the categories and is to be manipulated by the ruling party to serve its own purposes. The children of all "non-Mulkis" including Government employees coming from Andhra areas, cannot get admission in educational institutions of Hyderabad City or other towns in Telangana on equal terms (but only residual unfilled seats or limited quota

in exchange for similar number of seats in the Andhra area).

With the galloping unemployment, especially of the educated, due to the Congress Government policies over these two decades, there are genuine apprehensions over employment opportunities among the Telangana students and employees and of economic development of that region faced with growing poverty and misery. The vested interests in Telangana, well entrenched in the Congress, were able to divert these sections and rouse them behind the slogan for a separate Telangana State. In 1972, for its own factional purposes, it absorbed the separate Telangana Praja Samiti into its Party, imposed the new Chief Minister and allowed him to raise the Mulki issue in the Supreme Court, without the Central Government taking a political decision on democratic principles. Now the Prime Minister has conceded practically all the demands of these separatists.

The Congress rulers talk of national unity and integration, but are pursuing fissiparous policies in their narrow party and factional interests, that are paving the way to the disruption of the unity of India itself.

This has its own repercussions in the Andhra area. The genuine fears of students, employees and other sections over employment and economic opportunities being denied to them, coupled with the sentiment of being discriminated against in their own State and capital city, burst forth in the form of agitation for scrapping of Mulki Rules, and has now become one for separate Andhra State, fully backed by all the reactionary vested interests entrenched inside the Congress as well as outside.

The Polit Bureau once again reiterates our Party's democratic movement and unity of Telugu speaking people and in the larger interests of the democratic movement and against disintegrating fissiparous forces in the whole of India. The Polit Bureau demands the immediate scrapping of the antiquated "Mulki Rules" by replacing the present Mulki Act by a new Parliamentary Act.

Our Party, taking into consideration the existing suspi-

cions and apprehensions that are dividing the masses of the Telangana and Andhra regions, demands that the Parliament Act must provide certain safeguards to the people in Telangana in regard to Government services and public employment, educational facilities and public expenditure. Our Party is conscious that safeguards do not fully square with the principle of equality and democracy or the unity of the exploited classes and cannot offer a final solution. Our proposals for safeguards and reservations are such that they will enable the democratic unity of the masses to be achieved as quickly as possible and do away with these reservations. Our proposals are against prohibition of persons of one region being employed in the other region, and against income and expenditure of one region being calculated and spent in that particular region itself as these militate against integration and would perpetuate inequality and discrimination of persons of one region as against those of another.

We have demanded that the Parliament Act must ensure : employment in State Government services at all levels in the ratio of 2 : 1 for the Andhra and Telangana regions respectively and they be posted in any part of the State and not confined to each region. This reflects the real strength of the population in the two regions. This principle is to be extended to all public corporations or semi-Government concerns.

“Secondly, the allocation of all the State resources including those of Hyderabad City and Central loans and grants for regular administrative and developmental activities in the State including Five-Year Plans, in the ratio of 2 : 1 while special attention is to be paid and special allocations be made to develop backward tracts and areas in both the regions.

“Similarly, seats in colleges and professional schools and institutions are to be reserved in the same ratio.

“Thirdly, the time-limit for the two above stated provisions should not be mechanically fixed, and they should continue until such time as mutual understanding and confidence de-

velop between the two regions and the people living there and the existing imbalance in the development between the two regions gets progressively reduced and eliminated.”

The Polit Bureau warns that prolongation of the present Mulki Act or granting separate Regional Councils for the Andhra and Rayalaseema areas similar to the Telangana Regional Council or gimmicks like filling the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet with a new set of Congress MLAs in place of the set that resigned, or shuffling of Congress Committees or trying to give certain concessions to various separatist demands or resorting to President's rule and to brutal CRP, military and Ordinance and MISA rule will only further worsen the situation. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) is equally opposed to granting separate States for the Andhra and Telangana areas, as it would harm the economic and democratic development of the Telugu-speaking people and would be leading to similar disruptive movements in the whole of India.

The P. B. appeals to the democratic forces, the students and youth, the workers, peasants and intelligentsia in the Andhra area to realize that to get the discriminatory, undemocratic and disruptive Mulki Rules scrapped, it is necessary to mobilize all the democratic forces not only in the Andhra area but also from the Telangana area especially the toiling masses of both the regions. By extending support to the demand of separate Andhra or Telangana the democratic forces and the toiling masses are only helping the vested interests, the landlords and Big Business reactionary elements in both the areas, to carve out small States, one for each, where they can easily suppress the toiling masses and carry on their ruthless exploitation. It is only by removing the apprehensions of the Telangana people by assuring equal opportunities in jobs, education and developmental expenditure that they can get the Telangana people join them in common struggle against the Congress landlord-capitalist rule.

The P.B. appeals to the Telangana people that their backwardness is not due to the people of the Andhra region coming and exploiting them, but it is due to exploitation of the



deshmukhs, feudal landlords, backed by the Nizam and British imperialists. The Mulki movement is not directed against the landlords and bureaucratic corrupt officials of either the Andhra area or of the Telangana area, who are continually backed by the new Congress rulers. The P. B. appeals to the people of Telangana not to fall a prey to the Mulki agitation but to fight the landlords and other vested interests in their own region to get land and employment.

The P. B. appeals to the people of Andhra and Telangana that even their immediate aspirations for equal and better opportunities in employment, education and economic development and for overcoming regional backwardness, cannot be achieved by lending support to separatist State movements. They must realize that to achieve land and food, full employment and living wage, education and social security, wiping out regional disparities, it is absolutely necessary to destroy the present Congress regime of Big Business and landlords, with its corrupt bureaucracy. It is this big bourgeois landlord system that is at the root of perpetuating and continuously enhancing regional disparities as well as to the ever-increasing inequality between the lazy upper crust and the toiling masses. To destroy the system, the united countrywide movement of the workers, peasants and middle classes and other broad sections of the people has to be developed.

The Polit Bureau appeals to the agitators in the Andhra and Telangana areas to realize that their legitimate aspirations and struggle for them will lose the support of democratic forces from all over the country and will not succeed if they indulge in physical attacks against political parties and individuals who stand for unity of the Telugu people or in attacks on workers, peasants and other toiling masses and womenfolk to coerce them to lend support to their movement and to desist from such tactics. The supreme need at this time is the unity of all democratic forces to fight the Central Congress regime and defeat its game of playing one section of the people against another in order to perpetuate their rule of exploitation.

## **Condemnation of West Bengal Ordinances\***

**Resolution adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on January 10-14, 1973**

The Polit Bureau of Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly condemns the proposed Ordinances of the Government of West Bengal amending the Industrial Relations and Trade Union Acts, which abrogate the fundamental right to strike and the freedom of association.

By taking power to declare at any time any industry or service as an essential service, which would lead automatically to illegalization of strikes in such industries, and to forcing on the workers such conditions of service as the Government might choose, the Government seeks to take away from the workers the weapon of collective bargaining and create an army of slave labour.

It is the ruling Congress party that started splitting trade unions in an attempt to disrupt the unity of the working class and stem the tide of working class struggles.

It has been consistently refusing to accept the democratic proposal put forward by the trade union movement to confer recognition on the union commanding majority support of the workers determined by secret ballot. Presidential assent to the Bill embodying this principle passed unanimously by the West Bengal Assembly when the United Front Government was in office has been withheld.

It is hypocritical, therefore, for the Congress leaders to talk of proliferation of trade unions. Actually, in West Bengal this phenomenon has intensified after the rigged elections of

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\*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, January 21, 1973.

1972 due to the activities of the warring groups inside the Congress party itself, as stated by the Chief Minister himself.

In these circumstances, the attempt to deny registration to those unions which do not have a minimum membership of 20 per cent of the complement of workers in an industry or factory, as verified by the Registrar of Trade Unions, is most objectionable. It is only a device to deny registration to militant trade unions and to register trade unions favoured by Government and employers by manipulation through the Registrar of Trade Unions. In the context of denial of democratic rights to workers in large areas to form and function their unions as a result of attacks by Congress gangsters, aided by the police, this proposal is all the more dangerous and reprehensible.

The proposal to prevent retrenchment of those with over five years of service without reference to arbitration is no protection to the job security of the workers. First, dismissals of any worker can take place at the will and pleasure of the management. Secondly those with below five years of service can be retrenched at will. Even with regard to the others, the proposal is really an attempt to deprive the workers of their right to resist attempts at retrenchment by their collective strength and to assist the employers in their drive to retrenchment through the machinery of compulsory arbitration.

The proposals show to what extent the Government is prepared to go by discarding all democratic facades and resorting to naked fascist methods, when, unable to solve the problems of mounting prices, unemployment and retrenchment, and faced with increasing united resistance to its policies of attacking the working class and abetting the employers to throw the burdens of the economic crisis on the shoulders of the working class.

The Polit Bureau is happy to note that all trade union centres, including the AITUC and INTUC, have come out against these proposals. The need of the hour is to unitedly

resist these moves. The P.B. appeals to all trade union centres to forge a united front, and mobilize the entire strength of the working class of West Bengal and force the Government to retreat.

The P.B. warns that these proposals of the West Bengal Government made with the blessings of the Central Government, pose the greatest danger to the trade union movement. For two years now the leaders of the Government of India have been canvassing for a moratorium on strikes. Having failed in their attempt to hoodwink the working class into acceptance of these proposals, they are now coming out in their true colours. The proposed Ordinances of West Bengal are a foretaste of what is in store for workers all over the country. The Maharashtra Government has already enacted a Black Act. The Union Labour Minister is reported to be working on a Central legislation for putting new curbs on the right to strike and enabling the recognition of stooge unions.

The Polit Bureau, therefore, appeals to trade unions all over the country to raise their powerful voice of protest against these proposals, which if enacted, will make collective bargaining a mockery and reduce the working class to a state of absolute slavery.

## **Resolution on Vietnam\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on January 10-14, 1973**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) denounces the continuous bombing of North and South Vietnam by American pirate planes. The barbarous and all destructive bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, equal to the destructive power of nuclear bombs, set a wave of shock throughout the world. The heroic defenders of Vietnam foiled Nixon's game of blasting them into submission. Though forced by the freedom-fighters and the strength of world opinion to temporarily stop the attacks on the Hanoi-Haiphong areas, Nixon continues his saturation bombing of other parts of North and South Vietnam.

The return of the American imperialists to the negotiating table under these circumstances has to be treated with suspicion and it might well be utilised by the perfidious enemy of all mankind to prepare for another inhuman attack. Hanoi has clearly expressed its apprehension and the people of all countries share the same with it.

The Polit Bureau is of the opinion that great harm has been done to the cause of Vietnam by those who have roused hopes of early settlement and certified American imperialists' desire for a peaceful settlement.

The Polit Bureau joins its voice with the democratic and people's organisations in all countries to demand immediate settlement of the war on the basis of the agreement reached in October. The heroism and resistance of the people of

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\*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, January 21, 1973.

Vietnam combined with the strength of world opinion can still compel Nixon to observe the agreement and defeat his perfidy. The Polit Bureau, at the same time, calls upon the people of India and other countries to demand immediate stopping of all bombing and withdrawal of all American naval blockades and of all American forces.

The Polit Bureau calls upon the working class and people of India to organise during the current month protests and demonstrations against American imperialism, demanding immediate end to the war. The Polit Bureau is of the opinion that the ruling party and the Government are still following a policy of equivocation on the question of Vietnam, on American bombings and their ghastly consequences. The Government of India seems to lack the courage shown by many smaller countries in taking a position of forthright condemnation of the USA and support to the people of Vietnam. Specially condemnable is the continued recognition of the puppet Saigon Government and the refusal to recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam as the legal Government. The Polit Bureau calls upon the people and all progressive forces to demand that the Government grant immediate recognition to the Provisional Revolutionary Government and put an end to the national dishonour involved in diplomatic relations with the Saigon Government.

## **Statement on Assam Language Tangle\***

**Resolution adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on January 10-14, 1973**

The Polit Bureau is seriously concerned over the continued denial of the rights of linguistic minorities in Assam by the ruling Congress party. The recent talks in Delhi between Sri K.C.Pant, the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs and the Congress MLAs and MPs from Cachar, and the agreement arrived at between them, to suspend the agitation in Cachar, is in effect, a manoeuvre to force the Assamese language on all minorities not only in the Brahmaputra (Assam) Valley, but even in the overwhelmingly Bengali speaking Cachar district, as well as in the Mikir and North Cachar Hill Districts.

The K.C.Pant-Cachar Congress MLAs agreement has not a word to say on the Assam Government's decision, as announced by its Home Minister, to introduce Assamese as medium of instruction even in non-Assamese schools, and thereby permitting the Assam Government to go ahead with its decision, denying the linguistic minorities their fundamental right to get their education in their mother-tongues.

The agreement takes note of the Assam Chief Minister's categorical assertion that according to his interpretation, Lal Bahadur Shastri's formula of 1961 allowed him to introduce the Assamese language as a compulsory language at secondary stage in schools in Cachar and throughout Assam State. Instead of repudiating this reactionary and

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chauvinistic interpretation, which goes against every elementary democratic right of a citizen, then and there, on the spot, the Union Minister of State for Home promised to give his award later. It is strange that Cachar MLAs agreed to abide by his decision!

Our Party upholds the principle that linguistic minorities should not be coerced to learn any language other than their mother-tongue at school stage, as it would only create resentment and opposition to the majority language. But our Party desires and is confident that the minorities in furtherance of their own economic and social needs, would voluntarily learn the language of the majority and develop close and friendly mutual relations. That is why, here in this case, our Party is opposed to the Assamese language being made compulsory even at secondary stage for other linguistic minorities. It should be only optional.

It is all the more unjustified and disruptive to impose the Assamese language in Cachar, a Bengali-speaking area, where Assamese-speaking people are in very small numbers.

The agreement does not uphold the principle that at collegiate and university levels, too, the instruction should be through mother-tongue. It does not even restore the position that existed earlier before the Gauhati University authorities took the undemocratic decision of making the Assamese language the sole medium throughout the State and for all minorities, against which the minorities have been carrying on their legitimate agitation and struggle. But the Cachar Congress MLAs were made to agree to call off the agitation and negotiate for a compromise on the undemocratic and disruptive stand of the language chauvinists.

Our Party pays tribute to the Assamese-speaking democratic forces and students in Assam, who stood up in defence of the right of the Bengali and other linguistic minorities, and braved the physical assaults of chauvinists. Our Party hopes more and more, larger and larger sections of Assamese people would come forward in defence of the democratic rights of linguistic minorities and force the



Congress rulers both in Assam and New Delhi, to give up their present chauvinistic and disruptive policies.

Our Party once again reiterates that the legitimate aspirations of the Assamese people to establish their language as the medium of education and administration in their State will receive added support from all democratic forces in the whole of our country, the more the democratic masses, the students and intellectuals, the peasants and workers of Assam champion and defend the rights of the minorities. It is only the unity of democratic forces of both the majority and minority linguistic groups in any State, that can safeguard the economic and political rights of the masses, even of the majority group, from the onslaught of the reactionary vested interests.

## **CPI(M) Hails Vietnam Victory\***

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on January 25, 1973 :*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) hails the Vietnam agreement as a big victory for the fighting people of North and South Vietnam—a victory for which they had to carry on struggle for three decades and had to undergo untold sufferings, devastations and massacres. All freedom lovers, progressive and democratic forces, all Socialists, will welcome this victory of a great cause, of a brave and courageous people engaged in one of the biggest freedom battles of all time.

None of them will forget the barbarities of American imperialism, the massacres and devastations it has inflicted on the people of this brave country, and the ghastly near-nuclear bombing it resorted to in cruel desperation. Every one will brand Nixon as one of the biggest war criminals of our time, though he is pretending to be a peace dove. The Vietnam war has summed up in a nutshell the cruel and barbaric character of the imperialist system.

The valuable help of the Socialist camp, the solidarity of the international working class movement, the consistent fight of the world democratic forces and especially of the people of the United States of America have contributed to the military

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and diplomatic success of the DRV and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam.

The terms of the agreement reveal the great triumph of the people of Vietnam and the rebuff administered by them to the wanton bombings ordered by Nixon. They virtually endorse the earlier terms of the October agreement to change which Nixon ordered his genocidal bombing.

The American forces are to be withdrawn, all foreign forces to quit South Vietnam and all military establishments to be demolished; the NFL is recognised and will continue to hold sway in the areas of its influence; the line between North-South Vietnam is a temporary line and the unification of Vietnam can take place in accordance with the wishes of the people; a National Council of Reconciliation of three equal segments will prepare for democratic elections in South Vietnam, composed of the NFL, Saigon and neutrals whose decisions will be taken on the basis of unanimity; troops, weapons and war materials from abroad are not to be introduced into South Vietnam, civilian prisoners are to be freed, Hanoi will return the U.S. prisoners of war. There is to be an international supervisory force.

These terms which fulfil the demands for complete withdrawal of American troops, recognition of the right of Vietnam people to unify their land and open the prospect of democratic advance in South Vietnam do constitute a great victory of the people of Vietnam.

The Polit Bureau, however, warns against complacency. The perfidious Nixon and American imperialists cannot be trusted with honest intentions and are preparing to undermine the foundations of the agreement. The recognition of the Thieu Government as the only legal Government is intended to prepare for future mischief; besides, the time between October and now has been utilised to pile up arms and planes in South Vietnam to give full scope to Thieu's conspiracies. Before and after the ceasefire, every effort will be made to undermine peace. Extreme vigilance is therefore required on the part of the democratic forces in our country and abroad

to guard against the sinister designs of the imperialists and their puppet, the Saigon Government.

The Polit Bureau calls upon all Party members and mass organisations to redouble their efforts to collect funds for Vietnam and not to relax them because of this dearly bought victory.

The Polit Bureau strongly protests against the failure of the Government of India to grant recognition to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. National self-respect as well as anti-imperialist considerations demands that the Provisional Revolutionary Government be recognised and the recognition of the Saigon Government be withdrawn.

## On Certain Agrarian Issues\*

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its Muzaffarpur session on March 9-15, 1973 [With an Explanatory Note on the Resolution by P. Sundarayya, General Secretary of CPI(M)]**

1. In concretising the "Tasks on the Kisan Front", as enjoined in the C.C. Resolution of 1966, in the course of developing the kisan movement, certain differences have cropped up in our Party. These relate to the questions of (1) land ceiling; our stand towards non-cultivating owners other than the landlords; (2) the rights of tenants-at-will (sharecroppers) vis-a-vis non-cultivating owners, especially small owners (with regard to fair rent, right of ownership and right of resumption); (3) issues connected with regard to agricultural labour struggle for land and wages; the attitude of the kisan movement towards introduction of tractors and other agricultural machinery; (4) how fair prices for the peasant produce are to be defined; and (5) the stand to be taken with regard to land legislations and the relation between mass struggles on concrete immediate demands and the propagation of the Party's programmatic agrarian demands.

2. The Central Committee reiterates that the central slogan of the agrarian movement must be "abolish landlordism, both feudal and capitalist, without compensation, and distribution of all the land of the landlords to the agricultural labour and the poor peasant free".

3. This basic demand has to be concretely propagated and the movement and struggles are to be developed towards

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\*Published as a booklet. Also published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, March 25, 1973. Refer the Document : "Tasks on the Kisan Front", Volume No. XI, Item No. 79, Pages 858-882 of this series.

achieving it. The Congress Government has now come with new legislation on land ceilings, tenancy, minimum wages, fair prices, taxation, etc. They claim that these ceiling legislations would abolish landlordism and enable the agricultural labour and the rural poor to secure land.

4. In our general propaganda and on the floor of legislatures when the ruling class Governments bring agrarian legislations, we must put forth counter-proposals, basing on our programmatic stand, to expose the hollowness and pitiful character of the ruling class proposals and legislations especially when they are coming out with their solutions as basic solutions.

5. When we move our basic programmatic alternative amendments, and when they are rejected, we have to move various other amendments to get the next maximum possible concessions from the ruling classes, in the concrete reality of legislative strength of the democratic Opposition, as well as the mass strength of the mass movement outside.

6. Whatever legislation is passed, we must develop mass movements to get the beneficial portions implemented and against the harmful provisions.

7. No legislation, however limited, under the present ruling classes and corrupt bureaucratic, set-up gets implemented, leave alone the basic solutions, unless powerful mass movements are developed.

8. We must put forth the democratic demand for elected committees of agricultural labour and peasants to implement the legislation.

9. It goes without saying that basic solutions can be carried out only when the present state is replaced by a People's Democratic state. In our propaganda and agitation, we must constantly put this before the people.

### **Land Ceilings**

10. Our alternative to land ceilings legislation of the Congress Government is to put forth the proposals to abolish landlordism and ensure land gratis to the landless agricultural

labour and the poor peasant, without affecting the rich peasant as a class.

11. The principal demarcating line between the capitalist landlords and rich peasants is that the capitalist landlords or their family members do not participate in the major agricultural operations (on their farms) through manual labour, while the rich peasants or their family members participate in the major agricultural operations through manual labour.

12. In terms of landholdings, if in any particular state or region of state, or in areas having similar agro-economic characteristics, if say, 90 per cent of holders of a particular size of holding, say, ten to twelve and a half acres wet, or 20-25 acres dry do not physically cultivate their lands, it can be assumed that holders over ten acres wet or 20 acres dry are broadly, for land ceiling legislations, landlords.

13. Reports and experience from several states and regions, except areas like the Rajasthan desert, show that an average family of five members, which owns 10 to 15 acres of irrigated land, or 20 to 30 acres of non-irrigated dry land, depending upon the fertility and other agro-economic conditions, is normally a rich peasant family which participates in the agricultural operations of its farm with its manual labour. Those families, which own more than 10 to 15 acres of irrigated land or 20-30 acres of non-irrigated dry land, normally do not participate in the manual labour on their farms, in the principal agricultural operations, and hence are to be characterised as landlords for the purpose of ceiling legislations.

The variations in different states within these limits based on the same criteria for different regions are to be decided by the respective State Committees.

14. All the lands of the landlords as defined above (including the land below ceilings) should be taken over for distribution among the agricultural labour and poor peasants gratis. They shall neither be allowed to possess agricultural land nor be paid any compensation for the lands taken over by the state for distribution among the landless and the poor.

In cases where some of them find no other alternative means of livelihood, they may be paid rehabilitation grants by the Government.

### **Family**

15. A family for the purpose of ceilings is *WORKING* adult male, his wife and children, whether major or minor, of five members.

16. If that family has more members, each additional member is given one-tenth of the ceiling but in no case, should the total landholding exceed one-and-a-half ceilings, whatever the number of extra members.

17. But in certain regions, where the joint family system exists, and where a large number of such joint families is a feature, then such families may be allowed to have each *WORKING* male adult with his children (major or minor) a separate ceiling, i.e., if there is a joint family of say, two brothers or more, each with their own adult sons and grandchildren living and cultivating together, then each brother, his wife, sons and grandsons would be treated as a separate family instead of all brothers with all their descendents as one family.

### **No Exemptions**

18. Land ceilings legislation should not give any exemptions. Big plantations that for reasons of production cannot be split and distributed, should be nationalised. But small plantations must also be brought under land ceilings, and owners of plantations will not be allowed to hold other agricultural land, over and above the ceiling allowed in the plantations.

### **Priority in Land Distribution**

19. Land will be distributed to the landless agricultural labour and to the poor peasants, Harijans and other Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes getting preference. For developing the united struggle for land, it may be necessary to give a small portion of land to the middle peasantry.



### **Attitude towards Non-Cultivating Small Owners**

20. Lands of smallholders owning land less than half the ceiling, but eking out their livelihood in factories, small shops, schools, small government jobs or as ordinary soldiers and junior army officers, or in any other profession, even if they are not cultivating their lands, shall not be taken. But if these lands are leased, then tenants shall have security of lease and pay fixed fair rents only. They will have the option to part with their lands to the Government and the Government shall pay them the market rate.

21. Landholders, who are owning on the day of legislation less than the proposed ceiling but more than half the ceiling, but who are not cultivating their lands by their physical labour but getting them cultivated by agricultural labour, if they have other professions or means of income, they will be allowed to retain only that amount of land that would be enough to make the total income equal that derived from the land ceiling. The excess amount of land would be taken for distribution but they will be paid compensation for such lands.

### **Tenants**

22. The right of tenant to the ownership of the land he is cultivating is to be guaranteed, except to those who are leaseholders from small owners.

23. If one is a tenant on smallholder's land owning less than half the ceiling, and if such a smallholder intends to resume cultivation of his land through his manual labour then such land under tenancy be equally divided between the tenants and the smallholder owning less than half the ceiling. The tenant will continue to pay fair rent on the portion of the land he cultivates. Where the tenant has already been conferred by law the ownership right, as in Kerala, there the small owner is entitled to get full market value from the Government.

24. The fair rent a tenant is to pay should not exceed one-fourth of the gross produce.

### **Fair Price for Peasants' Produce**

25. Fair prices should be fixed and guaranteed at the time of harvest itself taking the interests of the mass of the peasantry, and they should be such as to assure a decent living, after meeting his agricultural expenses. The retail prices for the mass of consumers of their essential supplies must be within their reach. If subsidies are to be paid by the state it must be done.

### **Struggle for Wages and Land**

26. The Party must agitate for fixing fair wages for agricultural labourers, carry on the struggle to improve the wage rates, the struggle for wages must be linked to the struggle for land, and to rouse the agricultural labourers' consciousness to fight for land and its distribution.

27. The agricultural labour movement is opposed to the introduction of tractors and other modern machinery, as it would further aggravate the unemployment among the rural labourers and bring down their wages. This fight against the introduction of tractors and modern agricultural machinery should be linked with the struggle for abolition of landlordism and land distribution to the landless and the poor peasants.

### **Struggle for Achieving Certain Immediate Demands**

28. While it is incumbent on our Party to continuously propagate and rouse the consciousness of the toiling masses to organize and fight for these basic solutions of their problems, both from legislative forums and outside, it is also incumbent on our Party to evolve suitable concrete immediate demands for actions. These demands will be formulated from area to area, depending upon the existing consciousness and organization and strength of the concerned sections of the people and also of the broad democratic unity and support that can be mobilised in support of the struggle. Even if a legal right exists, it may be necessary to move into action step by step, to get it implemented in practice. In planning actions, they must be for the demands which the

people consider immediately with their reach and are prepared to actively fight for. While such immediate actions are carried on, simultaneous, continuous and constant propaganda about the legal and basic rights should be carried on to rouse the consciousness of the fighting masses.

29. The Central Committee once again stresses the urgency of concretisation of our programme at state and local levels. It stresses the urgency of orientating our whole Party to base our work on the agricultural labour and poor peasantry and on the basis of that strength, champion and defend the interests of the middle peasant and make him our firm ally and win the rich peasant to our strategic front.

### *An Explanatory Note on the Resolution*

*by P. Sundarayya*

The Central Committee in its meeting in March 1973 in Muzaffarpur has come to certain decisions, on the basis of the experience pooled and discussions held in different State Committees on certain agrarian questions. As the C.C. resolution itself points out :

“In concretising the ‘Tasks on the Kisan Front’, as enjoined in the C.C. resolution of 1966, in the course of developing the kisan movement, certain differences have cropped up in our Party. These relate to the questions of (1) land ceiling; our stand towards non-cultivating owners other than the landlords, (2) the rights of tenants-at-will (sharecroppers) vis-a-vis non-cultivating owners especially small owners (with regard to fair rent, right of ownership and right of resumption), (3) issues connected with regard to agricultural labour struggle for land and wages; the attitude of the kisan movement towards introduction of tractors and other agricultural machinery, (4) how fair prices for the peasant produce are to be defined, and (5) the stand to be taken with regard to land legislations and the relation of mass struggles on concrete immediate demands and the propagation of the Party’s programmatic agrarian demands.”

These differences have cropped up as the movement

developed and these issues have become urgent calling for immediate answers. The C.C. resolution on "Tasks on the Kisan Front", adopted in 1966, had directed the different state units to concretise the programme on the basis of the general line given in that resolution but in most of the states, that resolution was not applied in practice nor has any concrete study been carried out.

The "Tasks on the Kisan Front" states :

"The deep-rooted reformist understanding prevalent in the Party.....expressed itself in virtually distorting the correct conception of all-in peasant unity in the struggle against feudal landlordism, and in building that unity based upon the middle and rich-peasantry, instead of building it round the rural labour and the poor and mainly based upon them,.....and instead of organising these sections as the main backbone and driving force of the movement.

"Such a course.....restricts the sweep and tempo of the very anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle, 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.....places its principal reliance on the rural labourers and poor peasants who constitute 70 per cent of the peasantry, while of course not for a moment neglecting or ignoring the middle and rich peasantry, but drawing them into the struggle for agrarian revolution." (paras 4 & 5)

"The adoption of the Party Programme, however, has only laid 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 re-organising 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 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." (para 15)

The same old reformist deviation is still persisting in our understanding and practice.

Certain comrades have been expressing divergent understanding of certain formulations of our Party Programme while trying to concretely work out the slogans. In fact, sometimes, their divergence amounts to repudiation of the Party Programme formulations.

Let us take the issues one by one.

### **Abolish Landlordism, both Feudal and Capitalist**

What does the Party Programme say?

"Today, after two decades of independence and Congress rule with all its multitude of agrarian reform laws, land concentration remains intact and 5 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 70 per cent of the peasant families hardly possess 20 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 peasants 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 a tremendous expansion in agricultural production." (para 45)

And again, para 89 (i) :

"Abolish landlordism without compensation and give land gratis to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants."

This is further explained in the C.C. resolution on "Tasks on the Kisan Front" as follows:

"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 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 produce the limited surpluses of foodgrains to supply the Government for feeding the urban centres." (para 8)

"The surplus value the new-type landlord and the well-to-do peasant are 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 a few centres around cities and towns in 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 5 per cent of households over more than 37 per cent of the total cultivated area at one end, and a vast mass of peasantry—70 per cent 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. (para 9)*

*"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 .... 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." (para 10)*

*"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 militant struggles of the mass of peasants and agricultural labourers are to be directed against the land monopolists and landlordism*

of different hues and colours." (para 19) (All emphasis mine—P.S.)

"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* (emphasis mine—P.S.), 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 labourers, 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 the 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." (para 20, Emphasis original)

Again in para 28 : "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." (Emphasis mine—P.S.)

We have given these extensive quotations to bring out clearly that the Indian agrarian situation as it exists today under the bourgeois-landlord rule is not classical feudalism nor developed capitalism but it is feudal and semi-feudal, meaning thereby that capitalist exploitation is super-imposed on the old feudal system. It also brings out that this feudal and semi-feudal relationship in agriculture cannot be abolished without at the same time abolishing capitalist landlord relations. So if any one understands that our Party Programme



or the C.C. resolution on "Tasks on the Kisan Front" is only directed towards eliminating feudal landlords but does not attack the capitalist landlords, it is a total misunderstanding and repudiation of the Party Programme itself.

The classical bourgeois democratic revolution is no more of the same character as the old. In the present stage of world Socialist revolution, it also becomes anti-monopoly, led by the working class. Similarly, the anti-feudal revolution cannot be confined only to elimination of feudal landlordism but has to be carried out against capitalist landlordism which has got intermingled with feudalism.

It is also clear that in the Party Programme as well as in the resolution on "Tasks on the Kisan Front" it is *laid down that abolition of landlordism of all hues, whether feudal or capitalist, is our task in this stage of the revolution.* This was stressed because without abolishing the land monopoly held by these landlords, both feudal and capitalist combined, the question of land distribution to the largest number of agricultural labour and land-poor is not possible and would remain an empty slogan.

### **Quantum of Ceiling**

Instead of concretely studying the class differentiation and agrarian structure in different states, some of our comrades persist in their own wrong deviations and advance untenable arguments. They say, "Our approach to the ceiling question arises not from the point of view of liquidation of landlordism and distribution of land to the tiller but from the point of view of weakening (and breaking) the land monopoly of the landlords." Further, they argue, "As has been stated above, our Party has made it clear time and again that ceiling on landholdings (yes, of Congress brand—P.S.) cannot meet the universal demand for the abolition of landlordism without compensation and distribution of land to the peasants and agricultural labourers free of cost. It has supported the slogan of ceiling because it would help in breaking the land monopoly of landlords and relieving the land-hunger of the peasantry to some extent." "We

have to treat this slogan of land ceilings as a partial demand and formulate our proposals accordingly."

"We should look at the Government proposals from the point of view of partial demands and formulate our counter-proposals accordingly."

"So far as concrete amendments to Government legislations are concerned they are to be viewed and worked out from the practical point of view. Tactical slogans are related to strategic tasks but they are not identical. Hence concrete amendments are to be worked out keeping in view the programmatic tasks and the correlation of class forces and the tactical needs of the movement. As such, concrete slogans and amendments may not remain fixed for all time but may change with changes in the situation."

Further, in practice, this question of quantum of land ceilings had been an acute controversial issue for some time past. West Bengal kisan leaders held the view in 1969 and 1970 :

"Regarding ceiling, we should adopt a realistic approach. A ceiling of 25 acres with no exemption will be a very big step. The major loopholes were not ceiling of 25 acres but individual ceilings and the exemptions. After propaganda for so many years, if we now suddenly propose lowering of ceiling it will create apprehension among the rich and middle peasants also and will adversely affect our attempt to isolate the jotdars."

In the draft proposals for comprehensive amendments to land reform legislation in West Bengal, it was said, "the target of attack should be limited to big landowners. Jotdars having adequate income from alternative sources should theoretically have no right to retain land. But no such legislation can be enacted in the present socio-political set-up. Hence everything necessary must be done to take away all surplus land above the ceiling from them. The ceiling should be such that these big landowners can have little scope to escape.

"Ceilings should be on family basis (no per head calculation)

it should be 25 ordinary acres of agricultural land and 10 acres of non-agricultural land including homestead. At present it is 20 acres of non-agricultural land. Exemptions from ceilings of tank fisheries and religious or charitable land should be deleted, i.e., they should be included within the ceiling.....Regarding land for factories, tea gardens and orchards, so much land should be allowed to be retained as is thought sufficient by the state Government. Cooperatives should be allowed to retain so much land that its individual members own subject to the ceiling per family.”

The same wrong understanding that we should advocate amendments which would improve the Congress legislative ceilings had burst forth in the All-India Kisan Sabha Conference in Rurka Kalan.

In the resolution “Carry Forward the Struggle for Land Reforms”, it is said, “The Central Land Reforms Committee formed by the last Chief Ministers’ conference in 1970 has quite recently come out with certain recommendations like family ceiling, partial restriction on exemptions to ceilings, ceiling ranging from 10 to 18 acres in case of perennially irrigated land (that would give two crops—P.S.) to 54 acres in case of dry lands for a family of 5 and so forth. According to press news, the Central Government is reported to have accepted the recommendations in principle. These recommendations, though they are vague and partial and fall short of requirements, at the same time show that the measures so far taken by the Government during the last 20 years were wrong. The Kisan Sabha is of the opinion that these recommendations, coming in the wake of powerful struggles, provide an opportunity for uniting wide sections and advancing the struggle for land reforms.”

The Sabha demands that “The recommendations of the Land Reforms Committee be immediately accepted and suitably amended in the light of criticisms made by the Kisan Sabha. On that basis prompt legislations should be enacted and implemented. Legislation should include a fool-proof family definition; a family ceiling; no exemption of any kind;

ban on transfers before implementation and cancellation of all back-dated transfers; recognition of tenants on basis of possession and no eviction; distribution of land free of cost to the landless, etc.”

This means that our comrades working in the All-India Kisan Sabha accept that these recommendations are a big advance and would really give a substantial amount of land to the landless provided it is implemented honestly. These proposals of the Congress should be the basis for further broader united movement. Of course, there is the fig-leaf that these proposals should be amended as per the Kisan Sabha suggestions. The Kisan Sabha does not suggest reduction of the ceiling quantum of 10 to 18 acres irrigated double-crop land for a family; which in fact, would mean 27 acres irrigated single-crop or 54 acres dry land for a family, and with such an amount of ceiling, even if it is honestly implemented, no land will be available for distribution. Nor does it demand that *ALL* the land of the landlords be taken over.

The Punjab State Committee, in the month of March, submitted a memorandum to the Governor wherein it demanded “implementing the recommendations of the Chief Ministers by lowering the ceiling to 18 acres making the family the unit.”

That is why the Central Committee in its resolution at Muzaffarpur, March 1973, had to elaborate on this issue :

“10. Our alternative to land ceilings legislation of the Congress Government is to put forth the proposals to abolish landlordism and ensure land gratis to the landless agricultural labour and the poor peasant, without affecting the rich peasant as a class.

“11. The principal demarcating line between the capitalist landlords and rich peasants is that the capitalist landlords or their family members do not participate in the major agricultural operations (on their farms) through manual labour.

“12. In terms of landholdings, if in any particular state or region of a state, or in areas having similar agro-economic

characteristics, if say, 90 per cent of holders of a particular size of holdings, say, 10-12½ acres wet, or 20-25 acres dry, do not physically cultivate their lands, it can be assumed that holders over 10 acres wet or 20 acres dry are broadly, for land ceiling legislations, landlords.

“13. Reports and experience from several states and regions, except areas like the Rajasthan desert, show that an average family of five members, which owns 10 to 15 acres of irrigated land, or 20 to 30 acres of non-irrigated dry land, depending upon the fertility and other agro-economic conditions, is normally a rich peasant family which participates in the agricultural operations of its farm with its manual labour. Those families, which own more than 10 to 15 acres of irrigated land or 20-30 acres of non-irrigated dry land, normally do not participate in the manual labour on their farms, in the principal agricultural operations, and hence are to be characterised as landlords for the purpose of ceiling legislations.

“The variations in different states within these limits based on the same criteria for different regions, are to be decided by the respective State Committees.

“14. All the lands of the landlords as defined above (including the land below ceilings) should be taken over for distribution among the agricultural labour and poor peasants gratis. They shall neither be allowed to possess agricultural land nor be paid any compensation for the lands taken over by the state for distribution among the landless and the poor. In cases where some of them find no other alternative means of livelihood, they may be paid rehabilitation grants by the Government.”

### **The Main Point of the C.C. Resolution**

The Central Committee's resolution certainly brings forth a new understanding and stresses the importance and absolute necessity of propagating and developing the movement on that basis. The Central Committee resolution says *that a landlord is not entitled and will not be allowed to retain land*

*even below the ceiling and all the lands of the landlords, including that below the ceiling should be taken over by the state without compensation and should be distributed free to the agricultural labourers and land-hungry poor peasants.*

This is in consonance with our Party Programme and "Tasks on the Kisan Front" of abolishing landlordism both feudal and capitalist. It is true that the Central Committee had not been able to concretise this earlier.

In all our previous propaganda about ceiling legislations, we have been propagating that only the surplus land, over and above the ceilings, will be taken over. Now the new understanding which the Central Committee wants to impart is that landlords who do not physically cultivate their lands shall have no right to retain even that amount of land below the ceiling and if he has no other means of livelihood he may be given some rehabilitation grant but he is not entitled to get any land.

Why?

Our demand for abolition of landlordism is to do away with a parasitic class which has no role in production and has become an obstacle to improving agricultural production. Only by abolishing landlordism will we be able to distribute land to the agricultural labour and the poor peasantry.

By allowing parasitic landlords to keep land even up to the ceiling, we would be continuing to keep the landlord system instead of abolishing it.

In Table III (see Appendix II), we find that the big landholdings constituting three to five per cent of rural households, as given in the National Sample Survey of Landholdings, 1960-61, vary in size from over 10 acres to over 50 acres in various states. On an all-India scale, the number of such big households over 20 acres are 3,158,000 i.e. about 5 per cent, holding 36 per cent of total operational lands. If we allow them to keep the land up to the ceiling limit, we would be leaving in their hands 6.32 crore acres of land, while taking away 5 crore acres as surplus. If these lands are taken over and distributed to the landless and those who have less than

2½ acres, we will be adding an extra of one to 1½ acres over and above what they would get by merely taking the land over the ceiling in different states, and more or less ensure a landholding of one hectare (2½ acres) and in certain states even 5 acres per household, as far as present statistical averages show.

Thus there is absolutely no reason why we should deprive millions of agricultural labour and poor peasants below 2½ acres of getting land, why we should not enable them to eke out a part of their meagre livelihood.

If our Party is serious about the programmatic slogan of abolition of landlordism and land to the agricultural labour and land poor, we cannot leave so much land to the parasitic landlord class. To go on repeating the slogan of abolition of landlordism and land to agricultural labour and poor peasants while not even propagating that landlords should not be allowed to retain any land, even that below the ceiling, and that all their land should be taken over and distributed, is nothing but cheating the agricultural labour and poor peasants and our slogan would remain an empty slogan.

It is true that even by completely abolishing landlordism and giving land to the agricultural labour and poor peasants we will not be able to give every agricultural labourer enough land that would ensure him full employment and guarantee him a minimum standard of living. Radical improvement in the standard of living of all landless agricultural labour and land poor is possible only when we can draw away a good chunk of the agricultural population from agriculture and provide for them in the industrial and other spheres of the economy. But till large-scale industrialisation and provision of better employment are carried out, it is only by abolishing landlordism completely and distributing land that we can even make a beginning and ensure these agricultural labourers and poor peasants some avenue of employment and livelihood.

It is true that where agricultural labour and poor peasants may be concentrated, there is not land enough to distribute to every one of their households. Agricultural labour would

not normally go away from their places of living and leave for some distant places to get some non-fertile land. It will be also true that to keep the unity of the agricultural labour and poor and middle peasant in the struggle for land distribution, we might have to give certain portion of the land of the landlords even to a section of middle peasants as well and thus every agricultural labourer will not be in a position to get *ENOUGH LAND*.

It is also true that complete abolition of landlordism and distribution of the whole land to the agricultural labourers and poor peasants is finally possible only when a new state is established, but all the same it is necessary, even today, to give this slogan of taking away all the land of the landlords and distributing it to the agricultural labour, so that the masses of agricultural labour and poor peasants can be mobilised and the struggle waged to achieve this demand.

So "land ceiling" is the demarcating line, in terms of landholding, that would broadly demarcate the landlord from the rich peasant. So the line of demarcation between the landlord and the rich peasant is to be fixed on the basis of existing agro-socio-economic conditions. We characterise those landholders who physically cultivate their lands with their family labour in major agricultural operations even though they may be employing a large amount of agricultural labour as rich peasants. They are not touched. But once the line of demarcation, i.e., ceiling, is fixed, there should be no hesitation whatsoever to take the land, even below the ceiling, of those landlords.

### **Certain Objections Answered**

Certain objections are raised to these formulations of the Central Committee. Some argue that:

1. Lenin did not define the landlords in terms of landholdings.

2. By drawing a demarcating line between landlords and rich peasants, in terms of landholdings, even in broad terms, and demanding that *ALL* the lands of such landlords, even those



lands below the ceilings, be taken over for distribution, there is the danger that a certain section, however small, of the rich peasant being affected and a certain amount of their land would be taken away from them for distribution. This will spread apprehensions among the whole rich peasantry, and it may even spread to the middle peasant, and drive them away from joining the strategic democratic front. Thus, the new Central Committee resolution, in practice, revises the Party Programme which lays down that the rich peasant is our ally.

3. They also argue that both China and the East European People's Democracies, even after the revolution, for a long time, guaranteed the rich peasants holding land. They reduced the amount of land, which a holder could hold as the consolidation of their revolutionary power went ahead and as the correlation of forces behind the Government became more and more favourable vis-a-vis the remaining exploiting rural classes, the kulaks. Why now advocate a scheme that would touch even a portion of land of even a small section of the rich peasants?

4. By the Central Committee resolution, the target of attack of our movement, gets enormously widened and it is very harmful for our movement.

So, they argue, that except saying in general terms that we stand for abolishing landlordism, we cannot and should not concretise it in terms of landholdings, and that can and should be done only after the revolution. Meanwhile, we must advance amendments to Congress legislations which would be a little more radical, and take us a step ahead from the position as it exists today. Hence our attitude to amendments should be of a tactical character depending upon the level of the mass movement.

### **Can We Demarcate Landlords on the Basis of Landholdings?**

There is a lot of confusion as to who is to be characterised as a landlord, a rich peasant, a middle peasant and a poor peasant, and about their characteristics.

But here for fixing up land ceilings, the only point with which we are concerned is what is the demarcating line between a landlord and a rich peasant. We need not go here into the various characteristics of the rich peasant, his role in the different stages of the revolution or about his vacillating role in the People's Democratic Front. The Central Committee categorically lays down, on the basis of sound Marxism-Leninism and strictly adhering to Lenin's definition of a rich peasant and a landlord, the following guidelines:

"The principal demarcating line between the capitalist landlords and rich peasants is that the capitalist landlords or their family members do not participate in the major agricultural operations (on their farms) through manual labour, while the rich peasants or their family members participate in the major agricultural operations through manual labour.

"In terms of landholdings, if in any particular state or region of state, or in areas having similar agro-economic characteristics, if say, 90 per cent of holders of a particular size of holdings, say 10-12½ acres wet, or 20-25 acres dry do not physically cultivate their lands, it can be assumed that holders over 10 acres wet or 20 acres dry are broadly, for land ceiling legislations, landlords."

Comrade Lenin, in studying the agrarian structure of various countries, analysed the bourgeois statistics and especially, the landholdings of various sizes as given in the statistics of the bourgeois Government and applying his broad criteria based on production relations, has drawn certain relevant conclusions for practical activities. For a broad understanding and broad propaganda and legislative slogans, we have to follow the same procedure.

The Kisan Sub-Committee of West Bengal in reply to the questionnaire issued by the Central Kisan Council has answered: "The acreage above which 90 per cent of owners do not cultivate vary from area to area. In fertile areas with high productivity, particularly irrigated areas (for example,

major parts of Burdwan, Hooghly, parts of Bankura, Birbhum Midnapore, 24-Parganas, Murshidabad, etc.) it is found that owners owning more than 10 acres of agricultural land do not generally cultivate themselves but there are less fertile areas with low productivity where the acreage is higher. In Purulia, some parts of Bankura, Midnapore, Birbhum, Maldah, Darjeeling, etc., it is about 15 to 20 acres. There are areas and lands in between the two."

Punjab comrades say: "In many areas of Punjab, Haryana and Western U.P., there are rich peasants who cultivate up to 20 acres of wet land and their number is not small and they can in no way be confused with landlords." "When we talk of maximum 18 acres ceiling of wet lands, we take into consideration the joint family system and the fact that the rich peasant as a class is not affected and this is commonly understood by the people. This is how we have been explaining the issue during the last 20 years."

From both these answers, it is clear that the Central Committee's understanding that, in general, a landholder up to 10-15 acres wet or 20-30 acres dry are working their holdings by manual labour in major agricultural operations, and landholders having larger holdings do not manually cultivate and hence are to be treated as landlords, is correct.

In Punjab it is contended that a joint family system with two or more brothers, along with their parents, and along with their children, and all the male adult brothers physically cultivating their lands, with their own family labour in major agricultural operations, is a normal feature.

The Central Committee resolution in this respect categorically states, in the case of joint families, every *WORKING* adult male and his family is entitled to have a separate ceiling. As such, in Punjab, if a joint family of two *WORKING* adult brothers has 18-20 acres, then each one is entitled to 10 acres wet. As such the rich peasant *as a class* is not affected. Later, this question of a family is dealt with in greater detail.

### **Is it Justified to Touch any Portion of the Land of a Rich Peasant ?**

The Central Committee resolution says that the land ceiling legislation should be such *as would not affect "the rich peasant as a class."*

It goes further to explain, "if say, 90 per cent of holders of a particular size of holdings say 10-12½ acres wet or 20-25 acres dry do not physically cultivate their lands it can be assumed that holders over 10 acres wet or 20 acres dry are broadly, for land ceiling legislations, landlords."

When the Central Committee resolution says that "all the lands of the landlords as defined above (i.e., those who or whose family members do not participate in the major agricultural operations through manual labour), including the land below the ceilings should be taken over", it means that if there are certain landholders, who are physically cultivating their lands, though owning more than the proposed ceiling, such landholders (they are by definition rich peasants) will have to forego the land above the ceiling, for distribution among the rural poor *BUT WILL RETAIN* all the land below the ceiling.

This means that the Central Committee resolution takes enough precaution to see that the rich peasant as a class is not affected, though in the course of broad ceiling laws, in exceptional cases, a few may lose a very small bit of land.

In the name of not affecting these exceptional cases of a few rich peasants, we cannot put the ceiling high and allow 90 per cent of the category, the landlords, to escape the ceiling laws, or get the benefits of owners having land below the ceilings.

To remove the apprehensions that are likely to be created among the small owners, the Central Committee has formulated clearly their rights and demands and has not confused or equated them with the landlords. To this aspect we will come later.

In the stage of People's Democratic Revolution, is it at all permissible to touch any portion of land of any rich

peasant however small it may be? Chinese revolutionary experience shows that it may become necessary.

### **The Chinese Experience**

The Chinese People's Democratic Revolution took place with armed revolutionary forces fighting armed counter-revolution. The agrarian structure is also different in many respects from that of ours. It is necessary for us to understand the rich experience of the Chinese Party with regard to their agrarian revolution and land distribution, but not to copy it mechanically and wrongly. But here to illustrate the point under discussion, we are giving certain extracts from Comrade Mao's writings. (See Appendix I for fuller extracts.)

The May 4 Directive of 1946 and Outline Land Law of China of September 1947 "provide for *equal distribution of land per head*, based on the principle of abolishing the land system of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation and putting into effect the system of land to the tillers. This is a method which most thoroughly abolishes the feudal system and fully meets the demands of the broad masses of China's peasants." ("Present Situation and Our Tasks", *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. IV, Page 164, lines 11-15)

"The reason why, under the principle of equal distribution the surplus land and part of the property of the old-type rich peasants should be handed over for distribution is that the rich peasants in China generally and to a great degree have the character of feudal and semi-feudal exploiters; most of them also rent out land and practise usury and they hire labour on semi-feudal terms. Furthermore, as the rich peasants have more and better land, the demands of the poor peasants and farm labourers cannot be satisfied unless this land is distributed. However, in accordance with the Outline Land Law, rich peasants should generally be treated differently from landlords. In the land reform, the middle peasants show approval of equal distribution because it does not harm their interests. Under equal distribution, the land of one section of the middle peasants remains unchanged and

that of another is increased; only the section of well-to-do middle peasants has a little surplus land, and they are willing to hand it over for equal distribution because their burden of land tax will then be lightened. Nevertheless, in carrying out equal distribution of land in different places, it is necessary to listen to the opinions of the middle peasants and make concessions to them if they object. During the confiscation and distribution of land and property of the feudal class, the needs of certain middle peasants should receive attention." (*Ibid*, page 165, lines 2-23)

In the East European People's Democracies, the seizure of power by the working class had taken place in the context of the Anti-Fascist War, through the joint armed struggles of patriotic forces along with the Soviet Red Army. The working class and the Communist forces had to proceed step by step consolidating their forces, and carrying out land reforms step by step, as the toiling peasants' consciousness and organization developed. Hence, various stages in their revolutionary consolidation and carrying out of agrarian and other social changes towards socialism.

In India, where a bourgeois parliamentary democracy of a sort continues to exist, and the ruling classes come forth with land ceiling legislations, in the name of abolition of landlordism and land to the agricultural labour and the poor peasant, in that context, we are forced to come out with our alternative proposal, in terms of land ceilings, that would lead to the abolition of landlordism and assure land to the peasantry.

### **Does the Target of Our Attack Get Too Much Enlarged ?**

The census of 1961, on the basis of 20 per cent sample of all households or the 1960-61 National Sample Survey of Landholdings, gives a picture which shows that with the Central Committee's suggested limits of land ceilings the target of attack will be less than 5 per cent of the rural households. (See Tables I, II & III in Appendix II)

These charts show that in West Bengal, landholders with

holdings over 15 acres constitute 1.4 per cent of the total working population (workers) in the state while landless agricultural labour owning or cultivating less than one acre constitute 21 per cent. If cultivator households alone are taken, even then, those holding more than 15 acres do not constitute more than three per cent. Only in Burdwan, Birbhum, Maldah, they constitute 4.5 to 5 per cent while in West Dinajpur, they constitute about 8 per cent of the cultivators. The land irrigated in West Bengal is 26.5 per cent. The Kisan Sub-Committee says that the fertility variation except in a few limited areas like in Purulia is more or less the same and they also say that the overwhelming majority who cultivate more than 10 acres irrigated or 15/20 dry do not contribute manual labour. Even if you take 15 acres as the limit of ceiling for the holdings (wet and dry combined), our target of attack will be only 3 per cent of the cultivating households and in the whole population both urban and rural, it is just 1.4 per cent.

According to the National Sample Survey for West Bengal, holdings over 15 acres constitute 1.3 per cent of 46.62 lakhs of rural households, but they own 9 per cent of the total land of 125 lakhs acres. 44.7 per cent households are landless or own less than one acre.

In Punjab and Haryana, 60 per cent of the land is irrigated. The National Sample Survey figures do not give the landholding figures after converting the landholdings to a common factor either in terms of irrigated land or in terms of dry land. They just give holdings as they are today, which may consist both of irrigated and non-irrigated land or only of irrigated or non-irrigated land. Assuming that every holding has 60 per cent irrigated and 40 per cent non-irrigated land, it can be assumed that 20 acres as given in the National Sample Survey would be the ceiling as per the broad suggestion of the Central Committee. In this case, the percentage of holdings of over 20 acres would be 7 per cent out of 34.2 lakh holdings and they occupy an area of 44 per cent of the amount of 190 lakhs acres. There are 54 per cent, i.e.,

18.4 lakh households who are either landless or own less than one acre.

These do not give an alarming picture as certain comrades fear.

It is true that Census or National Sample Survey *on a state-wide basis* does not give a full picture. We have to go if possible to tehsil or thana level to get as near an approximation as possible to a common socio-economic area and find out what would be the holding beyond which in that particular area the landowners do not physically participate in all major agricultural operations and thus come into the category of landlords.

We have census figures up to thana and tehsil level of the size of holdings, though the amount of acreage of each size group of holdings is not given. Similarly, how much of this holding is irrigated or non-irrigated or what kinds of crops are grown in the year and intensity of capital investment, the employment of wage labour, etc., on various sizes of holdings are not given. To that extent, they do not give an exact picture as to who are landlords, what percentage they constitute, etc. Yet, for broad general purposes and to concretise broad propaganda slogans as to what should be the ceiling in terms of landholdings of main categories, irrigated and non-irrigated, these figures would help and should be taken as sufficient basis provided we apply our Marxism-Leninism and our understanding as to who constitutes a landlord and who a rich peasant and demarcate the size of the landholdings on that basis.

Comrades can work it out up to thana level from the 1961 household economic tables, Part III, as well as general population tables, Part IIA, of each state. Of course when the 1971 figures are available, the latest position can also be worked out.

### **The Question of Small Landowners**

As soon as we say the land of the landlords even below the ceiling should be taken over and distributed free to the



agricultural labour and poor peasants, questions are raised: are we going to take away the land of the small landholders who are either forced to give up cultivation because it is uneconomical on account of the small size of the holdings or because they are employed in other professions as factory workers, middle-class low-salaried employees, etc.? The question is posed: if the landlord is defined as one who does not cultivate the land with his own or family manual labour, it automatically means that we would be taking away the land of these smallholders as well.

It is true that the landlords would carry on propaganda that the land of the small landowners who may be employed in factories, in offices, drawing small wages and salaries, would be taken away by the Communists by such land reforms. They would like to protect their own lands under the garb of protecting the land of smallholders. That is why, in order not to allow any such propaganda having any scope of misleading the small landholders against our struggle against landlordism, we categorically say that these small landholders should not be confused with landlords even though in the existing society, they do not cultivate their lands through personal or family physical labour. In their case, we categorically assure that they shall not be dispossessed of their lands and their ownership rights would be guaranteed.

That is why it is imperative that we define clearly to what limit we consider them as small landowners. The Central Committee in its resolution says: "Lands of smallholders owning lands less than half the ceiling but eking out their livelihood in factories, small shops, schools, small government jobs or as ordinary soldiers and junior army officers, even if they are not cultivating their lands (with their own personal manual labour), shall not be taken. But if these lands are leased, then tenants shall have security of lease and pay fixed fair rents only. They (the small owners) will have the option to part with their lands to the Government and the Government shall pay them at the market rate."

Here the Central Committee makes it clear that lands of

the landowners who own less than half the ceiling, in no case, would be taken away; they can be cultivated through wage labour, in absentia, by these small owners or they may be leased out subject to tenancy laws of fair rent and security of tenancy. And the ownership right will be guaranteed and the income on that is also guaranteed to the owners.

If the upper limit of the rich peasant holding is 10 to 15 acres wet or 20 to 30 acres dry, as broadly suggested by the Central Committee, then that is the ceiling which we advocate in the land legislation. Half of this ceiling would be 5 to 7.5 acres wet or 10 to 15 acres dry. This would normally be the limit of the middle peasant in those varying regions, because up to these limits, broadly, these families will be able to cultivate their lands mainly by their personal and family manual labour while the seasonal or wage labour they would be employing is a small proportion. It would be that in almost all the cases, the income they would be deriving from the 5 to 7½ acres wet or 10 to 15 acres dry would be enough to make both ends meet and maintain their minimum existing standard of life in normal years and leave some surplus in good years to be converted even into capital.

Let us assume that the all-India ceiling is 20 acres (wet and dry combined). Then according to the National Sample Survey, 1960-61, the amount of leased land being cultivated by all landholders up to 10-acre holdings (wet and dry combined), that is half the ceiling, is about 20 million acres or 6 per cent of the total operational land in India.

The same 6 per cent figure is arrived at if we calculate on the basis of the 1961 Census 20 per cent Household Sample Survey figures, the number of full tenants and part tenants between 1 and 10 acres and the proportion of the land these tenants hold to total arable land of all sizes of holdings. It is true that all the sharecroppers might not have declared themselves as such before the Census and National Sample Survey enumerators and got themselves recorded. If we include them, too, this percentage would be a little higher.

Even if we assume all this leased land is only from the

small owners (which definitely is not the case, as quite a major portion of leased land is from landlords), the land involved, that is, not being cultivated through manual labour of small owners below the ceiling will be much less than this percentage.

Apart from these leased lands, we do not have figures about the amount of land of the small owners below half the ceiling that are being cultivated by wage labour, in absentia, but it may be even less.

We are not interested in touching this land now or in future. What we are interested in is the land of the landlords, the top 5 per cent who own more than 37 per cent of the land and that is why we should concentrate that *ALL THE LAND OF THESE TOP FEW LANDLORDS* should be taken and distributed. The question of the land of the small landowners even if they are absentee ones should not be confused with those of landlords and we go to assure small owners that their land will not be affected, under any conditions.

What these small absentee owners will do with their lands after the revolution becomes successful, they are free to decide. As the revolution gets consolidated, economic development, full employment and social security get guaranteed, these small owners with the increased democratic consciousness are more likely to part with these lands than stick to them.

### **Regarding Absentee Owners with Holdings over Half but below One Ceiling**

The Central Committee in its resolution says:

“Landholders, who are owning on the day of legislation less than the proposed ceilings but more than half, but who are not cultivating their land by their physical labour, but getting them cultivated by agricultural labour, if they have other professions or means of income, will be allowed to retain only that amount of land that would be enough to make the total income equal that derived from the land ceiling. The excess amount of land would be taken for distribution but they will be paid compensation for such lands.”

Here, too, the Central Committee, keeping in mind the need to forge a broad alliance with all democratic elements, including the rich peasant, in the struggle against landlordism, the big bourgeoisie and imperialism, has laid down guidelines that would protect the genuine interests of these sections of the absentee owners, without giving scope to the landlords to escape and without weakening the democratic struggle for total abolition of landlordism and for taking away all the land of the landlords.

The Central Committee resolution means that these absentee owners (between half and one ceiling), even if they are getting their lands cultivated by agricultural labour and not by their own or family manual labour, (1) if they have no other means of livelihood, whatsoever, they are allowed to keep the land up to the ceiling; (2) if they have other means of livelihood, they are allowed to keep that amount of land that would be enough to make their total combined income (their other income and the income from this land) equal that derived from the land of one ceiling. Only the excess amount of land is taken away from them and not the whole land; (3) for the land taken away from this category of absentee owners, certain amount of compensation is paid, whereas in the case of landlords, no compensation is paid, except rehabilitation grants in cases where some of them find no other alternative means of livelihood.

As such it should be easy enough to allay any apprehension among any democratically inclined individual.

We do not want to extend the same kind of blanket exemption or concession to them as we extend to the small owners with less than half the ceiling. It is true that in these few cases, where the landowners own between half and one ceiling, who do not cultivate by their personal and family manual labour, but lease it or get it cultivated by wage labour, in absentia, much land is not involved, and also they cannot become much of a hindrance to agricultural production or the democratic movement as the landlord class.

But at the present stage of our movement, when we have

to go a long way to achieve revolutionary power and enact real legislation that would abolish landlordism and take away *ALL* the land of landlords for distribution, and when we are still in the propaganda stage, to say that these owners below a certain ceiling would be allowed to keep the land whether they manually participate in cultivation or not, and even if they have other means of livelihood yielding large incomes, then, every landlord, in the course of a short time, would manipulate his holdings and show that he is an owner below the ceiling. This has been the history of land ceiling legislation in our country under the bourgeoisie.

Therefore, we want to focus the attention of the people on one slogan that these landlords who do not manually participate in agricultural operations, and those who have other means of livelihood, will not be allowed to retain any land.

Small owners (i.e. below half the ceiling) do not come into this category and hence they are treated on an entirely different footing. As for the absentee landowners between half and one ceiling certain concessions are sought to be given to them, so as to attract them to the democratic alliance without harming the struggle against landlordism.

### **The Concept of Family**

When we are defining ceiling in terms of a family, we should be clear what we mean by family. The Government of India in its latest land legislations has defined family as a family of five consisting of husband, wife and three minor children. In various land legislations it has made explicit provision that an adult is entitled to hold a separate holding to the extent of the ceiling. The Government by its definition wants to give every adult a separate ceiling and preserve as much land as possible with the landlords' families while creating illusions among the masses that it is proposing a radical land ceiling legislation and drastically reducing the extent of ceiling that existed earlier. As against this, it is correct that the democratic movement must plug this loophole and

not allow, in the name of family, extensive land being retained in the name of different adults, male or unmarried female. That is why the Central Committee has laid down "that a family for the purpose of ceiling is working adult male, his wife and children, whether they are major or minor, of five members. If that family has more members, each additional member is given one-tenth of the ceiling, but in no case, should the total landholding exceed one-and-a-half ceilings whatever extra members are there."

Practically all over India, except in a few regions where the property laws had tended to keep the joint family system intact in considerable measure, single families normally exist today, i.e. male adult, his wife and children. So family must be defined as it normally exists in the country based on adult male, his wife and children, whether major or minor. Every adult child, whether male or unmarried female, merely because they are adults, are not entitled to a separate ceiling. They should be considered as one family. If there are more than five, they are given a little consideration of an extra one-tenth of a ceiling to each extra member, but in no case the total land being allowed to exceed one-and-a-half ceilings for the whole family.

But unless he is physically cultivating the land through his family's manual labour, he is not entitled to retain any land.

But at the same time, the Central Committee takes into consideration "that there are certain regions where the joint family system exists and where large numbers of such joint families are a feature, then such families may be allowed to have each *WORKING* male adult, with his children, major or minor, a separate ceiling. That is, if there is a joint family of say, two brothers or more, each with his own adult sons and grandchildren living and cultivating together, then each brother, his wife, sons and grandsons would be treated as a separate family instead of brothers with all their descendants as one family." Some doubts are raised whether, by allowing even a working adult of a joint family a separate

ceiling, landholders will not get a loophole to keep as many ceilings as there are male adults in a family.

The Central Committee is very clear that the real safeguard against any landlord keeping more land is in the basic and categorical assertion that no family or adult male if he is not actually physically participating in the *major agricultural* operations, is entitled to hold any land. Similarly, it sticks to the principle that the family of an adult male if he is physically participating in major agricultural operations, shall not be deprived of the land and he is entitled to keep land up to the ceiling because it wants to assure all working peasants, whether they are poor, middle or rich, that their lands are not affected by the land ceilings, and their right to ownership and cultivation and enjoying the produce and income are guaranteed.

But if there are joint families which by tradition had continued up till now and if they have not partitioned during the last two decades, if a joint family of brothers and their sons or even grandsons exists, and if these adult brothers are working in major agricultural operations, they are entitled to have a separate ceiling just like any other single family of an adult male where the joint family system does not exist.

Irrespective of what we say, even with the Congress reduction of land ceilings, many of these joint families that might be existing would, certainly, legally partition the land between different partners of the joint family so that each one will have a separate ceiling. We cannot find out and fight effectively these divisions and prevent each partner holding a separate ceiling. But the movement is to be developed with the slogan that no family of a single male adult, if it is not working, is entitled to hold any land and if it is working, it shall not be deprived of it; it is on this democratic basis that we should mobilise all the working peasantry against the landlords.

It is true, when the Government refuses to accept our basic suggestions that no family is entitled to hold any land

unless it is physically participating in all major agricultural operations, then we may move various amendments to restrict a large extent of land being retained by lazy landowners, in which case, one such amendment might be family definition to cover a large number of such benami members. But it will meet the same fate, as our correct basic amendment itself.

### **The Problem of Tenants, Rent Reduction Priority in Surplus Land Distribution**

The Central Committee resolution lays down:

“The right of the tenant to ownership of the land he is cultivating is to be guaranteed, except to those who are leaseholders from small owners.

“If one is a tenant on smallholder’s land, owning less than half the ceiling, and if such a smallholder intends to resume cultivation of his land through his manual labour, then such land under tenancy be equally divided between the tenant and the smallholder owning less than half the ceiling. The tenant will continue to pay fair rent on the portion of the land he cultivates. Where the tenant has already been conferred by law the ownership right, as in Kerala, there the small owner is entitled to get full market value from the Government.

“The fair rent a tenant is to pay should not exceed one-fourth of the gross produce.”

By these sections, the Central Committee clearly says that our Party stands for and campaigns that tenants-at-will (or simply tenants) on the lands of the landlords, as well as on the lands of landowners between half and one ceiling, shall get the ownership right to the lands they are cultivating. As we have already explained earlier the landlords are not entitled to get any compensation and the owners between half and one ceiling will get some amount as compensation. But the tenant shall get the ownership right free and he need not pay any compensation, but only land taxes, like any other peasant owner, to the Government. There is



no right of resumption on any portion of the land, nor any rent to the landlord and to the owner of over half the ceiling.

But the tenants of a small owner (i.e., owning less than half the ceiling) are entitled to security of tenancy, and need pay only a fair rent not exceeding one-fourth of the gross produce. He is not entitled to the ownership right but he is entitled to retain half of the land he is cultivating for eking out his livelihood even if the small owner wants to resume the land for personal cultivation through his family manual labour. He needs to pay only the fair rent on that half portion of land he is cultivating to the small owner.

Some comrades in West Bengal argue that the ownership right to the tenants should not be campaigned for now, but the campaign should only be for hereditary right. They fear that by such campaign, the tenants would become more liable to be evicted than get even security of tenancy leave alone ownership.

They further argue strongly that the question of ownership right to the tenants on the lands of owners between half and one ceiling should not be raised, as it would antagonise these sections, and they would go away from the democratic alliance.

They advance the following argument :

“In West Bengal there are no other tenants except sharecroppers and so far as sharecroppers are concerned, the demand for ownership is an advanced slogan and is unreal. At present we should restrict ourselves to the demand of real security of tenure for them. The demand of ownership, even if it is accepted in legislation, will not give any benefit to the sharecroppers, but will inevitably lead to their eviction. Sharecropping as a system will not end. It will continue in a concealed heinous form. What do we stand to gain by this slogan except making the position of sharecroppers hopeless and pushing the small owners into the camp of the landlords? Sharecropping in our country can only end after the revolution. At present it is better to have open sharecropping than concealed sharecropping.” The same comrades from West Bengal further say that “we are not demanding aboli-

tion of the sharecropping system now as it is unreal. So far as the right of hereditary cultivation, greater share, right of selecting threshing ground, bargadars' right to retain some land in case of eviction, voluntary surrenders, forcible evictions, etc., are concerned, legal provisions are already there."

We have already dealt with those absentee owners between half and one ceiling. Here the tenants must have priority to the land they are cultivating and not the absentee owners. The absentee owners can claim reasonable compensation from the Government for the land they have to surrender to the tenants. We are not touching the ownership right of small owners below half ceiling.

But their real objection to the demand of right of ownership to the tenant on the land he is cultivating is that with this demand the big landholders would be evicting the tenants; and as such, we should not advocate the right of ownership to these tenants and should confine ourselves, till we make our own revolution, to the security of tenancy and fair rent. The big landholders are not going to abide by the law and allow the tenants to keep the leased land hereditarily and be satisfied to receive as fair rent a small portion, either half, one-third, one-fourth or one-sixth. The history of tenancy legislation and movement in the whole of India has shown that even limited protection of security of tenancy for a period of 3 to 6 years and fair rent of 50 per cent of gross produce, leave alone permanent occupancy or hereditary right, or one-fourth gross produce as rent was not honoured and they have resorted to large-scale evictions to avoid even this limited legislation being enforced. The struggle against all forms of evictions has to be waged by the peasant masses through their own organized strength; the legislation would only help them to some extent.

That is why to bring in the question of eviction when we speak of the right of the tenants to ownership of the land he is cultivating of big landholders is completely irrelevant.

In fact, these critics have gone to the extremely ridiculous position of saying, "at present it is better to have open share-

cropping than concealed sharecropping". Consistent with this declaration and argument, they hesitate to popularise among the masses that fair rent should be 3:1. Further, when by a Presidential Act, the Congress Government itself has made such a law, they hesitate to propagate and demand implementation of it on the ground that any such propagation or demand for implementation would hasten the eviction of the tenants by landlords. This attitude, if logically extended, would mean that we should formulate and advance the demands of tenants in such a way as would be acceptable to the landlords and as would not make them feel the necessity of evicting the tenants.

It is a different thing to say that due to the weakness of our movement in any part of a state, we will not be able to get enforced whatever tenancy legislation is there, however, limited it may be, due to the lack of a strong organized tenant and peasant movement and that there we may have to compromise with less than what the tenant is entitled to even under the law. It is also understandable that in areas where our movement is weak, whatever the law may be, in launching struggles, our slogans of action should be such as the tenants of that particular moment, at their particular level of consciousness and organization, feel are realisable while at the same time, educating the peasant masses about their democratic and legal right of a fair rent and other demands. But to hesitate to raise these demands and propagate them when the bourgeois-landlord class Government of the Congress itself is forced to come forward to satisfy the urge and expectation of the masses with such legislation, though only to cheat them, is something queer.

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Certain comrades from Punjab approvingly quote the 1954 Central Committee resolution with regard to the smallholders as correct. But they object to the present resolution of the Central Committee. They say :

"In relation to small landowners who lease out their lands

and take to other professions our stand so far has been that they should be given option either to resume land for self-cultivation or to continue to lease out lands subject to the compliance of the tenancy laws. We have not so far demanded taking away their land.

“In taking this stand, we have taken into consideration three factors: first, these sections are the firm allies of the working class in the present stage of our revolution; second, it is the feudal capitalist exploitation which has forced them to leave their tiny plots of land and to resort to some other professions and third, the peasant is very much attached to his land and will not quit it till he is forced to quit. Here we are dealing with this category.”

Let us examine this objection.

The 1954 Central Committee resolution says, “We must demand that those *landlords* who lease out their lands *even though they may own less than the ceiling* shall have no right of resumption even under the plea of self-cultivation as it would lead to the eviction of cultivators. They may be paid some rehabilitation grant or allotted land from surplus land if they want to take to actual tilling and cultivate and live in peace with the people. This is especially so in those cases of statutory landlords like inamdars, etc., who never have been cultivators for generations”.

Here “the landlords.....even though they may own less than the ceiling” could mean only absentee landowners below the ceiling. The earlier part of the old Central Committee resolution of 1954 mentions that “ceiling should be such as to allow enough income to maintain a person and his family at least at the same standard as that of the rich peasant, but it must not be so high as not to leave enough land for distribution among agricultural labourers and the peasant masses.”

The 1954 Central Committee resolution further says:

“There are smallholders who own less than a family holding (a family holding being in certain cases that amount of holding which gives employment for a single family of an adult

male worker, his wife, with a pair of bullocks employing seasonal wage labour, or in certain other areas, it will be only that amount of landholding which gives a reasonable standard of living) who might have leased out their lands because it was uneconomical to cultivate them themselves or because they might have been forced to take up jobs or trades in towns and villages. They will generally be factory employees, petty traders, low-paid professionals, etc. These are not to be confused with landlords. Their cases are entirely different.

“These smallholders should have the option either to come back and till their land, making it their main profession, or lease it subject to fixity of tenure and reduction of rent as per the tenancy laws, or to sell it, or to take full compensation from the Government at the market price, relinquishing the land to the tenant cultivator. If conflicts arise between these smallholders and these tenants who are equally poor, the kisan movement must strive to bring about some compromise to preserve the unity of these peasant masses. *BUT IN THE CASE OF THOSE WHO HAVE PROFESSIONS WITH INCOMES ENOUGH TO MAINTAIN A REASONABLE STANDARD OF LIFE, THEY SHALL BE PAID COMPENSATION OR ALLOWED TO RECEIVE THE REDUCED RENTS, BUT SHALL NOT HAVE THE RIGHT OF RESUMPTION.*”

From the very definition of family holding given here it is clear that the 1954 Central Committee resolution refers to that section of peasants whom we broadly characterise as middle peasant, because the family labour becomes predominant. Such a small owner, when he leases out his land, can resume it only under certain restrictions. His right of resumption is not absolute. Even the small landholder is categorically denied the right of resumption if he has got other means by which he gets a reasonable standard of life, i.e., the income of a medium peasant.

Further, the position of our Party during all these two decades has been that whenever the right of resumption for the small landholders is given, he shall have to leave a certain amount of land to the tenant so that the tenant will not

be deprived totally of the means of livelihood. As such, to say that they agree with the 1954 Central Committee resolution but at the same time criticise the tentative suggestion made by the Central Committee now is totally untenable. Because the present Central Committee resolution lays down a more liberal provision that those small owners who own less than half the ceiling (it would be nearer to the family holding of the old Central Committee definition) may be given the right of resumption to half the holding leaving the remaining half to the tenants, even if the small owner has enough other means of livelihood.

It is not that the Central Committee is advocating a new understanding in connection with the tenants from what the Party has been following in the past. On the other hand, when the concrete reality and situation force the Party to face this issue, some of our comrades are hesitant to stand even by the earlier understanding of the Party and take up the tenants' cause as against the well-to-do absentee landowners and landlords.

In the name of smallholders, both with regard to ceilings as well as the right of ownership of the tenants to the lands they are cultivating, some comrades want that the land of any landholder below the ceiling should not be touched and they should be assured of their land whether they lease it or whether they cultivate it through wage labour, in absentia. We have already explained how this stand is harmful to our struggle against landlordism.

### **Exaggeration of Tenant Problem**

There is a tendency to exaggerate the dimension of the tenant problem as it now exists, two decades after independence. They depict that the main struggle in the rural areas in defence of the toiling peasantry is the security of tenancy and other rights of the tenants. They think that the mode of agrarian production in our country is still, on a large scale, based on tenancy. In fact, the Kisan Sabha in West Bengal in its reply to the questionnaire says, "The nature of tenancy

is sharecropping and it is widely prevalent though during the last 10 years the number of agricultural labourers has sharply increased. We do not find any decrease in sharecropping. On a rough estimate, about 30 per cent of land is cultivated by this system. The number of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers will be almost equal. Ten years ago, the number of sharecropper families was higher. In many areas, the two categories are interlinked. In some areas, the sharecroppers are greater and in some areas, the agricultural labourers."

We do not agree that after two decades of the Congress legislation with all its talk of security of tenancy and various tenancy acts giving a certain amount of security and certain reduction in the rent rates, the predominant form of tenancy is today sharecropping.

But it is true that in most of the states, all the sharecroppers are not recorded as such in the Government records. They have become tenants-at-will liable to be evicted at any time. As the answer to the questionnaire from West Bengal Kisan Sabha points out, "Eviction is a regular phenomenon. Its nature is mainly change of land from one sharecropper to another. Sharecroppers remain but particular lands change hands. Sometimes lands are taken away from doubtful elements to be given to 'loyal' ones. It means no security for sharecroppers, whatever may be the legal provisions. The organized peasant movement was and is the primary guarantee of security. Most of the sharecroppers are not recorded. There are some who are recorded as bargadars (sharecroppers) but it will be found in many cases that the lands that were recorded in their names are no longer under their possession. They cultivate some other lands."

This concealed sharecropping, whether recorded or not, whether legal or not, is quite a feature in the rural areas. As such, it is an issue with which our agrarian movement should seriously be concerned with. Without mobilising these tenant masses in the first instance for security of tenancy or for hereditary rights, and educating them about their legitimate

rights to ownership of the lands they cultivate, an all-inclusive agrarian revolutionary movement cannot be built up. But we should not confuse this tenancy problem as if that is the predominant issue before the vast rural masses and ignore the tremendous growth of agricultural labour due to pauperisation on the one hand and due to the development of capitalism in agriculture itself. To go on exaggerating the problem of tenancy out of proportion and out of reality is in fact to ignore the need to concentrate on agricultural labour, their demands, their struggles and organization.

It is because of this that questions are raised about what is the main demand of agricultural labourers, land or wages? Or the question, to whom is priority to be given in working out the slogan for distribution of lands?

Before we answer these questions let us examine the extent of tenancy, i.e., tenants-at-will or sharecropping, that exists in India as revealed by the 1961 Census, Household Sample Survey.

In Punjab, according to the 1961, 20 per cent Household Sample Census figures, the full tenants between 1 and 10 acres are 5 per cent of the rural households and part tenants 8.5 per cent making a total of 13.5 per cent as against the rural labour of 25 per cent (of whom 13.0 per cent are agricultural labour and those having less than 1 acre). But even here as per the provisional population table of 1971, the "agricultural labour" increased to 20 per cent as compared to 10 per cent in 1961, on the basis of working males.

Certain comrades from Punjab argue: "In working out the slogan of land distribution in the Central Committee suggestions, neither the reality of the situation is taken into consideration nor the requirements of the anti-feudal front. The right of tenant to ownership is separately mentioned.

"The reality of the situation is that, taking the country as a whole, there is no record of rights for the tenants. This fact is accepted by everybody including the spokesmen of the ruling party. Whenever a surplus is declared they will not be considered as tenants though they were the real tillers



of these lands, because they had been evicted. If the movement for implementation of limited concession is to be developed, these tenants will be in the forefront of such a movement. Therefore, it will help the anti-feudal struggle if we state that surplus lands be distributed to agricultural workers and poor peasants, with tenants on those lands getting priority."

The struggle to defend the security of tenants and even fight for full ownership of the tenant masses of the land they are cultivating against the landlords and big landowners is an elementary task of the kisan workers and the Communist movement. We also know that it may not be possible to preserve these under the capitalist-landlord system and full guarantee is possible only when the system is abolished. Meanwhile, as it happened during the last two decades, due to the weakness of the movement, the overwhelming majority of the tenants have been evicted and they are in most parts of the country either landless agricultural labour, or tenants-at-will (whether recorded or not) trying to get land on lease from one or another landlord, from year to year, and in reality, have been reduced to agricultural labour.

When the struggle for abolishing landlordism and land to the landless agricultural labour and the poor peasants achieves certain limited success and whatever land the movement forces the ruling classes to distribute, at this stage to say that these tenants should have priority in the land distribution over the mass of agricultural labourers and other poor peasants would be disrupting the unity of the rural poor in their struggle for land against landlords itself.

The consciousness of the tenant who has been cultivating a particular piece of land for a number of years and has determination to stick to it and defend it without being evicted is of an entirely different character from that of one who has for years been evicted and has no particular attachment to any particular piece of land. He generally wants land for security of employment and livelihood. For the first category, our movement and our Central Committee have pledged

to defend his right of ownership to the land he is cultivating. Here there is no question of surplus being distributed, because on the land he is cultivating, he has to get ownership. As for the tenants who had been evicted and had become landless they get their share of land along with other rural poor in the course of the struggle against landlordism.

The bulk of the agricultural workers in our country come from scheduled castes. They also are socially oppressed and discriminated against and specific guarantees have to be given to them.

We have been propagating that these socially oppressed sections would have equality in social relations and to guarantee social equality they will be given special preference in land, employment, education, etc. This has always been our Party's stand, both before and after independence. So, the Central Committee has specially and specifically pointed out that harijans and other scheduled castes and tribes get preference in the land distribution.

### **Struggle for Land and Struggle for Wages**

There has been some confusion on this issue. Certain comrades used to argue which was more important in case of agricultural labourers, the movement for land or the movement for wages. Nor is it correct to counterpose that in the struggle for land, agricultural labour is a colleague of others but the struggle for wages is his own.

In fact, the hunger for land is a dominant factor and both the agricultural labour and the poor peasant join the agrarian struggle against the landlord and rich peasant. Till the agricultural labour reaches the consciousness and achieves the organization which enables him to occupy *the land of the landlord*, he is to be mobilised on his partial demands, wages, house-sites, no eviction and wastelands, etc. Even his partial struggles for wages can be successful only if the movement can mobilise the support of the poor and middle peasants and other democratic forces to back them. These wage struggles are to be carried out and intensified till a

permanent solution that would guarantee fair wages and employment throughout the year is achieved by abolishing the land monopoly and land is distributed to him. Today, he gets employment for a few days and whatever increased wages he is able to enforce is mainly during the busy agricultural seasons. In other periods, when there is practically no employment, he is not getting any employment, leave alone enforcing any wage agreement.

The Central Committee Resolution says: "The Party must agitate for fixing fair wages for agricultural labourers and carry on the struggle to improve the wage rates. Struggle for wages must be linked up with the struggle for land and rouse the agricultural labourer's consciousness to fight for land and its distribution."

In the extended meeting of the Central Kisan Council at Palakollu, December 13 to 15, 1972, the Kisan Sabha had categorically come out with the demand for a minimum daily wage rate of Rs. 5 and a monthly rate of Rs. 150 for farm servants, with 8 hours' working day for farm servants which in no case should exceed 10 hours even during busy seasons and 6 to 8 hours for the daily wage labour. It also demanded at least 30 days' holidays in a year for the farm servants.

The problem that faces the kisan movement in our country is not what is more important in case of agricultural labourers, the movement for land or the movement for wages. The problem that still faces us is, how the Kisan Sabha should orientate its work. It is to be mainly on the basis of the demands of the agricultural labourers and poor peasants and not on the demands of the middle and rich peasants for fair prices for their produce, against heavy taxation, and for facilities for improving their agricultural production, etc. While the agrarian movement and the Kisan Sabha organization in the rural areas should take up the demands of the middle and rich peasants, it should essentially orientate itself on developing the movement of the overwhelming majority of the rural masses of agricultural labourers and poor peasants on their specific demands, wages, land, etc. The

hesitation to organize agricultural labour and take up his class demands against the rich peasant and landlord has been a weakness in the Indian kisan movement and also in the Indian revolutionary and democratic movement. Though a considerable change has come about in our cadre, the old practice still persists.

In West Bengal our kisan cadre initiated the seizure of vested lands and benami lands by the mass of agricultural labour and poor peasants during the United Front Governments of 1967-69 and enlarged our influence and base among them. But it is an admitted fact that we had not devoted necessary attention to develop struggles on wages and other demands of agricultural labourers and to develop their organization.

In certain other parts of the country, where our Party has considerable influence among the agricultural labourers like the eastern part of Tanjore district in Tamil Nadu or Kuttanad and certain other parts of Kerala (in Kerala lakhs of homesteads were occupied), or in certain parts of Andhra Pradesh where we have been conducting many struggles for wage increases, in these specific areas, the movement has not made serious efforts to rouse the consciousness of the agricultural labour for distribution of the *land of the landlords of these areas*.

### **Use of Machinery in Agriculture**

The Central Committee's resolution says:

“The agricultural labour movement is opposed to the introduction of tractors and other modern machinery, as it would further aggravate the unemployment among the rural labourers and bring down their wages. This fight against the introduction of tractors and modern agricultural machinery should be linked up with the struggle for abolition of landlordism and land distribution to the landless and the poor peasants.”

Certain comrades raise certain doubts regarding this question:

"The total opposition to the introduction of machinery in agriculture would mean that the Party of the working class advocates the use of outmoded means of production in agriculture. This stand will also result in opposition to the introduction of new technology into agriculture. This will put us in opposition not only to the rich peasant, but also sections of middle peasants. Machinery is not tractors alone, but also tubewells, threshing machines, power-sprayers, bullock-driven seed-drillers, and many other agricultural implements used by peasants.

"We should link our opposition to the introduction of machinery with the concrete requirements of the peasant movement. Where the introduction of machinery directly leads to the eviction of tenants or unemployment of agricultural workers, we should oppose it, but we cannot take a stand of general opposition."

The Central Committee has given this directive because in certain areas in Kuttanad and in Tanjore, where our agricultural labour movement has become a powerful organized factor, the landlords have started introducing tractors on a sufficiently large-scale to counteract the organized agricultural labour movement. This has become an issue of immediate practice. There, our comrades have started opposing the introduction of these tractors. It is in these places also that the Government has started giving easy credits to the landlords to purchase and use tractors. Our comrades in these areas in defence of existing employment and wage rates are bitterly waging struggles against introduction of these tractors.

Depending on the correlation of strength they were able to defend the employment and wage-rates by various permutations and combinations in the temporary agreements they were able to force upon the landlords. In certain agreements, the amount of work which they used to get before the introduction of the tractors was to be guaranteed if the tractor was to be allowed. In certain agreements the total emoluments which they used to get during the particular season

before the introduction of the tractors were to be guaranteed with a certain percentage of increase, irrespective of the hours and time they might be working, if the tractors were to be allowed. Whatever the form of agreements, the struggle against tractorisation is in defence of the existing employment and the existing wages. These are correct struggles.

The Central Committee neither in its suggestion nor anywhere has taken a stand opposing introduction of machinery in agriculture. In fact, the Central Committee is completely aware that whatever the struggles in a particular area we may be able to launch in defence of employment and wages as against the landlords' efforts to cut down the same by introducing machinery, this battle cannot be won finally without the wage-labour and the mass of the toiling peasantry backed by the democratic movement winning the battle against landlordism, abolishing it and taking away all land of the landlords for distribution to the agricultural labour and the poor peasants. That is why the Central Committee stresses that our struggle against introduction of modern machinery "must be linked with the popularisation of the demand of land distribution to the landless". With the land in the hands of the agricultural labour and poor peasant, machinery would be welcome for agricultural labour, as it facilitates his own cultivation.

It is unnecessary to bring in the question of irrigation pumps, power-sprayers, bullock-drawn seed-drillers, or improved iron ploughs. It is not correct to raise the bogey of the middle peasant being affected, as if the middle peasant uses tractors, power-sprayers and modern agricultural machinery as part of his normal agricultural operations, unless they are confusing the rich peasants as middle peasants. The question of improved implements which would be utilised by peasants for their own personal and family labour should not be dragged in here with the large-scale introduction of tractors and modern agricultural machinery which the landlords and a section of the rich peasants are bringing in as

labour-saving devices to suppress the agricultural labour movement in the rural areas.

### **The Basis for Fixation of Prices for Agricultural Commodities**

There is no clear idea how the fair prices for the peasants' agricultural produce are to be fixed. We have been always making the demand that fair prices should be fixed and guaranteed to the toiling peasant masses. We also know that the prices for the agricultural produce have been and are being manipulated in such a way that at the time of harvest they become low while a few months later the prices shoot up due to the market manipulations of speculators and big traders. These sections and the landlords corner the produce through various malpractices immediately after the harvest, and a few months later, sell these commodities at an enormous profit at inflated prices. That is why the demand has been for guaranteed fair prices for the mass of producers at harvest time itself and that the prices should not be allowed to vary in the later part of the year beyond a certain percentage. The prices for retail sale for the consumers with reasonable rate of profit for the middle men and small traders are to be fixed and supplies guaranteed. That is why the demand for the state taking over the wholesale trade in foodgrains has become a common demand of the democratic movement.

But though the general principles have been accepted by our movement and we have been constantly propagating these views, in actual practice, our movement has not been able to have definite guiding lines as to how to fix the minimum fair prices for the peasants. One idea that has been prevalent is that after meeting the agricultural expenses, some reasonable return or profit should be left to the peasant. What should be this reasonable return or profit and to which section of the peasants, has never been clearly defined. Further, how to reconcile the consumers' interest to keep the prices of food and other necessities cheap enough to be within

their reach, with the necessity of the toiling peasant being assured of a reasonable price that would enable him to eke out a decent standard of life.

Even the Central Committee's resolution is to be further concretised by working out more details. The Central Committee's resolution says: "Fair prices should be fixed and guaranteed at the time of the harvest itself, taking the interest of the mass of the peasantry and they be such as to assure a decent living after meeting his agricultural expenses. The retail prices for the mass of consumers of their essential supplies must be within their reach; if subsidies are to be paid by the state, it must be done."

*THE ONE POINT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MAKES CATEGORICAL HERE IS THAT THE PRICES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE FOR THE MASS OF PEASANTRY MUST BE SUCH AS TO ASSURE A DECENT LIVING AND NOT JUST SOME REASONABLE RETURN, OR SOME PROFIT.* But in the course of discussion in the Central Committee itself, questions have arisen what in the opinion of the Central Committee is this decent level of living.

One idea that has been put forward in the course of discussions is that a middle peasant must have at least a minimum income of Rs. 300-400 per month or Rs. 4000-5000 per year at the present level of prices. It is argued that the minimum wage for a Grade IV employee or a factory worker which we are demanding is about Rs. 300 per month as a step towards a need-based minimum wage. At least this must be assured as the return for the total agricultural produce on a farm with a middle peasant who mainly works his farm with his family labour, to enable him in rural conditions to have a reasonable standard of living.

If the upper limit of a middle peasant is taken as 5 acres wet or about 10 acres of reasonably fertile dry land, his produce from this land, of the various crops he grows, must give him this much net income, after meeting agricultural inputs and expenses, as the return for his labour which he can utilise for his family consumption and other expenses. If a particular holding of this size is of one food crop, say,



wheat, rice or millet, the price of this crop, at harvest time, should be so fixed as to give him this net income.

Commercial crops like jute or oilseeds or sugarcane or fruit orchards are more profitable than ordinary food crops. They require also more capital input and are subject to more market fluctuations. Even in these cases, if the peasant-owner cultivates all his holding with this crop, the expenses he would be incurring in terms of input, in terms of extra labour which he has to employ for this intensive cropping apart from his family labour, should be taken into consideration and the net income that will be left should definitely be far more than that he would be getting with a single main food crop. A peasant who works is entitled to get a higher margin of income from these high income yielding commercial crops than from his usual cheaper food crops. These as raw materials give industrialists great profits, and a share of these profits should go to the toiling peasant masses as well.

The extra income which a toiling peasant can earn if he can raise multiple crops or high-income-yielding commercial crops or by subsidiary occupations like dairying, poultry, bee-keeping, vegetables, etc., has to be considered as extra income by which he may have a better standard of life. But the minimum price that should be guaranteed at harvest time for a particular normal food crop should be such as to assure him an income that would give his family a decent living at the present level of prices, at least a minimum net income of about Rs. 4000-5000 a year.

To improve the lot of the poor peasants, the question of further avocations or outright subsidies from the state as relief grants may have to be worked out, but it will not be possible to demand a minimum price for the produce of owners of say, two acres, that would ensure them a minimum livelihood.

Another suggestion that was made in the course of discussion in the Central Kisan Council was: take what the consumer is paying today for various agricultural products, in the finished form, foodgrains, pulses, oils, etc., and work

back on those rates to fix the minimum price which he should get after allowing for various expenses and reasonable margin of profit for middlemen and traders between the producer and the consumer. Why should the peasant be deprived of his legitimate share of the profits at the prices which the consumer is paying today? The argument against this is that today the blackmarketeers, the landlords and the speculators under this system have so manipulated prices that the consumer is forced to pay such burdensome prices; if one is to make demands on the basis of this skyrocketing price, no unity can be developed between the agricultural producer and the consumer, the peasant and the worker.

In this connection, there is also another important aspect in our demand for fair prices for the toiling peasant. Today, it is a fact that because of land monopoly, 40 per cent of the land is in the hands of 5 per cent whom we generally consider as the landlords as they do not do major manual work on the fields. They are the parasitic class. When we demand fair prices that would assure decent livelihood for a middle peasant and if such prices become high for the consumer it does not mean that these minimum prices should be assured even to these landlords. We can certainly raise the demand that the whole of the produce of these landlords be compulsorily procured by the Government for meeting the needs of the people and the economy at prices far less than what we demand for the toiling peasant.

If the landlords who possess and control a preponderant portion of the marketable agricultural produce are forced to hand it over to the state at low prices, it will be economically feasible to assure a fair price for the toiling peasants and essential supplies to the consumers at prices within their reach.

Of course, the capitalist-landlord Government will not accept these schemes nor will its economic system allow it to operate this kind of price mechanism. In fact, today, the minimum prices and procurement prices are all utilised to work against the small peasant producers and in favour of

the landlords, big traders and capitalistic big manufacturers. But the inability of the present system or the Government's refusal to take over the responsibility of guaranteeing fair prices for the toiling peasant and essential supplies to the consumers of prices within their reach should not bar us from raising these demands and mobilising the workers and the peasants, consumers and producers, in a common struggle against the present rulers and the whole system itself.

### **Propaganda Slogans not to be Confused with Concrete Slogans of Action**

One argument that is advanced by the protagonists of approach to ceilings being based on the point of view of partial demand is that "the strength of the peasant movement in our country is such that we cannot advocate radical land ceilings. We must raise slogans that could be achieved or are within the scope of realisation as per our strength and organizations." "Taking into consideration the level of the peasant movement and correlation of class forces in the country, it is necessary for us to advance our alternative proposals on this question."

The Central Committee resolution says :

"The Central Committee reiterates that the central slogan of the agrarian movement must be to 'abolish landlordism, both feudal and capitalist without compensation and distribution of all the lands of the landlords to the agricultural labour and the poor peasant free.'

"This basic demand has to be concretely propagated and the movement and struggles are to be developed towards achieving it. The Congress Government has now come with new legislation on land ceilings, tenancy, minimum wages, fair prices, taxation, etc. They claim that these ceiling legislations would abolish landlordism and enable the agricultural labour and the rural poor to secure land.

"In our general propaganda and on the floor of legislatures when the ruling class Governments bring agrarian legislations, we must put forth counter-proposals, basing on

our programmatic stand, to expose the hollowness and the pitiful character of the ruling class proposals and legislation, especially when they are coming out with their solutions as basic solutions.

“When we move our basic programmatic alternative amendments, and when they are rejected, we have to move various other amendments to get the next maximum possible concessions from the ruling classes, in the concrete reality of legislative strength of democratic opposition, as well as the mass strength of the mass movement outside.

“Whatever legislation is passed, we must develop mass movements to get the beneficial portions implemented and against the harmful provisions.

“No legislation, however limited, under the present ruling classes and corrupt bureaucratic set-up gets implemented, leave alone the basic solutions, unless powerful mass movements are developed.

“We must put forth the democratic demand for elected committees of the agricultural labour and peasants to implement the legislation.

“It goes without saying that basic solutions can be carried out only when the present state is replaced by a People’s Democratic state. In our propaganda and agitation, we must constantly put this before the people.”

The Central Committee demands that we should continuously propagate inside and outside legislatures our programmatic solution for abolition of landlordism and in that connection to concretise who is a landlord in terms of landholdings and that we should demand that ceiling should aim at abolishing this landlordism so that agricultural labour and land-poor peasant can get as much land as possible. Some dub this proposal of the Central Committee as equivalent to creating illusions that through Congress legislations of ceilings, abolition of landlordism can be achieved. Secondly, they confuse the propagation of our basic programmatic solution for abolition of landlordism, both inside and outside the legislature, with immediate slogans of agitation and

action which depend upon the actual level of development and organization of the peasant movement vis-a-vis the ruling classes, in a particular area or a state.

It is correct that we should concretely work out the practical slogans of agitation and action depending upon the level of consciousness and organization of our movement at a particular time, in a particular state or area but this should be coupled with continuous propaganda among the masses that even these partial concrete slogans of action are limited ones, and it is only after achieving our basic programmatic solution that their condition would be really bettered. Some comrades in the name of concretely taking up these slogans of action, refuse to discharge the elementary Communist duty of putting the basic programmatic solution, which we envisage in the People's Democratic stage of our revolution, before the masses. They think that it is enough to merely repeat that unless this bourgeois-landlord Government is replaced by a People's Democratic state and Government, the condition of the people cannot be radically bettered, whereas all our political resolutions again and again stress that on various issues that face the masses while the Congress ruling party comes out with its so-called basic solutions, we have to concretely expose them and put forward our own basic solutions in concrete form as alternative to those being propagated by the Congress.

To avoid any confusion, the Central Committee in its resolution further elaborated it by stating :

"While it is incumbent for our Party to continuously propagate and rouse the consciousness of the toiling masses to organize and fight for these basic solutions of their problems, both from legislative forums and outside, it is also incumbent on our Party, to evolve suitable concrete immediate demands for action. These demands will be formulated from area to area, depending upon the existing consciousness and organization and strength of the concerned sections of the people and also of the broad democratic unity and support that can be mobilised in support of the struggle.

Even if a legal right exists, it may be necessary to move into the action step by step, to get it implemented in practice. In planning actions, they must be for the demands which the people consider immediately within their reach and are prepared to actively fight for. While such immediate actions are carried on, simultaneous, continuous and constant propaganda about the legal and basic rights should be carried on to rouse the consciousness of the fighting masses.

“The Central Committee once again stresses the urgency of concretisation of our programme at state and local levels. It stresses the urgency of orientating our whole Party to base our work on the agricultural labour and poor peasantry and on the basis of that strength, champion and defend the interests of the middle peasant and make him our firm ally and win the rich peasant to our strategic front.”

We are concluding the explanatory note on the latest Central Committee resolution on “Certain Agrarian Issues”. We are anxious that various party units, while carrying out these Central Committee decisions, as our normal practice, should thoroughly discuss them on the basis of their own experience and send us reports as to how far these decisions help them in their practical work, what lacuna they find in these decisions and what suggestions they make to further enrich our understanding and practice on the rural front. Only by sending their rich experiences, on the basis of their practice in implementing these decisions they will help the leadership to imbibe it and impart it to the whole Party. It is only then the whole Party can rapidly advance on this front overcoming its past shortcomings.

## APPENDIX NO. 1

### THE CHINESE EXPERIENCE

**From “Present Situation and Our Tasks”  
by Comrade Mao Tse Tung, December 1947**

“The rear areas of the People’s Liberation Army are much more consolidated now than eighteen months ago. The reason

is that our Party, standing resolutely on the side of the peasants, has carried out the land reform.

“During the War of Resistance Against Japan, our Party, on its own initiative and for the sake of forming an anti-Japanese united front with the Kuomintang and uniting with those who could still oppose Japanese imperialism, changed its pre-war policy of confiscating the land of the landlords and distributing it among the peasants to the policy of reducing rent and interest. This was entirely necessary.

“After the Japanese surrender, the peasants urgently demanded land, and we made a timely decision to change our land policy from reducing rent and interest to confiscating the land of the landlord class for distribution among the peasants. The directive issued by the Central Committee of our Party on May 4, 1946, marked this change. In September 1947, our Party called the National Land Conference and drew up the Outline Land Law of China, which was promptly carried out in all areas. This measure not only reaffirmed the policy set forth in last year’s ‘May 4th Directive’ but also explicitly corrected a certain lack of thoroughness in that directive.

“The Outline Land Law provides for equal distribution of land per head, based on the principle of abolishing the land system of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation and putting into effect the system of land to the tillers. This is a method which most thoroughly abolishes the feudal system and fully meets the demands of the broad masses of China’s peasants.

“To carry out the land reform resolutely and thoroughly, it is necessary to organize in the villages, as lawful bodies for carrying out the reform, not only peasant associations on the broadest mass basis, including farm labourers, poor peasants and middle peasants and their elected committees, but first of all poor peasant leagues composed of poor peasants and farm labourers and their elected committees; and these poor peasant leagues should be the backbone of leadership in all rural struggles. Our policy is to rely on the poor peasants and unite solidly with the middle peasants to abolish

the feudal and semi-feudal system of exploitation by the landlord class and by the old-type rich peasants.

“Landlords or rich peasants must not be allotted more land and property than the peasant masses. But there should be no repetition of the wrong ultra-Left policy, which was carried out in 1931-34, of ‘allotting no land to the landlords and poor land to the rich peasants.’ Although the proportion of landlords and rich peasants in the rural population varies from place to place, it is generally only about 8 per cent (in terms of households), while their holdings usually amount to 70 to 80 per cent of all the land. Therefore the targets of our land reform are very few, while the people in the villages who can and should take part in the united front for land reform are many—more than 90 per cent (in terms of households).

“Here two fundamental principles must be observed. First, the demands of the poor peasants and farm labourers must be satisfied; this is the most fundamental task in the land reform. Second, there must be firm unity with the middle peasants and their interests must not be damaged. As long as we grasp these two basic principles, we can certainly carry out our tasks in the land reform successfully.

“The reason why, under the principle of equal distribution, the surplus land and part of the property of the old-type rich peasants should be handed over for distribution is that the rich peasants in China generally and to a great degree have the character of feudal and semi-feudal exploiters; most of them also rent out land and practise usury and they hire labour on semi-feudal terms. Furthermore, as the rich peasants have more and better land, the demands of the poor peasants and farm labourers cannot be satisfied unless this land is distributed.

“However, in accordance with the Outline Land Law, rich peasants should generally be treated differently from landlords. In the land reform, the middle peasants show approval of equal distribution because it does no harm to their interests. Under equal distribution, the land of one section of the



middle peasants remains unchanged and that of another is increased; only the section of well-to-do middle peasants has a little surplus land, and they are willing to hand it over for equal distribution because their burden of land tax will then be lightened.

"Nevertheless, in carrying out equal distribution of land in different places, it is necessary to listen to the opinions of the middle peasants and make concessions to them if they object. During the confiscation and distribution of the land and property of the feudal class, the needs of certain middle peasants should receive attention.

"In determining class status care must be taken to avoid the mistake of classifying middle peasants as rich peasants. The active middle peasants must be drawn into the work of the peasant association committees and the Government. With respect to the burden of the land tax and of supporting the war, the principle of being fair and reasonable must be observed. These are the specific policies our Party must follow in carrying out its strategic task of uniting solidly with the middle peasants.

"The whole Party must understand that thoroughgoing reform of the land system is a basic task of the Chinese revolution in its present stage. If we can solve the land problem universally and completely, we shall have obtained the most fundamental condition for the defeat of all our enemies." (Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, pp. 163-65)

#### **Editors' Notes on the Above:**

"Subsequently in the implementation some changes were made in the method of equal distribution of land provided in the Outline Land Law of China. In February 1948 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China specified in its 'Directive on the Work of Land Reform and of Party Consolidation in the Old and Semi-Old Areas' that in the old and semi-old Liberated Areas where the feudal system had already been overthrown, there would be no further equal distribution of land, but that the poor peasants and farm

labourers who had not yet completely shaken off the feudal yoke should, if circumstances so required, be given a certain amount of land and other means of production through re-adjustment, by the method of taking from those who had a surplus and giving to those who had a shortage and taking from those who had better and giving to those who had worse, while the middle peasants would be allowed to keep more land than the average poor peasant.

“In areas where the feudal system still existed, equal distribution was confined mainly to the land and property of landlords and the surplus land and property of old-type rich peasants. In all areas, it was permissible to take the surplus land of middle peasants and new-type rich peasant for purposes of readjustment only if this was actually necessary and if the owners really consented. In the land reform in the new Liberated Areas, no land was to be taken from any middle peasant.

“The question of the rich peasants in China’s land reform was a peculiar one arising from her specific historical conditions. China’s rich peasants differed from those in many capitalist countries in two respects: first, they generally and to a great degree had the character of feudal and semi-feudal exploiters and, second, this rich peasant economy did not occupy an important place in the country’s agricultural economy.

“In the struggle against feudal exploitation by the landlord class in China, the broad masses of poor peasants and farm labourers also demanded the abolition of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation by the rich peasants. During the War of Liberation, the Communist Party of China adopted the policy of requisitioning the surplus land and property of rich peasants for distribution among the peasants, and thus satisfied the demands of the masses of poor peasants and farm labourers and ensured victory in the People’s War of Liberation.

“As the war progressed towards victory, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in February 1948

laid down new policies for the land reform in the new Liberated Areas. The reform was to be divided into two stages: in the first stage, neutralise the rich peasants and concentrate the blows on the landlord, primarily the big landlords; in the second stage, while distributing the land of the landlords, also distribute the land rented out by rich peasants and their surplus land, but continue to treat the rich peasants differently from the landlords. (see "Essential Points Land Reform in the New Liberated Areas").

"After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Central People's Government in June 1950 promulgated the Land Reform Law, which provided that in the land reform only the land rented out by the rich peasants should partly or wholly be requisitioned while the rest of their land and property was to be protected. In the subsequent stage of socialist revolution, the rich peasant economy disappeared as the movement for agricultural co-operation deepened and the rural economy developed." (*Ibid*, pp. 174-77)

## APPENDIX II

**Table I** Operational Land holdings—From Census 1961—Household Sample Survey-BX-BXI Tables  
Percentages

State	Total house-holds		Occupation other than cultivation & household industries		Household industry alone		Total		Cultivators						
	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Andhra	83	17	27.5	13.5	5.5	1.5	50.0	2.0	2.3	4.7	4.9	10.0	10.4	13.6	6.0
Assam	93	7	23.0	6.0	2.3	0.6	67.5	0.6	0.4	1.8	3.6	15.5	23.8	15.8	6.6
Bihar	92	8	21.2	6.6	2.1	0.4	68.6	1.0	1.0	3.0	4.0	12.0	16.0	18.6	15.0
Gujarat	73	27	22.0	24.0	4.0	1.0	47.2	1.8	4.7	8.5	6.4	12.0	8.7	7.0	1.6
Kerala	86	14	47.0	12.0	5.0	0.7	33.7	1.5	0.06	0.24	0.4	2.0	4.3	11.1	17.0
M.P.	85	15	18.6	12.0	3.4	1.5	63.0	1.5	3.7	9.5	9.6	17.7	12.6	9.1	2.6
Madras	74	26	27.4	21.5	4.0	2.0	42.7	2.3	0.5	1.5	2.3	7.5	11.4	15.0	6.7
Maha-rashtra	72	28	23.0	24.0	2.7	1.3	47.0	2.0	5.0	8.5	6.4	10.5	8.2	7.7	2.4
Mysore	78	22	20.6	17.3	3.0	1.4	54.5	3.3	4.0	7.5	6.8	14.3	13.1	10.2	2.0
Orissa	93.5	6.5	23.5	5.4	3.5	0.3	67.2	0.1	0.8	3.0	4.2	14.5	18.5	20.8	5.5
Punjab	76	24	29.0	22.0	7.0	1.0	40.0	1.0	3.8	10.1	8.1	11.0	4.5	3.0	0.5
Haryana	78	22	21.5	19.0	6.0	1.5	50.5	1.5	5.4	12.2	11.0	13.8	5.6	3.5	0.5
Rajasthan	83	17	12.4	14.0	3.1	0.9	67.6	2.0	10.0	11.8	9.4	16.2	11.7	9.2	1.2
U.P.	87	13	15.5	11.0	4.0	1.5	67.0	0.8	0.7	3.0	4.4	14.7	18.1	18.3	8.0
W. Bengal	75	25	26.0	23.0	2.0	0.4	46.2	0.8	0.15	1.2	2.3	8.9	12.5	14.2	7.6

Notes : R—Rural  
U—Urban

**Table II** Percentages of different categories of working population based on male workers—Census 1961, in rural and urban areas combined

States	Culti- vators		Over 30 I 2	30-15 acres	15-10 acres	10-5 acres	5-2.5 acres	2.5-1 acres	Less than 1 acre	Agri. Agriculture Rural House- Labour & Other Services hold indus- occupations III IX IV III-IX				Urban* occupa- tions 14
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	II	III	IX	IV	14
Andhra	41	1.8	3.7	4.0	8.0	8.2	10.7	4.7	22.0	5.0	7.5	9.0	15.5	
Assam	65	0.4	1.7	3.5	15.0	22.8	15.0	6.3	4.5	8.5	0.7	7.5	13.8	
Bihar	53	0.8	2.3	3.0	9.0	12.1	14.4	11.4	20.0	4.0	6.0	4.0	13.0	
Gujarat	50	5.0	8.5	6.5	12.0	9.0	7.0	2.0	12.0	1.5	5.0	5.0	26.5	
Kerala	22.5	0.04	0.15	0.03	1.3	3.0	7.1	11.0	13.0	10.0	20.5	4.0	30.0	
M.P.	60.0	3.4	8.8	9.0	16.4	11.6	8.4	2.4	14.0	4.0	4.3	4.3	13.4	
Madras	42.0	0.5	1.4	2.2	7.0	10.3	14.0	6.3	15.0	3.3	9.2	4.5	26.0	
Maharashtra	40.0	4.0	7.0	5.3	8.6	6.8	6.3	2.0	18.0	3.0	4.0	4.0	31.0	
Mysore	53.5	3.7	7.0	6.7	13.0	12.2	9.5	1.9	12.5	3.0	5.0	5.0	21.0	
Orissa	60.0	0.7	2.6	3.7	13.0	16.5	18.5	5.0	13.0	2.0	10.0	5.0	10.0	
Punjab Dts.	47.0	4.3	11.5	9.3	12.6	5.2	3.4	0.6	10.0	1.0	8.0	6.6	27.4	
Haryana Dts.	57.0	6.0	13.4	12.1	14.7	6.2	3.9	0.6	7.0	0.8	7.5	6.0	21.5	
Rajasthan														
W.	63.0	10.00	11.6	9.4	16.0	11.6	9.2	1.2	5.0	1.0	6.0	3.0	22.0	
E.	68.0													
U.P.	64.0	0.7	3.0	4.2	14.0	17.2	17.2	7.6	9.0	0.6	5.0	6.3	15.0	
W. Bengal	40.0	0.1	1.0	2.0	7.6	10.8	12.0	6.4	14.5	4.4	2.6	6.0	33.5	

Note : 1. Percentages of cultivators of different size holdings have been calculated from Table I, proportionately to the working male cultivators' percentages in this Table II.

2. Rural Services mean other services in rural areas as given in Census Category IX.

\*Urban occupations : allied agricultural occupations, household industries and other services in urban areas plus all workers in construction, communication, commerce and trade and manufacturing industry located both in rural and urban areas.

Table III

Extent of tenancy : percentages of owner-cultivators, tenants and rural labour (all percentages) based on 20 per cent Household Sample and other tables, 1961 Census

States	Rural Households	Cultivators 10 acres & Over			Cultivators 10—5 acres			Cultivators 5—1 acres					
		T	a	b	c	T	a	b	c	T	a	b	c
1	2	3			4			5					
Andhra	100	13.2	9.7	0.5	3.0	11.5	8.6	0.6	2.3	28.0	22.5	2.2	3.3
Assam	100	6.1	4.3	0.3	1.5	16.8	10.7	1.1	5.0	42.2	25.7	7.5	9.0
Bihar	100	5.6	5.2	0.1	2.3	14.9	8.1	0.5	5.3	36.2	24.8	1.7	9.7
Gujarat	100	35.9	22.2	0.6	13.1	15.5	13.1	0.6	1.8	20.6	18.0	1.2	1.4
Kerala	100	0.77	0.24	0.28	0.25	2.03	0.77	0.73	0.53	17.3	8.0	6.3	3.0
M.P.	100	28.6	20.6	1.0	7.0	20.4	16.0	1.0	3.4	6.5	2.0	2.0	2.5
Madras	100	5.6	4.5	0.2	0.9	9.8	7.5	0.6	1.7	33.9	25.6	4.0	4.3
Maharashtra	100	26.4	20.6	1.0	4.8	13.9	11.5	0.6	1.8	21.1	16.3	2.4	2.4
Mysore	100	23.2	15.0	0.8	7.4	17.6	12.7	1.2	3.7	28.2	20.6	4.4	3.2
Orissa	100	8.8	7.1	0.2	1.5	15.2	11.5	0.4	3.3	41.3	31.8	2.5	7.0
Punjab	100	31.7	17.5	2.6	11.6	16.0	7.1	2.6	6.2	10.8	6.4	2.2	2.2
Haryana	100	35.5	18.0	4.5	13.0	17.0	8.0	3.0	6.0	11.5	7.0	2.5	2.0
Rajasthan	100	36.0	31.7	1.0	3.3	18.6	16.5	0.7	1.4	23.9	21.5	1.4	1.0
U. P.	100	9.3	8.7	0.1	0.5	17.0	15.3	0.3	1.4	42.0	37.2	1.5	3.3
W. Bengal	100	4.9	3.6	0.2	1.1	10.8	7.0	0.3	3.5	35.2	22.0	5.4	7.8
All-India	100	14.5	11.3	0.5	2.7	14.4	11.0	0.7	2.7	31.7	24.0	3.0	4.5

Note : T = Total percentage of the particular size of holdings to total rural households. a = owner-cultivator; b = full tenants; c = part leased and part owned. II, III, IX Economic categories in census.

Re : Tenants : 1. Upto one acre operational holdings, the full tenants do not constitute more than 1 per cent except in Kerala (5.3) and in Assam, Bihar and Madras about 2 per cent. Part tenants up to one acre also constitute less than 1 per cent except in Bihar where they are 2 per cent. Their main source of income will be more from wage-labour than from land. They better be clubbed along with agricultural labour.

2. Tenants between 1 and 5 acres, full or part tenants are in Assam (16.5 per cent); West Bengal (13.2 per cent); Bihar 11.4 per cent; Kerala and Orissa about 9.5 per cent; Madras and Mysore about 8 per cent and in all other states less than 5 per cent.

3. Taking all tenants, between 1 and 10 acres, full or part tenants, together they are only, in Assam 22.6 per cent, in Bihar and Bengal 17 per cent and in Mysore, Orissa, Punjab-Haryana about 13 per cent. In all other states less than 5-10 per cent.

Table III Contd.....

Table III Contd.....

States	Rural Household	Cultivators below 1 acre			Ag. Labour	Allied occupations	Rural Service	Total rural Labours I, II III & IX	Tenant between 1-10 acres	
		T	a	b					c	Full
			I		II	III	IX	10	(b)	(c)
			6		7	8	9	10	11	11
Andhra	100	7.0	6.3	0.5	0.2	25.0	7.0	43	2.8 +	5.6
Assam	100	7.0	4.5	2.3	0.2	5.0	8.2	30	8.6 +	14.0
Bihar	100	16.0	11.6	2.3	2.1	22.0	7.0	49	2.2 +	15.0
Gujarat	100	2.1	1.9	0.2	.04	15.0	6.7	25	1.8 +	3.2
Kerala	100	18.7	12.3	5.3	1.1	15.0	24.0	68	7.0 +	3.5
M. P.	100	3.6	2.4	0.4	0.8	16.0	5.0	38	3.0 +	5.9
Madras	100	8.5	6.3	1.7	0.5	17.7	12.0	41	4.6 +	6.0
Maharashtra	100	3.1	2.2	0.7	0.2	24.3	5.3	36	3.0 +	4.2
Mysore	100	2.3	1.5	0.7	0.1	14.8	6.3	27	5.6 +	6.9
Orissa	100	5.8	5.0	0.4	0.4	16.0	11.0	35	2.9 +	10.3
Punjab	100	0.7	0.5	0.1	0.1	12.1	10.6	25	4.8 +	8.4
Haryana	100	0.5	0.5	—	—	8.4	9.5	19	5.5 +	8.0
Rajasthan	100	2.5	1.3	0.9	0.3	4.0	5.0	14	2.1 +	2.4
U. P.	100	9.2	8.1	0.7	0.4	10.0	7.0	26	1.8 +	4.7
W. Bengal	100	10.0	8.0	1.4	0.6	20.0	8.0	44	5.7 +	11.3
All-India	100	7.5	5.9	1.1	0.5	16.0	8.0	35	3.7 +	7.2

4. As against this agricultural labour along with those with less than 1 acre constitute 20-30 per cent except in Assam (5 per cent), Haryana and Punjab, where they constitute 9-13 per cent. In Rajasthan, they constitute 6.5 per cent. Here all those who may have holdings even up to 5 acres in certain desert areas and in certain other non-fertile places upto 2½ acres, may be earning their livelihood by wage labour.

Further, if we include all other categories of rural labour as in allied agricultural operations, fishery, forestry, dairying, plantations and other rural services, categories III and IX, in total rural labour vary from 25 to 40 per cent. In Kerala, the figure is 68 per cent. This may be due to cashew, coir and a high percentage of other rural services.

Main point to note is that rural labour in practically all states are two to three times that of tenants who have operative holdings between 1-5 acres, whether it is wholly leased land or part leased and part owned.

These average calculations made on state-wide basis is to give a very broad idea. In fact, conditions vary from tehsil to tehsil and even village to village. From census figures we can get a broad idea of tenants, different categories of landowners upto tehsil level. Kisan and political workers must have a more precise picture of each tehsil and village where they may be working.

National Sample Survey, 1960-61 (Landholdings)

State	Over 30 acres					Between 20—30 acres					Between 20—10 acres						
	Households		Acres per H. Hold	Average		Households		Average		Households		Average		Households		Average	
	No. (000)	%		000 acres	(d)	(e)	No. (000)	%	000 acres	(d)	(e)	No. 000	%	000 acres	(d)	(e)	
Andhra	113	1.9	6079	25.7	53.8	141	2.4	3425	14.2	24.3	404	6.8	5587	22.9	11.3		
Assam	2	0.1	108	2.0	54.0	7	0.3	153	2.8	21.9	76	3.7	1093	18.6	14.4		
Bihar	56	0.7	2700	11.0	48.2	98	1.3	2285	9.3	23.3	389	4.9	5154	20.9	13.2		
Gujarat	125	5.1	5865	29.8	47.0	161	6.1	3934	20.1	24.6	368	14.1	5167	26.4	14.0		
Kerala	12	0.4	832	21.2	69.3	10	0.3	247	6.2	24.7	43	1.6	585	15.0	13.6		
Madras	22	0.4	1128	9.0	51.3	32	0.6	735	5.9	23.0	178	3.1	2344	18.6	13.2		
Mysore	159	4.6	7438	32.2	46.5	146	4.3	3485	15.6	23.9	387	11.2	5306	23.0	13.7		
Maharashtra	329	6.8	16922	41.3	51.4	281	5.8	6828	16.7	24.3	670	14.2	9475	23.1	14.6		
M. Pradesh	258	4.7	12980	29.1	50.3	275	5.0	6991	15.1	24.3	905	16.6	12603	28.5	14.0		
Orissa	20	0.7	892	8.2	44.6	39	1.4	965	8.8	24.7	181	6.2	2424	22.0	13.4		
Punjab & Haryana	108	3.1	4926	26.0	45.6	134	3.9	3312	17.6	24.7	422	12.2	5922	31.3	14.0		
Rajasthan	260	8.7	14300	44.5	55.0	196	6.6	4901	15.1	24.5	470	15.8	6612	20.2	14.1		
U. P.	106	0.8	4966	10.2	47.0	154	1.1	3647	7.4	23.7	759	5.5	10217	20.8	13.4		
W. Bengal	2	0.1	91	0.8	45.5	16	0.4	402	3.2	25.1	206	4.5	2614	21.2	12.7		
All-India	1583	2.3	79281	24.4	50	1695	2.4	41142	12.7	24.2	5500	7.9	75390	23.2	13.7		

Table IV Contd.....



Table IV Contd.....

State	Between 10 and 5 acres					Between 5 and 2.5 acres				
	Household		Acreage		Acres per H. Hold (e)	Household		Acreage		Acres per H. Hold (e)
	No. 000 (a)	% (b)	000 Acres (c)	% (d)		No. 000 (a)	% (b)	000 acres (c)	% (d)	
Andhra	657	10.8	4471	18.7	6.8	750	12.5	2699	11.2	3.6
Assam	259	12.5	1746	32.2	6.7	452	21.9	1652	30.5	3.7
Bihar	932	12.0	6413	26.3	6.9	1275	16.2	4569	18.7	3.6
Gujarat	408	14.5	2797	14.3	6.9	330	12.5	1275	6.5	3.9
Kerala	89	3.4	614	15.7	6.9	181	6.5	625	16.0	3.5
Madras	487	8.4	3369	26.7	6.9	804	13.7	2896	23.0	3.6
Mysore	553	16.4	3893	16.9	7.0	606	18.0	2242	9.7	3.7
Maharashtra	664	14.0	4808	11.7	7.2	560	11.7	2087	5.1	3.7
M. Pradesh	1104	20.4	8022	18.0	7.3	826	15.2	3048	6.9	3.7
Orissa	471	15.8	3300	30.0	7.0	611	20.4	2278	20.7	3.7
Punjab & Haryana	437	12.8	3260	17.2	7.5	256	7.5	1030	5.4	4.0
Rajasthan	584	19.7	4226	13.0	7.2	489	16.3	1801	5.6	3.7
U. P.	1984	14.2	13754	28.1	7.0	2828	20.2	10117	20.6	3.6
W. Bengal	604	13.1	4146	33.4	6.9	958	20.6	3493	28.2	3.6
All-India	9369	13.5	65954	20.3	7.0	11153	16.0	40608	12.5	3.6

Table IV Contd.....

Table IV Contd.....

	Between 2.5 and 1 acre					Below 1 acre				
	Households		Acreage		Acres per H. Hold (e)	Household		Acreage		Acres per H. Hold (e)
	No. 000	%	000 Acres	%		No. 000	%	000 acres	%	
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	
Andhra	898	15.0	1446	6.0	1.6	3026	50.6	337	1.4	0.11
Assam	359	17.6	646	12.0	1.8	911	44.0	108	2.0	0.12
Bihar	1556	19.7	2564	10.4	1.6	3569	45.2	839	3.4	0.24
Gujarat	208	7.9	354	1.8	1.7	1019	38.8	54	0.3	0.05
Kerala	373	14.5	566	14.5	1.5	1856	72.2	443	11.4	0.23
Madras	1030	17.6	1716	13.6	1.7	3306	56.3	401	3.2	0.12
Mysore	293	8.7	530	2.3	1.8	1223	36.3	66	0.3	0.05
Maharashtra	434	9.0	741	1.8	1.7	1845	38.5	131	0.3	0.07
M. Pradesh	532	9.7	887	2.0	1.7	1543	28.4	187	0.4	0.12
Orissa	589	19.7	983	9.0	1.7	1055	35.6	155	1.5	0.14
Punjab & Haryana	225	6.5	408	2.1	1.8	1841	54.0	84	0.5	0.05
Rajasthan	280	9.4	499	1.5	1.8	696	23.4	73	0.2	0.10
U. P.	2980	21.2	5122	10.5	1.6	5221	37.0	1157	2.4	0.22
W. Bengal	817	17.5	1415	11.4	1.7	2059	44.7	248	2.0	0.12
All-India	10795	15.5	18260	5.6	1.7	29410	42.3	4334	1.3	0.15

National Sample Survey of Landholdings, 1960-61

States	Size of holdings over (acres)	No. of Households (000)	Acreege (000)	Land Left with big land-holders	Surplus over "Ceiling"	No. of households (000)	Below 2.5 acres					Total of b+c+d
							3	4	5	6	7	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Andhra	20	254	4.3	9504	40.0	5080	4424	3924	0.45	1.10	1.30	2.85
Assam	10	85	4.1	1254	23.4	850	404	1270	0.60	0.32	0.67	1.59
Bihar	12.5	354	4.5	8028	32.6	4465	3563	5125	0.66	0.70	0.87	2.23
Gujarat	30	135	5.1	5865	30.0	4050	1815	1227	0.33	1.50	3.30	5.13
Kerala	10	65	2.3	1664	42.4	650	1014	2829	0.45	0.45	0.30	1.20
Madras	10	232	4.1	4207	33.5	2320	1887	4336	0.50	0.44	0.53	1.47
Mysore	30	159	4.6	7438	32.5	4770	2668	1516	0.40	1.80	3.10	5.30
Maharashtra	30	339	6.8	16922	41.3	10170	6752	2279	0.40	2.95	4.45	7.80
M. Pradesh	30	258	4.7	12980	29.0	7740	5240	2075	0.50	2.50	3.70	6.70
Orissa	12.5	154	5.4	3301	30.2	1925	1376	1644	0.70	0.84	1.11	2.65
Punjab-												
Haryana	25	116	4.8	6534	34.5	2900	3634	2066	0.24	1.75	1.40	3.40
Rajasthan	30	260	8.7	14300	44.6	7800	6500	976	0.60	6.7	8.0	15.30
U. P.	12.5	661	4.8	14853	30.3	8263	6590	8201	0.76	0.80	1.0	2.56
W. Bengal	10	224	5.0	3107	25.2	2240	867	2876	0.60	0.30	0.90	1.80

Note : 1. Keeping in view the percentage of big landholders to the total households should not normally exceed 5 per cent, the size of holdings of big landholders varies from state to state. In Rajasthan, holdings over 30 acres constitute 8.7 per cent. If all the lands

Contd Table V.....

*Contd Table V.....*

of these big landholders in Rajasthan are taken, then every agricultural rural householder in Rajasthan can have a minimum 10 acres each. Similarly, in Gujarat, Mysore, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, every rural agricultural household can have a minimum holding of 5 acres. For Kerala those who have holdings over 10 acres constitute only 2.3 per cent holding 42.4 per cent. Its agrarian structure seems to have special characteristics, just like Rajasthan, in an opposite direction.

2. If the land below ceilings is left to the big landholders, the amount of land that would be lost for the labourer and the poor peasant in almost all the cases is more than what he gets from mere "surplus land" distribution per household, sometimes even double.
3. These figures worked out above should be taken only as broad averages. When actual ceilings are fixed, it is no use fixing them for all the states uniformly, nor even for a state as a whole. These have to be worked out on the basis of the demarcation between landlord and rich peasant depending on irrigation, fertility, crop-pattern, agrarian socio-economic conditions for different regions, from concrete study and experience—in terms of land. The Central Committee's suggestion gives broad limits of the ceilings in terms of irrigated and non-irrigated. It is for each State Committee to work out detailed ones basing on the actual position in the rural agrarian situation.

## **Immediate Organizational Tasks\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its Muzaffarpur Session on March 9-15, 1973**

At the Ninth Congress of our Party a draft resolution on the State of Party Organization was presented. The draft itself and the contributions made by delegates on it expressed grave concern at the organizational weaknesses noted in the Political Resolution in the following words :

“Our Party must recognise its present weaknesses in order to overcome them quickly. Compared to the needs of the situation, the organized strength is not up to the mark. The quality of Party membership, the ideological equipment—all these require to be strengthened in a great measure. In fact, there is a hang-over of the old past in many of our activities and actions.”

These weaknesses of the Party in the matter of organization stand in sharp contrast to the achievements of the Party in the field of ideological, political and mass struggles. As the Political Resolution of the Congress noted :

“Our Party has been able to adopt a correct Marxist-Leninist line in our country, and has pursued it against tremendous odds. Attacked from the left and the right, we have held our own, remaining loyal to our people and to our class, applying Marxism-Leninism to the concrete situation in our country. The results are there for all to see. Though under attack, ours is the only Party that stands today firmly

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\*Published as a booklet in March 1973. This document is known as Muzaffarpur Resolution

against the onslaught of the ruling class, refusing to haul down the banner of Marxism-Leninism”.

The Ninth Congress entrusted the Central Committee with the task of overcoming this lag between the Party's achievements in the field of ideological, political and mass struggles and its weaknesses in the field of organization, and with this purpose finalising a resolution on organization, taking due note of all the contributions made at the Congress.

It is necessary to stress once again that, to carry out the political-tactical line evolved by the Ninth Congress, in order to tackle the current economic and political situation in our country, the overcoming of the weaknesses in our party organization has to be tackled urgently. It is necessary to remind ourselves about Comrade Stalin's exhortation :

“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 organized, on the organization 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.

“After the correct political line has been laid down, organizational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure”.

In spite of the C. C. Resolution of 1967, “Our Tasks on Party Organization”, and in spite of the Political-Organizational Report to the Cochin Congress of our Party, pinpointing certain of those weaknesses and making certain suggestions, it is to be admitted that we have not yet been able to overcome them.

Our failure to take up seriously the organizational task both of the party level and in the mass organizations is reflected both in the states and areas where we are a really strong political and mass force as in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura, and in most of the other states or areas where

our movement is weak as in the Hindi-speaking or other states. This is reflected even in the enlistment of membership of the Party and in the mass organizations.

Further, our Party has been facing growing repression in different states, where it has been heading the developing mass struggles. The semi-fascist terror it had to face in West Bengal, the continued terror and denial of any democratic rights for our Party, trade union and other mass functionaries to live and work freely in certain areas of West Bengal, is clear warning of what we should expect from the Congress ruling classes. As such, it becomes an absolutely urgent task to develop our party organization in such a way as it could face the enemy onslaughts and develop the revolutionary mass movement in face of every twist and turn in the situation.

### *Section One*

#### **UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT AND AREAS OF PRIORITY**

One of the crucial factors and weaknesses in the revolutionary movement in our country is the tremendous uneven development of our Party, the mass organizations and the democratic movement. Taking advantage of this factor, the ruling classes have been able to concentrate their fire and repression, during the last 25 years of their rule, again and again, on the advanced pockets and areas, or on the advanced sections and suppress them brutally. Even now the ruling Congress party has resorted to rigging of elections and semi-fascist terror in West Bengal, while it has been able to retain its mass base in the rest of the country with "tall promises" of "garibi hatao," etc. During the last one year, in spite of the tremendous growth of unemployment, soaring prices, growing misery of the masses, the rapid disillusionment that is growing among the people who were earlier taken in by Indira Gandhi's tall promises, the weakness of our Party and other democratic forces in vast portions of our country makes it very difficult to fight back the ruling party and its drive to one-party dictatorship.

One of the biggest problems facing the democratic movement, and especially our Party, is how to meet this situation. How to continuously develop and safeguard the movement in the advanced areas till the movement in the whole country reaches a stage when a countrywide offensive against the ruling classes can be successful? What kind of political mass and organizational tasks our Party should undertake in stronger areas, as against those in weaker areas?

However correct political and organizational tactics we may adopt in our strong states, the movement in those areas will continue to face serious difficulties and danger of being suppressed unless the democratic movement in the weaker states is developed fast to a position where it can defend effectively these movements or at least to a position where it makes it impossible for the ruling classes to concentrate all their repressive state power to liquidate those strong political bases of the democratic movement.

Further in the weaker States and areas, by the very factor of the limited strength of democratic forces, it will be a far more difficult and slower task to overcome the disruptive reactionary tactics of the ruling classes. Here, with the limited number of party cadre available for building the mass movement and party organization, we must carefully deploy our cadre so as to get the maximum benefit and rapid development. Here we have to lay more stress on building united mass actions, united work with the other mass organizations under the control of other left and democratic parties and closer relations with such parties and forces. Our support to build united mass activity or closer political relations will get response and achieve greater successes only to the extent we become an independent force.

We may not achieve this, in the beginning, on a statewide or even on area-wide basis. But we must concentrate to the maximum extent possible at least in a few key areas and strive to become a mass force there if we are to make any real advance.

Our tactic in the face of this very uneven development of



the movement must be to consolidate and extend to contiguous areas from the existing states, and develop them as wider and wider mass bases; while in the weaker states or areas, select the key centres or fronts to begin with and link these centres with the neighbouring strong centre till we have a wider area where we can really function as a powerful mass and political force.

So, "the first and foremost task before every state unit is to fix up the priority areas in each state and in each region of a state; or in each district, groups of villages or centres.

"The factors to be kept in mind in concretely fixing up these priority areas, keeping the principles and direction of our work as suggested in the C.C. Resolution on "Tasks on Party Organization" are :

"(i) It must be one of the key industrial, educational and administrative centres in the state or district.

"(ii) There must be already a certain basis for our Party, or certain number of cadres of our Party in that centre, who can take up some systematic work among the workers and students, to start with.

"If no such cadre or base exists in that priority centre, then wherever we exist at present, in urban areas or rural areas, in whatever strength, from these centres, select the relatively strongest areas amongst them from which we can reach in course of long-time patient work, these industrial and administrative centres on one side and on the other side, link up with scattered areas within reach so as to develop a contiguous belt in the countryside, either in that state or in the neighbouring state till we can extend to strategic areas. Develop these areas in such a way as to make them reasonably strong and extensive as to give enough scope for successfully defending our movement doggedly even for relatively long periods.

"(iii) Even when we have some key (or big) industrial and educational and administrative centres in some states as the focal point of our activity and organization, to sustain and develop the movement and organization even in these

industrial and educational centres, it must be coupled with developing kisan work round these industrial and educational centres to larger and larger areas in a contiguous belt. Without developing such kisan work, especially work among the agricultural labour and poor peasantry, there can be no development and defence of the people's partial struggles either in the 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 the 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, organization and on elementary partial struggles or elementary demands of the people in a total and narrow sphere.

"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 the working class, too, the priority is for key and major industries and then the scattered small-scale or household industries." (*Tasks on Party Organization*, pp.51-52)

The present practice of roaming all over the state or all over a district in the fond hope of developing statewide movements must be given up, exaggerating our present influence and capacity and organizational possibility. It is a question of deploying the now available cadre in the best way to produce most beneficial and rapid results for our Party and movement and not run after mirages.

When we are concentrating on key industries, we begin first on these key industries in the priority areas and develop neighbouring peasant belts before we try to spread and extend the organization even in those key industries on a statewide basis.

It is true that we cannot give up whatever few units we may have, however scattered, nor can we transfer all these party members from these areas, as an army command can do, but while keeping contact and helping them to the extent possible, we must try to deploy as many developed cadre as would be willing and politically necessary to these key priority areas. In these scattered areas, work has to proceed on low key, as a secondary work, to the extent these comrades there can work on their own with whatever help the leadership can extend, after attending to the priority areas first.

State Committees must immediately fix up such priority areas in consultation with the P.B.

**Priority of areas also means concentration and developing all around, all front movements in these areas**

This concept of priority areas and developing them first as political bases from which the revolutionary movement can be extended and defended better, will become a reality if the whole Party takes it up seriously. There is no use accepting this in words, but at the first opportunity running after every part of the state and dispersing cadres all around.

It is no use, in the name of developing a statewide trade union movement, even in the key and basic industries, the Party dispersing its energies throughout the state. T.U. work in that priority area means beginning with key industries and spreading to other industries in that area, spreading among the peasantry all round, and developing work among the students, starting from the colleges and to secondary classes of high schools, than taking up T.U. work throughout the state. Work among railway and road transport or other strategic industries means priority to these in these priority areas and expansion of these throughout the state gets secondary attention, after other fronts in the priority area are looked after and in no case at the cost of other fronts in the priority areas.

The present tendency of totally neglecting work among the peasantry and other sections of the people, in that industrial hub and city and its surrounding areas and only thinking in

terms of trade union extension in some farther away centres, would not help either the politicalisation of the working class or building the alliance of workers and peasants, nor does it become the basis for a broad people's front.

The same wrong tendency persists in our party units in different states at different levels in refusing to take up work among the students as a serious and important job. The tendency persists that if the Party is able to develop T.U.s and secondly, kisan sabhas, then automatically the student, youth and women would rally behind the movement. It comes out of an utter failure to see that even to develop strong T.U. and kisan movements, on the correct revolutionary basis, the Party must devote enough attention, deploy enough cadre and resources, to work among these sections.

It is true that the work among women and youth is auxiliary to that of developing class organizations of workers and of the peasantry. It is also true that unless our women's organizations and youth organizations basically do not take up the work and the organization among the women and youth of working class and peasantry, they would remain ineffective bodies hanging in the air. But after a certain development of the working class and peasant movement, neglect of these sections would become a big hindrance to the further growth of these very same class movements. Sometimes, it may become necessary to take up work among youth and students and develop their organizations as preliminary steps to go over to the workers and peasants.

But when we are stressing the importance of developing these priority areas, as all-round mass and political bases, it is a consequence of the present reality, of tremendous uneven development and of availability of limited number of political cadre for our Party. These are not eternal basic principles of revolutionary tactics. We must carefully watch the development of people's movement led by different political parties or of a spontaneous character, and try our best to keep in touch with the militants and cadre thrown up in those movements and make all possible efforts to draw them

nearer to us, without our main work in our priority areas being sacrificed. As new cadre, and new areas of political and mass upsurge develop, we must be ready to recast and regrade our priority areas, so that our movement can really become more effective and develop more rapidly.

Fixing the priority areas and developing cadres and resources to develop them is one step to consciously develop our revolutionary movement on the basis of our political and mass slogans and actions.

But at the same time, unless the weaknesses in our party functioning, in our party organization are overcome, our work in these areas, too, will not be really fruitful.

Then what are those weaknesses that we should immediately attempt to overcome.

### *Section Two*

#### **SOME WEAKNESSES IN OUR PARTY ORGANIZATION AND IMMEDIATE STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO OVERCOME THEM**

##### **1. Overcome the weaknesses in recruiting and renewal of party membership**

(a) *Instability in membership* : Every year, there is a large drop-out of party membership, far exceeding the permissible limit of 5-10 per cent, sometimes exceeding 20 per cent and even reaching 30 per cent in certain districts and states; a large percentage of candidates also drop out. This indicates the looseness in recruiting and, even after recruiting, failure of the party organization to educate and train and activate them, by specially allotting jobs and checking them.

b) *Membership dues and levy collection* : As has been reported by most of the states, annual renewal fee of one rupee is not being paid by quite a large number of party members on their own initiative, within the time fixed for such renewal. It is only when the local organizer repeatedly goes to the members and pressurises them, that they pay the dues.

Similarly, levy collection is not being implemented. Most of the states reported collections from 25 to 50 per cent of

party memebtrs. It is mostly and regularly collected from salaried employees, but from the members coming from the peasant families and others, it is very irregular.

The renewal of party membership has been practically reduced to one of collecting the annual fee of one rupee, whereas it is intended to review the activity of every party member and of every candidate member, by the respective branches, and the higher unit concerned, and on the basis of such a review, point to the member concerned his or her shortcomings, so that he or she can improve and thus be worthy of being continued on the party rolls or dropped. In reviewing the activities, it is to be checked up how far the minimum tasks each member is fulfilling or is sincerely trying to carry out (if not all the 10, at least the following : (a) paying party dues including levy; (b) attending branch or party unit meetings; (c) reading party organs and literature; (d) work in one or other mass organizations. Since quite a large number of party branches or local units are not regularly meeting and functioning, this check-up before renewal in most cases is not being done.

c) *Class composition of the Party* : Most of the State Committees have not reported about the class composition of the party membership. To the extent reports go, in Andhra Pradesh 8 per cent are workers; 40 per cent from agricultural labour; 37 per cent from poor and middle peasantry; from artisans, middle classes and intelligentsia 12 per cent and others 3 per cent (in 1971 December). This break-up is for 7,501 members.

In West Bengal, the figures given for 1972 are: 6,897 workers (20 per cent); peasants including middle peasants 7,152 (21 per cent) and the rest (59 per cent), students 1,234 (3.6 per cent) and women 726 (2 per cent).

Since almost all State Committees have failed to take up seriously the class composition of the Party, the Party Congress once again stressed the importance of this question as outlined in the organizational resolution of 1967 under the head "Defective Class Composition and Steps to Rectify It".

The Central Committee directs various State Committees to submit a report every six months as to what percentage of the Party members are carrying out at least the above-mentioned minimum tasks, and how far all these party members are grouped in branches on functional basis and whether all party members are allotted to function in specific mass front and mass organizations except those who are specifically exempted or allotted different other functions.

## **2. Education and training of party members and cadres**

(a) *Party organs* : The Eighth Party Congress held at Cochin in December 1968 reiterated that the key tasks facing the party organization was "Begin by re-grouping and activating party members and cadres and educate them to discharge their tasks on mass, political and organization fronts.

"For a Marxist-Leninist Party, party organs are the means of educating the cadre and the people about the Party's ideological and political positions both in theory and practice. They are to help our party units and members to carry on agitation and propaganda among the people. In fact, they have to help our organization-building as well. That is why the organizational principles of Communist Parties enjoin that the editors of the party organs are to be carefully selected and to be approved by the next higher committee".

The circulation position of the central organs of the Party, *People's Democracy* and *Swadhinata* (Hindi) and party dailies and weeklies in the states was given in the table attached to the Work Report passed at the Party Congress.

The Polit Bureau was unable to give guidance to and check the central organs, *People's Democracy* and *Swadhinata*, even to the extent it was doing before the last Party Congress. No criticism or suggestions as to how to improve them have come from any state or from any CCM.

Nor are there any regular reports about the movements, about political or economic issues from the states. Such reportage as appears in *People's Democracy* is mostly translated

from the state organs to the extent the comrades in the editorial section know these languages.

The sales of the papers can easily be increased much beyond the present figure if the party units adopt a proper attitude towards the party papers. This outlook has been absent. The party committees are not insisting that every branch allot the sales of party organs as one of the minimum tasks enjoined on every party member and enforce it. If we analyse the sale of party papers and literature, in a number of states and units where we claim large party membership and mass influence, it is too disproportionately small.

If the papers are to serve as an instrument of the Party attracting all the conscious elements towards it, not only the units must change their attitude towards them but also, the papers must register improvement, raise their quality and that, too, substantially and combine attractive journalism with the Party's politics.

One of the major defects of our central leadership's functioning is its ignorance about what is being written in the state organs in different languages.

There have been articles written in different papers in the states which are not in consonance with the party line. Though normally the P.B. has endorsed the editors of different state organs, it is in total darkness of the contents, political line these papers are pursuing. The P.B. is unable to help them to correct or give suggestions for improvement. But for a centralised revolutionary party like ours, it is a dangerous development. This can be remedied only if the Centre gets more cadre to work at the Centre, who can process the material appearing in the papers in different states, with their own estimation of the weaknesses and strong points in them.

But even before we can take any steps towards it, the first essential task would be to make efforts to improve the central organs, *People's Democracy* and *Swadhinata*, politically and in featuring movements and developments in our country and abroad.



b) *The production and sale of agitational and propaganda material* : To popularise our party stand on various events and to initiate and conduct mass struggles, it is necessary to bring out pamphlets and booklets, and make them available in time. But in this our Centre's record is very poor. Similarly, it is necessary for our Party Centre to plan and produce pamphlets and booklets, explaining the party stand on various national and international issues, economic and political, educational and social etc., criticising wrong views that are being purveyed by various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties and their intellectuals; and positively and popularly explaining our stand. In this regard, also, our Centre's record is very poor.

(c) *Basic reading in Marxism-Leninism* : The Polit Bureau had suggested a selection for basic reading from Marxist-Leninist classics to be brought out and made available to and make it necessary for all party members to study them in the course of time. We tried to impress that to start with at least all Branch Secretaries and Local Committee members study them, as a step for further studies in fuller texts and more of Marxist-Leninist classics.

Most of these basic readings of Marx-Engels and Lenin are available in most of the Indian languages brought out by the Soviet Union or by Indian publishers with their help.

We must insist that every Local Committee member, DCM and if possible every Branch Secretary must acquire these books and try to study them, in course of say, the next two years, to equip himself with basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism. The list of books is given below so that every party unit can take necessary action to act upon the above suggestion:

### **Basic Reading In Marxism-Leninism Part 1**

#### **General :**

1. Communist Manifesto, with the preface to the 1888 English Edition.  
Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, 3rd part only  
State—Lenin

Thesis on Bourgeois Democracy and Dictatorship of the Proletariat—Lenin.

2. **Dialectical and Historical Materialism :** 150 pp.  
**Part played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man and extracts from Marx and Engels as printed in Basic Reading, section II. Extract from Origin of the Family, Private Property and State—Chapters 1, 2 and 3 Dialectical and Historical Materialism—Stalin**
3. **Economic Theory :** 110 pp.  
**Wage-Labour and Capital  
 Wage, Price and Profit, sections VI-XIV  
 Extracts from Lenin's Imperialism**
4. **Foundations of Leninism; Proletarian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; The Party and working class in the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—Stalin** 150 pp.
5. **Party Programme, Policy Statement and Constitution of the CPI (Marxist)** 100 pp.

**Part II** 500-1000 pp.

1. **Outline History of International Communist Movement.**
2. **Outline History of the Communist Party of India.**
3. **Russian Revolution**
4. **Chinese Revolution (including Chinese Revolution and Chinese Communist Party; Role of C.P. in the national war; On correcting mistaken ideas in the Party and Combat Liberalism by Mao)**
5. **Vietnam Revolutionary Struggle**

**Part III of further studies**

1. **State and Revolution** 200 pp.

Can the Bolsheviks retain power Immediate Tasks of Soviet Government Lessons of Revolution—Extracts from Marx, Engels, Lenin	
2. "Left"-Wing Communism—Lenin	75 pp.
3. What is To Be Done?—Lenin (Extracts)	75 pp.
4. Two Tactics—Lenin (Extracts)	75 pp.
5. On National and Colonial Question— Selections from Marx, Lenin and Stalin	100 pp.
6. On Agrarian Question : Draft Thesis; To the Rural Poor by Lenin; Three Fundamental Slogans on Peasant Question by Stalin Decisions concerning the Differentiation of Class Status in the Countryside—Chinese People's Government Law; Report on Pea- sant Movement in Hunan—Mao	175 pp.

*Note* :—All extracts as suggested in "Basic Reading"  
published by NBA

d) *Schools to educate party members and cadre* : During the last three years, there has been a great effort on the part of almost all state units to conduct political schools and training camps to impart Marxist-Leninist theory, as well as to explain our Programme and policies, and to train as many cadre as possible, to carry out the work on the different mass fronts and Party organization.

The defect in these schools is that proper grading of persons participating on the basis of their educational level and on the basis of their political level is not done. So the lessons given sometimes go beyond the grasp of raw and new cadre, while for others they become too elementary. The syllabus followed (that is, the subjects taken up) are those laid down in the C.C. Resolution of 1967.

Another defect is that there is no follow-up action: how far those who attended these schools are able to grasp the subjects taught, and how much they are actively participating

in the mass or party work after this schooling, and what further schooling is to be done to remedy any defect or improve their level still further. This can be removed if most of the persons attending these schools are actively participating in some or other mass movements, and the leading personnel of that locality or district also spend all the time with them in the school and check up and help the "student" to grasp the lessons that are being given by tutorial work at night or at intervals. Later, on the basis of their understanding of these students, these local party leaders would be able to allot them work and guide and improve them, to overcome their weaknesses.

1. Our Centre has again and again decided that syllabus be prepared for different grades of schools. We must prepare one for Branch Secretaries and Local Committee members on the subjects which our C.C. had laid as minimum necessity. But we have not been able to fulfil this task. As part of this syllabus, our Central leadership should strive to bring out an "Outline History of the Communist Party of India".

2. The Party Centre must also plan out a series of books applying Marxism-Leninism to India and Marxist solutions to various problems facing India today. This series is intended for our ordinary party members and militants grouped in auxiliaries and the general public.

3. The Centre must insist that schooling and training of Branch Secretaries and functionaries of mass fronts should be taken up as a priority task. Their training should be based on the concrete situation facing them, in their area and how to tackle them, applying Marxism-Leninism.

4. The Centre must also insist that every party member, at least every Branch Secretary and Local Committee member upwards must devote, as a regular part of his party job and duty, to spend a definite portion of the time he can spare for political and party activity, for study of daily newspapers, party organs and current literature and *Marxist-Leninist classics*. This should be checked up regularly by the respective party committees. Unless this is made an obligatory

task, the ideological level of cadre will not improve by mere general body meetings or occasional schools of a week or fortnight. Schools will only guide him as to how to study and how to equip himself with more and more theoretical and practical knowledge.

The Central Committee directs State Committees to take immediate steps and report within the next six months about the steps taken and about the progress achieved.

—Improve the state party organs, both the editorial and political steps as well as the circulation aspect.

—Send regular newsletters or articles about the mass movements and political developments in their states to *People's Democracy* and *Swadhinata*; every CCM and State Committee member to send criticisms and suggestions on *People's Democracy* and *Swadhinata*.

—Check up the fulfilment of circulation quota of central and state organs.

—Report what basic Marxist-Leninist classics will be brought out in the next six months and how many Branches or Local Committee members will get them, what steps are taken for their study by them and progress achieved.

—What popular *propaganda* booklets on Marxism-Leninism and on present political and mass problems in your state you will be planning for next six months.

—How many training schools for Branch Secretaries and Local Committee members and for general party members and militants will be conducted?

### **3. Functioning of party committees at various levels— the need to streamline the existing party organization**

a) *Remove inactive members from State and District Committees* : Even during the latest party conferences a good number of inactive comrades, on the ground that they were once leading comrades, were taken into the District and State Committees. They have become a source of bad example and a hindrance not only for the functioning of these units but even for activising party ranks or units below. The

party leadership should tell them that either they seriously discharge their responsibilities or retire from these committees and do whatever they can in a limited way.

Within the next six months the leadership must find out whether any such member at state or district level has not improved to be worthy of his responsibility, then either he opts out for retirement or the Party has to remove him from such committees. Of course, it is the responsibility of the Party to give him the necessary financial help when he retires, if he has not enough resources to maintain himself.

It must be insisted that at least all State Committee members and all District Secretariat members be wholetimers, devoting their entire time for the Party and mass movements and not forced to eke out their livelihood by taking up some job or other. In weaker districts, the number of DCMs may be small but there, too, at least their Secretariat members must be wholetimers.

b) *Dissolve all unnecessary committees* : It is laid down in "Tasks on Party Organization": "The principle that must guide us in setting up Tehsil or District Committees is whether it is absolutely necessary to have such committees for coordinating the existing Party Branches and their activity. As a general rule, we can say that there need not be Tehsil or Local Committee as long as the members of the District Committee or its organizer comrades can directly attend the Branches and guide them.

"Similarly, District Committees need not be formed unless the State Committee cannot coordinate a group of small districts directly through its members or organizers, or through setting up a regional committee for a group of districts, going directly to the local committees."

It also lays down that party committees under the State Committee are to be formed on the basis of contiguity of movement transgressing administrative district or tehsil boundaries, whenever necessary, so as to facilitate the coordination and development of the movement.

Experience during the last five years has shown that

these directives are to be strictly implemented if efficient leadership even with the available cadre is to be provided. What stands in the way is the localism or the tehsil or district "patriotism" and not needs of the movement. They do not see that when we do not have capable cadres to function even one committee, going on setting up a number of committees and apportioning responsibilities is further worsening the situation and harming the movement.

This directive is not being implemented in a large number of places.

Now it is absolutely necessary to lay down that a panchayat (anchal or a group of compact villages) having a population of over 10,000 or a town with a population of over 20,000 or a big factory or establishment with three or more branches may form a committee with Branch Secretaries or otherwise. Between the District Committees and these Local Committees there shall be no intermediate committees. Any exception to this can be permitted only by the State Committee.

District Committees need not be co-terminus with the existing administrative boundaries. They may be set up on the basis of facility for coordinating the movements and party units that are existing today. District Committees as a general principle may be set up in an administrative district or for a group of adjacent areas in a number of neighbouring districts, when there are more than 25 intermediate or local units. Exceptions to this can be made by the C.C. for P.B. on the recommendation or in consultation with the State Committee concerned.

c) *End the practice of G.B. meetings and function through Branches*: Our Central Committee took the decision as early as 1966 to function through Branches, that G.B. (General Body) meetings of Party members and sympathisers together (and not of party members alone) were allowed as a transitory method and that, too, for reporting of major party decisions and events and as part of initiating mass campaigns. But in practice, G.B. has become the main method of functioning, though this functioning means that only one or other

leading comrade explains the decisions and urges and enthuses the comrades and sympathisers to work. The functioning through a series of party units and Branches has gone into the background. The development of Branches, their Secretaries, their functioning, which are essential to division of jobs and check up and developing each one of the members and Branches and direct links between the Party and the masses, have seriously suffered. This is dangerous for a revolutionary party and movement.

In this connection, it is also specifically to be noted that Branches are not yet organized on functional or factory or institution basis. This hampers our work in the mass organizations, if party members do not work in the class organizations, in a factory or institution, but take up their party job and general work in their place of residence, which should be only auxiliary.

The Central Committee, at the same time, suggests, to facilitate political reporting and initiation of mass struggles, broad meetings of all those who are interested in political developments, inviting them and encouraging them to participate in such meetings and listen to the exposition of problems by party leaders. These meetings should not be restricted to party members and close sympathisers but made open to broader sections. Participants in the meetings may ask questions for the clarification of the points made by the speakers, but this should not turn into a discussion or debating forum where different points of view are ventilated. Broad meetings of this type would help Local Committees and Branches to have a better understanding of the policy of the party and mass organizations on the basis of which they can carry on their day-to-day work of political agitation as well as the task of developing mass struggles.

Broad meetings of this type, plus the study of party literature produced by the Central and State Committees, should help Branch Secretaries and Local Committees to make it a regular practice that ordinary meetings of the Branches and the Local Committees are used for political discussions.



Absence of such political discussions of the meetings of the Branches or the Local Committees has led to a state of affairs in which party members do not attend the meeting itself, or when they do, discussion is confined to some petty practical problems, mostly personal differences and disputes. This can be ended and the primary units of the Party made politically alive only if political reporting from above, including discussion of the content of party literature produced by the Central Committee and State Committees, is made use of by Branch Secretaries and Local Committees to rouse political interest and deepen the political understanding of every party member. The political awareness that arises out of such constant reporting and discussion is an essential prerequisite for that day-to-day activity of party members and militants which will improve the quality of party work both in relation to the economic issues affecting the people as well as in popularising the political policy of the Party.

If the basic units of the Party—Branches organized in places of work or in residential areas—and the Committees next above them (Local Committees) remain inactive, neither the work of building mass organizations and developing mass struggles, nor of building up a well-organized system of political agitation can be done. This can be done only if the Branch, led by the Local Committee, mobilises the entire party membership, together with the militants organized in the Auxiliary Groups, for day-to-day work, take up the issues that affect the people in their places of work or in their residential areas, uniting the entire people around the demands that arise out of the working and living conditions of the masses, and the Branch is able to give timely guidance and leadership to the fighting people.

This work of rousing the people around the demands arising out of their day-to-day life has to be supplemented and supported by popular agitation on the basis of the political line laid down by the Party and explained in the agitational and propaganda material of the Party. Even the most correct leadership given by the higher organs of the Party and of the

mass organizations, the most effective speeches delivered, articles and pamphlets written by party leaders above, will not help the growth and development of the Party and the mass movement unless Party Branches under the leadership of the Local Committees are involved in the work of carrying the message of the Party to the people and the moods and feelings of the people to the Party.

d) *Change the style of functioning of the party committees*: Now-a-days, in quite a large number of states, even in most important committees, the day-to-day work is very much dependent on certain individual comrades. These comrades may be the most senior, experienced and developed comrades. They may have initiative, every good quality of a capable leader and can take bold and prompt decisions and get things done and get the party machine going. But if this mode of functioning is allowed to be prolonged and the party committee or its secretariat as a collective body is not developed to function and discharge these responsibilities, it will prolong the individual functioning and will become destructive to a collective team or leadership growing. No individual, however capable, can cope with the increasing movement and its complexities, and the problems that they pose and the consequent amount of work to be discharged.

So this method of individual functioning must be consciously eliminated. This becomes the special task of those very individuals on whom the other committee members place so much trust and rely upon, before its evil consequences burst out. The leader must consciously place everything before the committee, divide jobs and responsibilities among all members of the committee and help them to take their own decisions in carrying out these tasks. He must refuse to shoulder every task not carried out by others. The test of his success as team leader is whether at any movement he can entrust the responsibilities to some other comrade, and he takes an entirely new responsibility, whether the team could carry on with the work as effectively as when he himself was at the head of it.

Further, unless this individual functioning is replaced by team or party committee functioning, collective decisions and individual responsibility, the necessary cadre cannot be spared for higher committees to discharge their growing responsibilities and develop the movement wider or deeper.

Secondly, both the meetings of the party committees and of their secretariats are badly prepared. No written reports of specific issues that are on the agenda are prepared and presented nor are detailed minutes of the discussions held recorded. Even the decisions taken, in quite a number of important committees, too, are not in written form or in the form of written resolution, but noted as points and broadly enumerated in the form of press communiques or by oral reporting to lower units on the basis of notes taken. This practice leads to unclarity, each comrade interpreting the decisions arrived at as he understands and as such, confusion is bound to arise, and danger of disruption of party work looms ahead. Apart from this, since clarity about the decision will not be there, that will also hamper the work.

So all decisions taken must be in writing and they must be communicated to lower units in written form.

Further, discussions in the committees must be business-like and not repetitive and endless. If in spite of repeated discussion no common understanding could be arrived at, concrete amendments should be moved in a written form and put to vote.

Thirdly, the present practice of no written reports about the activities being carried on by lower units, or how they are implementing the decisions and calls given by the higher committees, is to be put an end to. However busy we may be in our day-to-day work, and however few cadres we may have at our disposal, unless this job of reporting to the higher committees is given priority and carried out, even at the cost of some work at their level, no centralised party can be built. It will lead and has already led to each state going its own way, without the Centre being able to check or guide them on correct lines.

Similarly, the higher committees have also ceased sending reports and reviews to lower units of their work of mass movements and struggles, the lessons to be drawn from them. Reporting about what is happening in other states or in other countries to lower units and the general mass of our party members is also becoming rare. Thus the bonds of fraternity, solidarity and of proletarian internationalism are getting weakened. And in understanding our own movement, localism is becoming more and more conspicuous than an all-India outlook or proletarian internationalism. So it must be insisted that regular reporting from lower units to higher units and vice versa becomes a regular feature of our party functioning. We once again draw the attention of the comrades to the C.C. Resolution "Tasks on the Party Organization", regarding the proper functioning of party committees.

*4. More whole-timers to be recruited; existing cadre to be graded and promoted:* As far as this question is concerned, it has been dealt with in "Tasks on Party Organization". Later at the Party Congress at Cochin in 1968, this was again discussed and a way suggested. The Ninth Congress once again reiterated the conclusions of the Eighth Congress:

".....it is an acknowledged fact that at central level for lack of cadres, we are not functioning the trade union, kisan, student sub-committees, nor are we able to organize education, preparing syllabus, organising write-ups and publishing necessary political booklets on current problems nor effectively producing our party papers and agitational material nor helping different State Committees organizationally, nor are we able to plan national campaigns and see that they are implemented.

"This is the case at the state levels as well.

"Everybody agrees that this is the situation. But everyone hesitates to take the only steps that offer themselves as solution.

"That solution is to make new promising comrades Secretaries of Branches and allow the older experienced Branch Secretaries to become members of Local Committees. It is these Local Committee members that must educate, train and help the new Branch Secretaries.

“Similarly, the experienced and developed Local or District Committee members or at least their Secretaries must be removed from the formal post of Secretary of the Local Committee or District Committee and promoted to District or State Committees. These comrades for quite a necessary time stay in that local or district to help the new Secretaries, as D.C. organizers or S.C. organizers or as C.C. organizers. But it is the entrusting of the routine and day-to-day responsibilities to newer and younger comrades whom it is absolutely necessary for the old comrades to train and develop, that will ultimately solve the problem.

“The same process has to be undertaken by the taking of certain CCMs from their present S.C.s and drawing them as C.C. functionaries so as to solve this problem in the course of a year or two. But even if this first step of relieving the leading comrades from their formal positions and routine jobs in the existing District and State Committees is not taken, then nothing much can be done, till time and events force a solution. This is leaving things to spontaneity and not consciously building the Party.

“We have also failed to evolve a proper cadre policy. We have not tried to understand and evaluate the cadre available at various levels, their strong points and weaknesses. Without this we cannot select and promote, nor can we make an effort to educate them.

“We must boldly promote the existing cadre if we have to discharge the responsibilities of carrying out the serious political and organizational tasks that are facing us.” (*Political-Organizational Report, Eighth Congress*, pp. 314-15)

Apart from this question of promoting cadre, our party committees have not properly graded them and decided who should be taken as wholetime cadre. Without having a minimum number of wholetime cadres, the work cannot be coordinated nor developed.

State Committees must immediately check up the existing wholetime cadre, their financial position, taking into consideration the number of people depending upon them

and their total family income, resources and make the necessary provision.

State Committees must also fix up necessary wholetime cadre, at local, district and at state levels, for both party organizational jobs as well as for different mass fronts, trade union, kisan and student fronts.

State Committees must check up within six months about their wholetime in the whole state, their names, the financial position and the allowance that is being paid to them; the fronts on which they are working and at what levels and submit a report about it to the Centre.

5. *The Party and the mass organizations*: These organizational tasks of the Party cannot be carried out except in course of developing economic and political struggles of all sections of all the working people. It is also necessary to overcome the dichotomy between "party organizer" and "mass leader", of keeping the tasks of party building, and the tasks of building the mass organizations and leading their struggles in water-tight compartments. Problems of party building, such as recruitment and education of party members; check-up on the work of party units; collection of party membership; raising the financial resources for and incurring the expenditure of the Party; solving the problems of wholetime cadres—all these are considered to be problems unconnected with the tasks on the trade unions, kisan sabhas and other mass organizations. Similarly, the functioning of the various organs of the trade unions and other mass organizations, preparing for, and organising mass struggles, etc., are looked upon as tasks unconnected with party building.

The existing Party cannot grow either in the number of its members or the quality of its work unless every party member and sympathiser is thrown into the work of building the mass organizations and helps them in organising the mass struggles. On the other hand, no mass organization can grow in strength, and be able to lead the masses in action, unless the militants who are thrown up in the course of the day-to-day organizational work and struggles are made politically

conscious, educated in the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism, trained as active organizers and leaders of their brethren working in the same place of work or residential area and through this process drawn into and organized in the Party.

This dichotomy should be put an end to by re-educating the entire Party on the inseparable connection between the tasks of party building and those of organising and leading the mass organizations.

Even the leading members of the leading bodies of the Party working in particular mass organizations confine themselves to the narrow organizational tasks of the particular mass organizations in which they are working, leaving it to the "specialists in party building" to tackle the problems of recruiting, educating and organising the large number of militants, thrown up in the course of struggles, into Auxiliary Groups and Party Branches whose work is constantly guided and supervised. So long as this dichotomy between "mass leaders" and "party builders" continues, there cannot be any improvement either in our mass work or in the organizational position of the Party.

Party leaders who are put "in charge" on any mass organizations therefore should be held responsible for not only the economic problems facing the particular section of the people or the organizational problems of that particular section, but also for that process through which the best militants who are thrown up in the course of the struggle are raised in their cultural and ideological level, trained to be the genuine leaders of their comrades in their places of work or residential area and finally, taken into the Party as members. From among those who are party members, the party leaders should select those who show qualities of real leadership and promote them into higher positions in the Party.

This is the way in which the defective class composition of the Party can be rectified. It is impossible to bring about a greater proportion of comrades whose social origin is either working class or poor peasant, at all levels of the Party right upto its highest units, unless the party leaders

who are entrusted with the task of leading mass organizations take upon themselves the task of such a development and promotion of the best militants into the Party, then to the leadership at different levels.

The same thing applies to the overcoming of all the other defects and weaknesses of party organization which have repeatedly been mentioned in our documents. Instability of party membership; irregular collection of membership dues and levies; non-functioning of Party Branches and so on, are all connected with the fact that the functioning of Party Branches is divorced from the day-to-day activity of the mass organizations. This, in its turn, is to be traced to the fact that even the best among the party leaders of the mass organizations content themselves with discharging the functions of an office-bearer of the particular mass organization and not as party leaders guiding the activities of all party members working in the particular organization.

In organising party education, party leaders working in mass organizations have to play the crucial role. For, the education and training of party members in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism cannot be divorced from the problems that they have to deal with in their day-to-day work. Such integration of theory with practical work cannot be left to the so-called "specialists" in the field of education but has to be done by party leaders. In doing it, of course, the assistance of such comrades as have made special studies of particular subjects may be utilised, but responsibility for it must be undertaken by the party leaders themselves. Discussion meetings, seminars, short-term schools, etc., should be organized by the various fractions under the guidance of party committees.

The question of financial resources for the Party and mass organizations too, has to be tackled in the context of party activity in the mass organizations. Party leaders who are responsible for party work in mass organizations should be responsible not only for the collection of party membership dues and levies, but also for annual or other periodical



collection for the Party and mass organizations (at the time when workers and employees get bonus and when peasants have their harvests). State and District Committees should be able to so plan the finances of party committees and of the mass organizations that each party unit in a mass organization is given a definite quota of collections to be made not only from party members and sympathisers, but from the general mass of workers and peasants, etc., among whom they are working, in the course of periodical fund drives.

The whole timers in a mass organization are to be maintained normally from the regular funds of the mass organization itself. The party funds raised should be utilised to maintain other whole-timers of the party and for other party expenses. Our party members must vigorously participate in the collections for mass organizations special funds, too.

In short, all the tasks of party building which are now supposed to be the responsibility of a few "specialists" in that line should be taken over by the leading functionaries of the Party in the trade unions, kisan sabhas, agricultural labour associations, students', teachers', youth and women's organizations and so on. Only then will it be possible to evolve a new style of functioning through which the activity of the party units as such, and the activity of the mass organizations in which party members are functioning, will supplement each other and support each other.

### *Section Three*

#### **THE FUNCTIONING OF POLIT BUREAU AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND IMMEDIATE TASKS AT THE CENTRE**

Our State Committees, faced with the problems of mass movements and the party organization, are finding it difficult to cope with the ever growing responsibility thrust upon them, with the existing cadre available. The same problem they are facing at district and local levels, too. So, they are finding it difficult to spare immediately cadre to function at the C.C. Centre. But without a large number of cadre, devoting most of their time functioning at the C.C. Centre, the Centre cannot

effectively discharge the tasks it is normally expected to discharge. The Central Committee decides that the State Committees, within a short time, should reorganize their work, and develop necessary cadre for their own state and giving priority to spare necessary cadre for the Centre.

Meanwhile, the Central Committee directs the P.B. to give priority :

1. To improve the central organ, "*People's Democracy*", and on that basis, *Swadhinata*, the Hindi weekly.

2. To prepare a syllabus for educating and training our party ranks, especially Branch Secretaries and Local Committee members and plan out a number of simple booklets on various current problems, both national and international, and also popular exposition of the theoretical principles of Marxism-Leninism for educating the masses and our members and supporters.

3. To discuss the problems of the three mass fronts—T.U., kisan and students—and give them general guidelines for functioning.

To help the State Committees to improve the cadre functioning in these three mass fronts and help them to educate and train the cadre on these fronts.

Political and other organizational problems will have to be mainly solved and carried out by respective State Committees with the help of PBMs who are at present guiding them.

The Central Committee has sharply posed these weaknesses in our party organization so as to give utmost importance to remove them, by our units at various levels. It has set forth the minimum urgent tasks, which are well with our present capacity to carry out. What is required is that party units beginning with Central Committee members and State Committees must take up these organizational jobs to consolidate more firmly all the tremendous ideological, political and mass front achievements of the last four years. The Central Committee is confident that the whole Party will shoulder these tasks and carry them out successfully.

## **Forge Left and Democratic Front\***

**Call given by the Central Committee of the  
CPI(M)**

*The last one year witnessed unprecedented rise in prices of all articles of mass consumption, particularly of food articles. The countrywide power shortage, affecting big, small-scale and cottage industries, as well as agriculture, the mounting unemployment—all these show the bankruptcy of the policies pursued by the ruling Congress Government. The economic crisis has become all-embracing, says a Press statement issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) after its session in Muzaffarpur from March 9 to 15, 1973. The statement continues :*

As a result, people's miseries have sharply mounted. Famine stalks large parts of the land. The Government has done precious little by way of relief.

Faced with these realities, people are gradually realising that the slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' with which the Indira Congress won a massive victory in the Parliamentary and Assembly elections, was a hoax on the credulous people. Unable to put up with the daily growing attacks on their living standards, every section of our people—workers, peasants, agricultural labourers, teachers, Government and other middle class employees, students, medicos—have risen in struggles. They have exhibited in these struggles, which have

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\*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, March 25, 1973.

Refer Documents/Resolutions adopted in Muzaffarpur session of the Central Committee of the C.P.I.(M) under Item No. 9 and Item No. 10, of this Volume.

been long and protracted, tremendous unity, tenacity and spirit of sacrifice never before witnessed.

While semi-fascist terror continues in West Bengal, in all the other States the Congress Governments seem to meet these just struggles with intensified repression, with lathis and bullets, with torture in police lock-ups and mass arrests, reminiscent of the worst days of British rule. This was seen in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan etc. The Achutha Menon Ministry of Kerala excelled in this repression by letting loose the police and the CRP on the entire people for no other fault than that they supported the struggle of the State employees. The police even went to the extent of raping women.

Unable to stem the tide of these rising struggles, unable to deceive them by its catchy slogans, the ruling Congress party resorts to diversionary tactics, raises chauvinistic slogans and seeks to encourage fratricidal warfare between the working people on the basis of language and regionalism as seen in Assam, Andhra and many other States.

Another important feature in the situation is the growing authoritarianism of the Indira Congress which cannot tolerate any opposition. This was seen when the Central Government threw to the winds all the norms of parliamentary democracy, went back on the resolution of the Governor's Conference presided over by the President himself, refused to allow the leader of the Opposition in Orissa to form the Ministry when the Congress Party became a minority, dissolved the Assembly and imposed President's rule.

The Approach to the Fifth Plan document and the budgets of the Central and State Governments show clearly that the Congress Government is bent upon pursuing the capitalist path of development, by fattening the monopolists and throwing the door open for intensified exploitation of the country by foreign monopolists and imperialists. Burdens on people will increase, they will have to face more intense misery and unemployment.

The ruling Congress will be resorting to intense

repression; authoritarianism and the drive to one-party dictatorship will intensify.

This is the great menace facing the country. The CPI(M) is firmly of the opinion that this menace can be combated only by the immediate forging of a front of Left and democratic forces. Such a front alone can galvanise the growing discontent, give direction to the bursting struggles of the people and through that emerge as a viable alternative to the ruling party.

The CPI(M) pledges that it will strive its utmost to bring about such a Left and democratic front and appeals to all Left and democratic forces to come together.

The Central Committee wants to make it clear that any all-India front of parties with totally incompatible ideologies and policies cannot be an alternative to the ruling Congress, and the CPI(M) can have nothing to do with attempts to forge a front of such heterogenous parties.

## **The Vietnam Victory\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in Muzaffarpur session on 9-15 March, 1973.**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) hails the Vietnam agreement as a big victory for the fighting people of North and South Vietnam—a victory for which they had to carry on prolonged armed struggle for three decades and had to make tremendous sacrifices and undergo untold sufferings, devastation and massacres. All freedom-lovers, progressive and democratic forces, all Socialists, will welcome this victory of a great cause, of a brave and courageous people engaged in one of the biggest freedom battles of all times.

The terms of the agreement reveal the great triumph of the people of Vietnam and despite the near-nuclear bombing by the U.S. airforce, they virtually endorse the earlier terms of the October agreement to change which Nixon ordered his genocidal bombings in January.

The American forces are to be withdrawn, all foreign troops to quit South Vietnam and all military establishments to be demolished; the PRG is recognised and will continue to hold sway in the areas of its influence; the line between North-South Vietnam is a temporary line and the unification of Vietnam can take place in accordance with the wishes of the people; a National Council of Reconciliation of three equal segments will prepare for democratic elections in South Vietnam, composed of the PRG, Saigon and neutrals whose decisions will be taken on the basis of unanimity; troops,

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, March 25, 1973.

weapons and war materials from abroad are not to be introduced into South Vietnam, civilian prisoners are to be freed, Hanoi will return the U.S. prisoners of war. There is to be an international supervisory force.

These terms which fulfil the demands of complete withdrawal of American troops, recognition of the right of the Vietnam people to unify their land and open the prospects of democratic advance in South Vietnam do constitute a great victory of the people of Vietnam.

However, the U.S. imperialists, defeated on the battlefield, had no intention of genuine cease-fire and peace. The recognition of Thieu as the only legal Government laid the basis for future mischief. The time between October and February was utilised to pile up arms and planes in South Vietnam to give full scope to Thieu's conspiracies.

The assaults and attacks on the representatives of the DRV on the Joint Commission, the obstacles deliberately created in the functioning of the cease-fire commissions, the hundreds of violations of the cease-fire agreement by Thieu, the open warfare with the help of American planes against PRG areas, the refusal to release prisoners and their massacres—with all these the American conspiracies to undermine the cease-fire are reaching a climax.

The U.S. imperialists encourage their puppet to violate all conditions while they pretend to talk peace and demand that all American war prisoners should be released by the DRV and the PRG. At the same time, they continue their insane and bestial bombing of Laos and Cambodia against the liberation forces to help their puppets.

The perfidious game, if not defeated in time by world democratic opinion and the forces of the international working class will fail to consolidate the gains of the mighty struggle and enable the U.S. imperialists to embroil South Vietnam in a prolonged civil war, denying democracy and freedom and national unification to the people of South Vietnam and be a constant threat to the freedom of the DRV also.

The Central Committee is of the opinion that Nixon has

been emboldened to pursue these nefarious tactics calculating on the differences and conflicts between the two big Socialist countries, the Soviet Union and China. Nixon's Vietnamese actions including near-nuclear bombings have been based upon this consideration ever since his Peking and Moscow visits.

The present danger can be defeated if the big Socialist countries overcome their differences and stand unitedly in support of the Vietnamese people. Such unity followed by the unity of the entire Socialist camp will unify all proletarian and democratic forces in the world against the conspiracies of American imperialism and make sure the gains of the big victory.

The Central Committee wishes to emphasise that great and incalculable harm has already been done to the struggle of the Vietnam people and of the entire Asian people by the rift between the two Socialist countries whose united might should have offered a protecting umbrella to all struggling peoples against imperialism and reaction. In the background of such unity, the victory of the Vietnamese people would have led to an overturn of reactionary regimes in a large number of Asian countries, especially in South East Asia, administering an irrevocable blow to the U.S. imperialists and further changing the balance of forces in favour of the revolutionary movement.

It is a fact that in the absence of such united help the revolutionary struggle in each country had to rely almost on their own strength entailing prolonged sufferings and sacrifices for the people.

The Central Committee once more hails the victory of the people of Vietnam, congratulates the fighting people on their success. It conveys its greetings to the Workers' Party whose Marxist-Leninist guidance has enabled the working class and the people of Vietnam to secure this great success. It sends its greetings to the NLF whose political guidance has succeeded in leading the people of South Vietnam to secure their demand for the withdrawal of American forces and open the door to unification of their country.



The Central Committee is confident that notwithstanding the present difficulties, the world working class, the Socialist countries and the democratic opinion will rally to defeat the new conspiracies and see that the fruits of the epoch-making struggle are fully reaped by the people of Vietnam and they will succeed in unifying the country on the basis of freedom, democracy and self-determination.

## **Mulki Agitation in Andhra Pradesh\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) adopted in its Muzaffarpur session on March 9-15, 1973.**

The Congress Government never took a democratic stand on the issue of unity and integrity of Andhra Pradesh. It was forced to concede it only after a bitter struggle. The out-moded and undemocratic Mulki Rules, promulgated by the Nizam, over half a century ago to keep the State of Hyderabad as his own preserve, were sought to be continued by the Congress rulers after the Hyderabad State was dissolved and Andhra Pradesh formed. It sowed seeds of regional chauvinism and strife, preventing the full political, administrative and emotional integration of the Telugu-speaking people.

With growing unemployment deteriorating economic situation and consequent discontent, the separatist Telangana vested interests exploited the genuine apprehensions of the Government employees and the educated youth of Telangana to raise the demand for a separate Telangana State.

The Congress rulers instead of attacking the vested interests, resorted to brutal repression of the ordinary masses of Telangana. The separatist leaders, on the other hand, were placated by accepting their demands.

### **Genuine Apprehensions**

With the Supreme Court upholding the Mulki Rules as valid, the Chief Minister and Telangana separatist Congress lead-

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, March 25, 1973. Refer resolution adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) on this subject under Item No. 4 of this Volume.

ers were jubilant. But the Central Congress Government did not come out with a democratic solution conferring equal rights on all citizens of the State and assuring equality in relation to employment.

These policies and actions of the Central and State Governments created genuine apprehensions in the minds of students, Government employees and other sections of the Andhra area that they were being discriminated against in their own State and in their own capital city, and that equal employment and educational opportunities were denied to them. This feeling led to a widespread agitation against the Mulki Rules.

Indira Gandhi came out with a five-point formula for the solution of the tangle she had created. In spite of rising opposition from the people and from Congress supporters, MLAs and Ministers of Andhra area, she got it enacted as the Mulki Rules Act.

The Act extends the Mulki Rules and regionalises and reserves all public service employment in Telangana to Mulkis of Telangana. In effect it will perpetuate a separate Telangana within the framework of the Andhra Pradesh State though it formally concedes that these rules should end by 1980.

### **Diversion into Separatism**

The Swatantra Party, Jana Sangh, Congress (O) took advantage of the situation to direct the movements into separatist channels and raise the demand for a separate Andhra State. Congress leaders who were opposed to Mulki Rules and who were at first demanding only certain changes and concessions, ultimately had to follow the reactionaries and became rabid separatists themselves. The Socialists, too, joined hands with the separatists and started demanding reorganization of India into 40-50 smaller States.

The Right Communist Party which became an appendage of the ruling Congress long ago, had vociferously supported the Mulki and other demands of Telangana separatists, in 1969. Once again, they came out in support of the Indira

Government and its disruptive Mulki formula as the only way to preserve the integrity of Andhra Pradesh and became an object of ridicule and contempt for all democratic sections.

It is only our Party that came out with a just and democratic solution and boldly campaigned for it. It is only our Party members, belonging to both the regions, unitedly, without vacillation, stood against the separatist demands in both the regions against Indira Gandhi's undemocratic Mulki Rules being imposed.

### **Democratic Solution**

Our Party demanded that the present Mulki Rules Act be replaced by a new Parliamentary Act based on democratic principles.

Our Party demanded that the new Parliament Act must ensure:

—That employment in Government services, at all levels, be in the ratio of 2:1, for the residents of Andhra and Telangana regions respectively, and they be posted in any part of the State and not confined to one region only. This principle is to be extended to all Corporations and Boards and semi-Government concerns.

—That the allocation of all the State resources including that of Hyderabad City and Central loans and grants for regular administrative and developmental purposes including the Five-Year Plans be in the ratio of 2 : 1 while special allocations are made to develop backward tracts in both the regions.

—That seats in all professional, technical and other educational institutions and schools are reserved in the same ratio.

—That these safeguards continue till such time as mutual understanding and confidence develop between the people living in the two regions and the existing imbalances in the development between the two regions get progressively reduced and eliminated.

—That the Regional Committee and special budget be done away with, as their continuation becomes superfluous with the provision of the above safeguards and as their very existence retard the process of integration.

The safeguards and the reservations which the Party proposed were not a final solution, yet they were such that they would enable the democratic unity of the masses to be achieved opening the way to abolish these reservations.

### **Repression on People**

To crush all opposition to the undemocratic Mulki Rules Act, the Government rushed the military and the hated CRP to all towns in the State, resorted to indiscriminate firings, killing scores of innocent people, clamping curfew for days together in a number of towns and cities, promulgating prohibitory orders under Section 144, detaining hundreds of persons under MISA and other laws and victimising Government employees. When the Chief Minister was found incapable of dealing with the situation, his Ministry was dismissed, the legislature was suspended and President's rule was imposed on the State. While Smt. Gandhi admits that the Mulki Rules Act discriminates against the people of Andhra area, she refuses to repeal it and seeks to play one group against another, wear out the movement and impose her solution on the people of the State.

The Central Committee rejects the arguments advanced by the Jana Sangh, certain Big Business papers and the Socialists that India be reorganised into some 40-50 smaller States as harmful and disruptive. They are only the echo of the same old reactionary elements who opposed the formation of linguistic States. Today, when even the limited powers enjoyed by the States under the Constitution are being systematically encroached upon by the Centre, and the States are being reduced to satellites of an autocratic Centre and the demand for the widest autonomy for States in being voiced as a foremost demand by all democratic forces, the demand for formation of small States will only make them

utterly powerless before the Centre and reduce them to non-entities.

### **Undermining Indian Unity**

By pursuing delaying tactics in relation to Andhra Pradesh Indira Gandhi's Government is strengthening disruptive and fissiparous tendencies. The refusal to accept a democratic solution arises from the play of factional and party interests. In pursuit of these same selfish aims the Congress party and its Government are rousing regionalism and linguistic chauvinism elsewhere and undermining the unity of the country. The attempt to suppress the rights of the linguistic minority in Assam, the slogan of jobs for the sons of the soil, official statements on reservation of jobs set people against people and undermine the fabric of Indian unity. The trials of the valiant Andhra people arise from this selfish policies of a party determined to remain in power at all costs.

The continued existence of the integrated State of Andhra Pradesh is essential to the vital interests of the Telugu people. The Central Committee warns the Central Government against conceding the reactionary demand for bifurcation. It calls for the scrapping of the Mulki Rules Act and demands the enactment of a new measure assuring equality for all residents of Andhra Pradesh and proportionate share of all available employment, educational and development facilities.

The Central Committee demands that the Central Government immediately withdraw all victimisation measures against the NGOs and employees and all pending cases and release all arrested persons. It calls for the withdrawal of the CRP from the State.

### **Appeal to Democrats**

The Central Committee wants the people of Andhra and Telangana to remember that their immediate demand for equal and better opportunities in employment, educational facilities, economic development and for overcoming regional backwardness cannot be achieved by lending support to the

movements for a separate State. They must realise that it is necessary to liquidate the present Congress regime of Big Business and landlords, with its corrupt bureaucracy to be able to achieve land and food for all, full employment and living wage, education and social security and end regional backwardness. To liquidate the system, a united country-wide movement of the workers, peasants and middle classes and other broad sections of the people has to be developed.

The Central Committee directs all Party members and units in Andhra Pradesh to mobilise all democratic forces in the State in support of the above proposals and demands. The Party appeals to the democratic forces in the entire country to realise the danger posed by the anti-democratic policies pursued by the Congress Government and by separatist and disruptive forces to the unity and integrity of the various nationalities and linguistic States and fight against them.

## **On Kerala Government Employees' Strike\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) adopted in its Muzaffarpur session on March 9-15, 1973.**

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the unprecedented repression and terror let loose on the common people of Kerala by the Achutha Menon Government during the recent strike of the State Government non-gazetted employees.

When thousands of the striking employees were arrested and beaten up, the democratic people expressed their horror and indignation by sympathetic picketing of Government offices, culminating in a Statewide hartal. The Government sought to meet this massive protest by letting loose unheard of terror. The police indulged in indiscriminate and brutal attacks on thousands of people, tortured arrested people in the police lock-ups and even raped women.

The Central Committee congratulates and warmly greets the State Government employees and the people of Kerala for braving this unheard of repression and for securing the cancellation of the orders of victimisation of the State Government employees.

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## **Another step towards One-Party rule by Indira Gandhi's Government\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) on April 30, 1973, in Calcutta on appointment of the Chief Justice of India**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement in Calcutta on April 30, 1973, on the appointment of Chief Justice of India :—

The appointment of Mr. Roy as the Chief Justice of India, superseding the claims of his three senior colleagues has led to a storm of protests from democratic circles, including the High Court and Supreme Court Bar Associations.

It has been correctly understood and attacked as a political appointment, a move to secure a pliant judiciary in the service of the ruling party.

The claim of the ruling party that it is asserting the sovereignty of Parliament and the people over the judiciary is a farcial claim. The ruling party, notwithstanding its big majority in the Lok Sabha, dared not bring the question before Parliament and explain the reasons for appointing a junior Judge to the position of Chief Justice. It was afraid of the democratic Opposition, it was afraid that its own partisan motives would be thoroughly exposed.

It cannot be said that the Government has taken this step to protect the democratic rights and fundamental freedoms of the people from the decisions of a wayward judiciary. The Indira Congress Government has distinguished itself by repeatedly violating the democratic provisions and norms of the Constitution. To suppress the people it has kept up the

\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, May 6, 1973.

Emergency provisions in being and virtually perpetuated the Defence of India Act which gives short shrift to the liberties under the Constitution.

Not satisfied with it, it has enacted the notorious MISA, Suppression of Violent Activities and other Acts which give the bureaucracy a free hand to crush every liberty of the people. It has undertaken powers to illegalise strikes and its State Government in West Bengal has launched a reign of terror against the workers and the people. Besides it is known how it uses the Governors to foil the Legislature and deny opportunity to other parties to form a Ministry.

The terror, the open attacks on liberties, the rigging of elections in West Bengal—this is the context in which the Executive has promoted its own nominee to the post of Chief Justice. It can, therefore, be regarded as one more step in the process of establishing one-party rule, the grip of one party over the State.

This, however, does not mean that all these years the Supreme Court Judges were playing an independent role and acting as a check on the Executive. The role of the Supreme Court and its Judges, to say the least, has been a dismal role and the common man in the country had long ceased to look upon it as a protective shield against the Executive's attacks on his liberties. The Supreme Court Judges have generally upheld the notorious Acts like the MISA, attacks against the liberties under the DIR and the preventive Detention Acts. Even when they found that some provisions were notoriously anti-constitutional—as for instance, Section 17A of the MISA, they went out of their way to accommodate the Executive and gave it time to amend the Act, accepting the usual plea about law and order. The Judges have failed to check the Executive when the liberties of the people were under attack.

The verdicts of High Courts on the issue of gheraos and a number of mild agrarian legislations clearly showed how the judiciary was lagging behind the demands and consciousness of the people and giving the law a conservative

interpretation. In 1967, the Supreme Court in a judgment declared that Parliament had no right to amend the Fundamental Rights. The real issue before the Court was not individual freedom but property rights. The judgement virtually decided that existing property relations could not be radically altered by Parliament and assured greater security to property holders. The Supreme Court by its judgement on the Bank Nationalisation Act and the Privy Purses Act shocked progressive opinion. Its verdicts went in favour of the vested interests. It showed extreme solicitude for full compensation to the banks which made all talk of nationalisation meaningless. The latest judgement also did not fully accept Parliament's right to bring about radical changes in the property relations.

It will be realised that when the Court invalidated parliamentary legislation, its effect was generally to protect the monopolists and big property holders in the name of equality and the fundamental right to hold property.

Those who are talking in the name of the independent role of the Supreme Court should ponder over these realities.

Marxism teaches that the judiciary and the judges are as much part of the class apparatus of the State as the Executive, the police and the laws. They administer class laws and as such, their independence is a propagated myth. This does not prevent the two wings the executive and the Judiciary—from some times conflicting with each other on some issues but even in this conflict neither goes beyond the basic class interests of the ruling class.

It should be further remembered that occupying the high position some Judges gave farcical and ridiculous interpretations of Marxist theory as in the case against Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad.

By promoting its own partisan choice to the highest judicial post, the Executive declares that in future the judges will have to follow strictly its needs and demands that the ruling classes can no longer afford the luxury of even the

sham independence of the Judiciary or its conflicts on individual issues with the Executive.

Our Party refutes the claims of the ruling party that the supersession of the senior judges constitutes an assertion of people's sovereignty over the Judiciary. On the contrary, our Party regards it as an arbitrary act of the ruling party to have a completely docile Judiciary to support its attacks against the people.

Our Party refutes the claim that the Supreme Court Judges were playing an independent role exercising restraint over the Executive in defence of democracy and individual freedom. On the contrary, they have been upholding all attacks on the liberties of the people, and came in conflict with the Executive over its measures to apply some moderate curbs to the power of certain vested interests.

Our Party is of the opinion that the Judiciary of the country must reflect the urges and demands of the people, not the political needs of the ruling party; it should not be allowed to set itself above the people in the name of independence and arrogate to itself the power of striking down policies and laws sanctioned by the people.

It is therefore necessary that the power of appointing Judges of the Supreme Court should be taken out of the hands of the President and the Cabinet. It should rest only with Parliament which should have the right to make direct appointments of the judges and to impeach them. This will emphasise the principal that judges derive their authority from the people while giving the Opposition parties a say in their appointment.

## **Build Democratic Unity against Congress Attacks on Life and Living\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M)  
on the 'Present Political Situation'**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), meeting in Calcutta between May 4 and 8, 1973, reviewed the international and national developments since the last meeting of the Central Committee in the second week of March 1973 at Muzaffarpur, Bihar.*

The Polit Bureau viewed with concern the continued violations of the truce in Vietnam by the USA and its puppet Thieu in violation of the Paris Agreement and the threat of president Nixon to resume bombing in Vietnam and to mine its ports. It expressed its indignation at the carpet bombing in Cambodia to bolster up its puppet regime of Lon Nol, which is on the verge of collapse before the onslaught of the liberation forces of Cambodia.

### **U. S. Imperialist Game**

The P. B. noted that in his recent message to the U.S. Senate, President Nixon while flattering India as a country that has emerged as a great Power in this part of the world, has simultaneously threatened that improvement of relations between India and the USA will depend upon the relations between India and another great Power, implying the Soviet Union. This is the clearest indication that the U.S. seeks to utilise the economic crisis in India to draw India into the orbit of U.S. imperialism.

The resumption of supply of arms just at this time to

\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, May 13, 1973.

Pakistan, thereby bolstering up the military circles there, clearly shows that the U.S. imperialists want to continue their game of working up tensions between the countries of the sub-continent to facilitate their designs of neo-colonialism.

The P.B. regrets that instead of standing up to these threats the Government of India accepts U.S. aid and is looking for more.

The P.B. warns that this course will only intensify our economic problems and may even lead to compromising our independence.

The joint initiative by India and Bangladesh for solving the problems of the Pakistani prisoners-of-war, the Bangladesh detainees in Pakistan and the Pakistani civilians in Bangladesh, which was welcomed the world over, had revived hopes that this would lead to meaningful negotiations between the three countries and the establishment of relations of amity and goodwill. The P.B. regrets that instead of positively responding to this initiative Pakistan had resorted to large-scale arrests of Bangladesh citizens in Pakistan.

### **All-round Deterioration**

During the last two months, the prices of all commodities have skyrocketed and are still rising day by day. Foodgrains are simply not available in large parts of the country. The Finance Minister, Sri Y.B. Chavan, admitted that one-third of the officially advertised fair-price shops are fictitious and exist only on paper. Even in the existing shops large number of cardholders have to go without ration.

The P. B. is alarmed at the rapidly deteriorating conditions of all sections of the people. Famine stalks large parts of Maharashtra, Mysore, Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Tripura and many other States. Instead of intensifying relief to the starving famine-stricken people, their rations have been cut and even the pitifully low wages of those employed on relief works are pocketed by the contractors in collusion with the officials. And when people protest and demonstrate, bullets are rained on them. The Maharashtra Chief Minister

proposes to impose collective fines on the starving people for no other crime than they dared to protest.

The countrywide power cut, which is increasing day by day due to bureaucratic bungling and corruption, has led to total loss of jobs of tens of thousands of badli and temporary workers and to lay-off of hundreds of thousands of workers. Handloom and powerloom workers throughout the country are without jobs. Peasants and agricultural workers are affected.

The Government announced with great fanfare that it would take over the wholesale trade in foodgrains and actually fixed April 1 for the take-over of the wholesale trade in wheat. The CPI(M) while it welcomed the acceptance of the principle of Government monopoly of wholesale trade in foodgrains expressed grave doubts about the success of the Government's move, taking into consideration the way in which it sought to implement its declaration.

### **Procurement and Distribution**

Instead of assuming the responsibility of feeding the people through procurement of all the marketable surplus from the landlords, which would run into tens of millions, the Government has fixed a procurement target of eight million tonnes of wheat and three million tonnes of rice. This is just a little more than the nine million tonnes of buffer stock that the Government had in August last, which is now completely exhausted. This has given free scope to the landlords and wholesalers to keep their stranglehold on food stocks and scuttle the whole scheme.

The P.B. warns that persistence in these policies will intensify the sufferings of the people. It demands compulsory procurement of all the surplus foodgrains of landlords. It demands that the Government must procure all the essential commodities of mass consumption from the producer.

It further demands their distribution through a wide network of fair-price shops and their supervision by people's committees on which all democratic parties and mass organisations are adequately represented.

The Central Pay Commission report lays bare the pretensions of the Government that it was interested in improving the conditions of the poorer sections and middle class employees. The report, while increasing the salary scales and other amenities of the higher-paid officer cadre, has refused to accept the minimum needbased wage and has cut down the amenities of the low-paid staff whose take-home-pay in many cases will be lower than today.

### **Determined Struggles**

Faced with this situation, different sections of the working people have resorted to determined strikes and other forms of struggle like gheraos, demonstrations and taking over of the stocks of hoarders and distributing them among the poor people.

The Government labels these actions of the hungry people as "food riots" and seeks to quell them with brutal repression, including firing. The more the resistance of the people grows, the more severe is the repression let loose on them. This was seen in the brutality of the repression let loose by the Kerala Government on the NGOs and agricultural labourers. This was seen in the strike of the teachers of Haryana. This was again seen in the coldblooded murder of Comrade Suraj Narain Singh by the police in Bihar.

In West Bengal, afraid that the most militant vanguard would give greater inspiration to these growing struggles, semifascist terror continues. The Prime Minister brusquely brushed aside all complaints of terror in West Bengal and called them lies. Today, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in its report on the conditions of trade unions, in its own mild language, has upheld these charges. And yet the ferocity, of the terror has not abated. Bourgeois newspapers of West Bengal report almost daily of incidents of rival groups in the Congress indulging in physical attacks against each other and even murders through goonda gangs with the police looking on. If this is the fate of the rival groups in the Congress, what lengths will the Congress rulers of West Bengal



not go in suppressing the opposition parties and above all, the CPI(M), which challenges the ruling Congress party.

### **Thirst for Authoritarianism**

The P.B. shares the anxiety of the people, their genuine fear that the recent appointment of the Chief Justice of India has been done to have a pliable and submissive judiciary. At the same time, it warns the people to beware of the propaganda of these superseded Judges and other parties about the so-called "independence" of the judiciary being given up.

The record of the Supreme Court Judges has been an unbroken one of interpreting the Constitution and the laws in favour of propertied classes and against the personal liberties of the common people, especially of those fighting the vested interests.

At the same time, the claim of the Government that this appointment was done to uphold the principle of the supremacy and sovereignty of Parliament is hollow. Had it been so, the Government would have placed the choice of the Chief Justice before Parliament where the Opposition parties would have a say in the matter. It was a pure executive act and done with a view to have a submissive judiciary.

Equally the claim of the Government that this was done to safeguard the interests of the people is untenable. When the Supreme Court struck down Sec. 17(1) of the MISA the West Bengal Government continues to keep over 1700 people, who ought to have been released at once, in detention with the active support of the Central Government. Some of them have been released and at the jail gate rearrested under Sec. 3 of the MISA. In most cases, it had suddenly trumped up criminal charges overnight, which were not there all these years, when they were in detention, to continue to keep them in jail.

The thirst for authoritarianism is further seen in the continuation of the state of Emergency and the DIR for the sole purpose of depriving arbitrarily the common people of their fundamental rights and attacking the struggles of the workers.

The CPI(M) demands the lifting of the state of Emergency and the abrogation of the DIR immediately.

The PB noted that against these policies of the Government resistance is growing, as seen in the recent united struggles in Haryana, Punjab, Delhi and other States. These are being fought with a tenacity and determination never before seen.

### **Need of the Hour**

The need of the hour is to forge unity of the Left and democratic parties and forces which can give direction to these growing struggles, often spontaneous, and through it emerge as the viable alternative to the Congress which is losing its prestige rapidly as the people through their experience, realise that they were cheated by Indira Gandhi at the last elections by her alluring slogans. This disillusionment was seen in several by-elections to Assemblies and Parliament in the recent period and most strikingly in the Banka parliamentary by-election where the Congress lost its deposit.

The Right Communist Party, despite it being treated with utmost contempt by the Congress in West Bengal, Bihar, Punjab and elsewhere shamelessly cling to the Congress and continue disruption of the Left and democratic forces.

It is regrettable that the S.P. and SSP continue to seek understanding and alliances with reactionary parties like the Jana Sangh and Congress (O). Far from helping the unity of the Left and democratic forces, such understanding will only tarnish the image of the S.P. and the SSP and will lead to further disruption.

The Jana Sangh, Swatantra and other parties of the Right who have always been the champions of the vested interests are now openly opposing the takeover of the wholesale trade in foodgrains. They are now seeking to exploit the terribly deteriorating conditions of the people.

However, Indira Gandhi emits her venom mainly against the CPI(M). She resorts to vile slanders such as the CPI(M) having allied with the Right parties. It is her party that

welcomed into its fold reactionary elements from these reactionary parties.

### **More Vigorous Struggles**

The P.B. is happy to note that larger and larger sections of the democratic people are seeing through this game. They see these attacks and slanders only as a smoke-screen to cover up the bankruptcy of her own policies.

The CPI(M) is proud that in spite of these determined attacks and slanders, its line of unity and united struggles has aroused response even from the toiling masses under the political influence of the Congress party.

The P.B. congratulates the workers, agricultural labourers, peasants, teachers, State Government employees, students and other sections who have been and are bravely fighting, facing severest repression and brutalities. The P.B. is confident that these struggles will grow and the united struggles will defeat these anti-people, anti-democratic policies of the Government.

The P.B. directs all its units to stand still more steadfastly by the struggling people, and pursue the path of unity and united struggles still more vigorously.

## **Motivated Slander against CPI(M) on Punjab Report\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the C.P.I.(M) in Calcutta on July 11, 1973**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on July 11, 1973:*

The Polit Bureau repudiates the motivated slander campaign unleashed by certain Right Communist and Congress members of the Punjab Legislative Assembly Committee, set up to enquire into the large-scale grabbing of evacuee and wastelands by influential men and corrupt high-placed officials.

It was the State Unit of our Party that had raised this question both inside and outside the Punjab Legislative Assembly and demanded a public enquiry and a thorough probe into all such deals. Curiously enough our Party was excluded from that committee, while the Right Communist representative, Sri Darshan Singh Canadian, was included in it.

The Committee did not investigate a large number of such illegal land grab cases and even exonerated many really guilty persons most of whom were Congressmen. But it took special pains to "investigate" a malicious charge, brought before it by the Right Communist kisan leader, Sri Chhajumal Vaid, that Harkishan Singh Surjeet, Polit Bureau member of the CPI(M), had set up a farm of 106 acres by purchasing land in benami transactions in the name of his relatives as well as the relatives of Sohan Singh Bassi, numbering nine persons. The Committee itself had admitted that it did not

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even call for any explanation from Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet.

As soon as this report was released to the Press by the Punjab Revenue Minister, Umrao Singh, Comrade Surjeet issued a statement to the Press on June 28 itself and also wrote to the Punjab Chief Minister that he had nothing to do with the purchase of the land mentioned in the report, and had never lent his name or influence to any of his relatives or friends to gain any personal land or property. But from the report for the first time, he has found that some of his relatives have purchased lands allotted to a landlord, Ravidarshan Singh, paying full market value of these lands. About 30 acres were lands auctioned to Harijans, and were being held under his benami occupation. The committee itself has said that there is nothing wrong in purchasing the allotted land but has pointed out that there is the irregularity of Harijan auction land being purchased before the ten-year period expired. Comrade Surjeet offered not only that he would make his relatives restore the land to the Government, but also extend our whole Party's support to the Government in distributing such lands to the agricultural workers and to landless peasants especially the Harijans.

Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Comrade Satwant Singh, our State Committee Secretary, while pinning down the nefarious motive in dragging our Party leader's name to tarnish the image of our Party, welcomed even the limited exposure of certain selected cases by this committee. They demanded immediate follow-up action on the report and to take away all such lands from such persons and officials, and also from all other landgrabbers who remain uncovered by the report and distribute the same to agricultural workers and Harijans. They also pledged our Party's support to any Government step against anybody who has indulged in foul land-grabbing.

The Polit Bureau calls upon all Party members to fight back these motivated slanders against our Party and leaders. It also calls upon them to intensify their campaign to

unearth all benami and illegal and immoral land transactions and see that it is distributed to agricultural labourers and poor peasants, especially the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

## **Appeal to All Left and Democratic Parties by the Central Committee of CPI(M)\***

*The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), meeting in Calcutta from July 15 to 20, 1973, made an appeal to all Left and democratic parties. The following is the text of the appeal :*

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) appeals to all concerned to make serious efforts to reforge the unity of Left and democratic forces, which had played a significant role in defeating the Congress in the Fourth General Elections in some States but which was disrupted after the Congress got split in 1969.

### **Far Bigger Crisis**

The developments of the last four years have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the stand adopted by the Right Communist Party and some other Left parties and groups towards the Congress split was incorrect. The ruling Congress headed by Indira Gandhi, it has been shown for all those who have eyes to see, is the rightful inheritor of all the policies that strengthened monopoly and landlords, pursued by the undivided Congress. The country today is in a far bigger all round crisis than it was on the eve of the Fourth General Elections.

The unprecedented rise in the prices of all essential commodities; the famine that is affecting large parts of the country leading to starvation deaths in several places; the millions

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of unemployed people all over the country; the increasing burdens of taxation; the veritable crisis of planning which once again brings to the forefront the shadow of a "Plan holiday"—all these symptoms of the most intense crisis of the economy are supplemented by rampant corruption which pervades the whole administration and social life; the intense repression to which all democratic organizations and movements are subjected; the rank opportunism and drive for power which lead to factional quarrels inside the ruling party; the consequent ministerial crisis in State after State; the imposition of President's rule as a method of staving off the crisis of the ruling party; and so on.

Never have the high-sounding promises made by a ruling party to the people been proved so hollow in such a short time as the demagogic promises of *Garibi Hatao*, democracy and socialism made by the Prime Minister and her colleagues on the eve of the 1971 and 1972 elections.

The developments of the last four years have also proved that the anti-people policies of the ruling Congress headed by the Prime Minister cannot be countered by that type of 'anti-Congress' politics which was evolved by the Socialist Party and some other Left and democratic parties and groups who sought to rally the forces of Right reaction, socio-cultural obscurantism and communal separatism in the same camp as the Left and democratic forces. The ignominious defeat of the 'Grand Alliance' in the 1971-72 elections, followed by the championing of openly pro-imperialist, pro-landlord and pro-monopoly slogans by some of the so-called anti-Congress parties and groups, has made it clear that the ruling Congress and its anti-people policies can be fought only by the united force of Left and democratic parties, groups and organizations on the basis of a programme of struggle against imperialism, feudalism and monopoly capitalism.

### **United Actions**

The C.C. notes that, forced by the developing crisis, the leadership of the Right C.P. is making some moves away



from the policy which made it break away from the Left and join the Congress camp. It has, of course, not yet broken away from its coalition with the Congress in Kerala—a coalition which pursues in Kerala the same anti-people policies as the Congress does in the whole country. There are, however, indications that their central leadership as well as the leaderships in most of the States where they do not share ministerial offices with the Congress are forced to come out in united action, as is shown in such instances as the Bombay General Strike of May 15, the Bangalore Bandh of June 30, the West Bengal jute strike of June 18, the Hooghly Bandh of July 9 and above all, the July 27 strike in West Bengal for which calls have been given by the Right Communist Party on the one hand and five Left parties including the CPI(M) on the other. The C.C. is confident that the very development of these struggles on popular mass issues will lead the ranks and leaders of the Right C.P. to gradually give up the incorrect policies on the basis of which it disrupted the unity of the Left and democratic movement after the 1969 split in the Congress.

The Socialist Party which has declared that it has given up its old policy of joining the 'Grand Alliance' still continues the same policy in some cases, as is shown by the efforts being made by it to forge understanding with the Congress (O) and other similar parties in connection with the forthcoming U.P. elections. Further, on issues like the Indo-Soviet Treaty and a number of national and international issues, the CPI(M) cannot agree with it. The C. C., however, notes with gratification the unity of action forged in various local struggles as well as in the formation of the UCTU and is confident that the process of joint struggles and mutual exchange of views among the Left and democratic parties would help the narrowing down of these differences.

The C. C. is aware that even among those Left and democratic parties who have been co-operating with the CPI(M) (as for instance, the eight Left parties in West Bengal and the Socialist Party, KSP, and KTP in Kerala) differences

sometimes crop up. The RSP in West Bengal, for instance, broke away from the eight party Left front on the question of joining the Assembly; the RSP, the SUC and the Forward Bloc are keeping away from the General Strike of July 27 for which the call has been given by the other Left parties. Despite such differences cropping up among them, however, the C. C. is confident that the requirements of the developing mass movement would bring them together in united actions, leading to the formation of a powerful united front.

The C.C. wants to assure all left and democratic parties, groups and organizations, that the CPI(M) would make utmost endeavours to forge unity in action of specific issues, and, wherever possible, political united fronts to fight the anti-people policies of the ruling Congress and its Government. It is aware that every party, group or organization has its own specific approach to the problems facing the country—an approach which is different from that of the other parties, groups and organizations. It would therefore, be unrealistic to attempt the formulation of a common programme covering all aspects of the economic and political life of the people.

### **Issues for Joint Action**

It is, however, possible and necessary for them all to come together on a limited programme of joint action directed against imperialism, landlordism, and monopoly capital, on such issues as food and famine; high prices and the need for increase in the emoluments of workers and employees; reduction in the tax and debt burdens; fair prices and financial assistance to the peasants, small traders and other small property owners; and such other immediate demands of the common people. United action is also possible against the increasing attacks of the police and other engines of oppression on the common people; against the corruption of the administration at its bureaucratic as well as political levels; for the extension of democratic rights of the common people; for strengthening relations with the USSR and for normalization of relations with China and Pakistan, and so on.

At the same time, it is necessary for all Left and democratic forces to combat caste and communal separatism, the efforts to use the legitimate sentiments of the common people for development of their common language in order to set people speaking one language against those speaking another and all other forms of separatism which range one section of the common people against another. Unity of the common people against these forces of disruption is the only guarantee that their struggle for their legitimate rights will force the hands of the ruling classes to concede their demands.

While developing unity in action on such burning issues that affect the lives of the people, the Left and democratic parties should also organize fruitful exchange of views on the basic issues on which they differ from one another. The CPI(M) for its part has its own approach to these basic issues, as has been made clear in the Party Programme and the Political Resolutions of the Party Congress and the C.C. The C. C. is of the opinion that the current developments have fully proved the validity of the stand taken by the Party. The C. C. would, however, be willing to exchange views with those parties, groups and organizations which differ from the CPI(M), so that the process of fraternal discussion on the basic issues combined with united action on immediate issues will help the formation of a more or less common approach to as many basic issues as possible. The C. C. expects all other Left and democratic parties, groups and organizations to make it possible for such a coming together of the entire Left and democratic movement in the country.

## **CPI(M) Denounces Portuguese Crimes\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M)**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) denounces the Portuguese colonialists for the mass killings of African people in Mozambique, the latest of which is the massacre in the village of Wiriyamu in December last. The democratic conscience of the world has been shocked by the massacre, news of which was given out a few days ago by two Catholic missionaries.

If, at a time when the liberation movement of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau are advancing fast with vast areas already liberated, controlled and administered by the popular forces, the Portuguese fascists have dared to commit such genocidal crimes reminiscent of the U.S. imperialist bestialities in My Lai and other places in South Vietnam, it is because of the support they have, not only from the racist regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia, but also the U.S. and British imperialist. Despite strong public opinion in Britain, the Tory Prime Minister has welcomed Portugal's Prime Minister when his hands are still dripping with the blood of the people of Mozambique.

The Central Committee calls on the people of India to denounce this Portuguese colonialist crime and extend all sympathy and support to the people of the three Portuguese colonies in Africa who are fighting for their freedom.

The Central Committee demands that the Government of India follow up its condemnation of the crime with every

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**effort in every international forum to invoke all possible sanctions against the fascist dictatorship of Portugal and give all moral and material support to the liberation struggles of Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau.**

## **On Certain International Developments\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M)**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) considers that recent international developments and agreements are the result of long-term economic and political developments. The imperialist camp weakened by the big blows of the national liberation movement, especially the defeat it had to face in Vietnam, confronted by the growing economic and military strength of the Socialist camp, is involved in its contradictions, monetary conflicts, struggle for world markets and stands in need of "detente" and of economic outlet through trade with Socialist countries.

The USA with a major military retreat in Vietnam and with opinion at home more and more opposing aggressive actions and crushing military burdens, was urgently in need of talks for detente and trade with Socialist countries. The imperialists also think that by entering into such accords with Socialist countries they will be in a position to utilize the differences in the Socialist camp to their advantage.

The successive devaluations of the dollar and the huge balance of payments deficit of the USA have compelled it to make insistent demands on its better and thriving allies and partners. Its need of markets, of redressing the balance of payments deficit of ten billion dollars, is so urgent that it has started blackmailing its partners to have access to their markets for its goods and capital.

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Kissinger's call for a new Atlantic Charter and his statement that the Atlantic allies "should revitalise their common ideals and objectives before Mr. Nixon undertakes his trip to Europe towards the end of the year," was a part of this blackmail. It demanded that military commitments and economic agreements should be discussed together, that the allies must lift part of American NATO burden and make adequate economic concessions. Here was an attempt to exploit the EEC's dependence on American nuclear weaponry to extort wide trade concessions from the European allies.

There was sharp reaction and rejection of this proposal. All the members of the EEC, from Pompidou to Brandt, rejected it and the U.S. President had to beat a retreat for the time being.

These conflicts and the need for new trading avenues constitute the source of recent understandings. The realization also has grown that the military might of the USSR is powerful enough to inflict irreparable damage and destruction on all aggressors and war-mongers in an open conflict.

The Central Committee welcomes the accord between the USSR and West Germany recognizing the frontiers and status of the German Democratic Republic. It welcomes the agreements between West Germany and Czechoslovakia and West Germany and Poland recognizing and guaranteeing the postwar frontiers.

All these years the big capitalist States of Europe, especially West Germany under American incitement, had refused to accept GDR and the frontiers between West Germany and other Socialist countries. It was in fact refusal to recognize the Socialist revolutions and their legitimacy. Bonn is now formally compelled to accept the realities of the situation and normalize its relations with its neighbours and the USSR.

Brezhnev's agreements in Washington endorsed what was previously agreed to in Moscow. Economically, Brezhnev's visit was not so successful. The demand for most favoured nation treatment in matters of trade was not granted. The

most important agreement relates to avoidance of war. It contains vague promises and phrases about peaceful intentions. It says that nothing stated in the agreement will affect the obligations of the two parties towards their allies, thus leaving the USA to intervene whenever it feels necessary. It is therefore not in the least surprising that when these professions to observe peace were being solemnly delivered and signed, Nixon was directing the most brutal bombing against Cambodia to carry out his obligations to his allies and his agents were helping Saigon to undermine the Paris Agreements on Vietnam; nor is it surprising that his officials have been asking Thieu to take over the Cambodian bombings.

The Central Committee, however, considers that the agreement to avoid war is welcome as it denotes a certain relaxation of tension arising from open stress on military confrontation and deflates the propaganda of danger of aggression from the USSR on which the militarists have been thriving.

At the same time, the Central Committee rejects the fantastic claims made in this behalf that "these agreements and joint statements denote the world's transition from the era of cold war to a new era of peace, detente and fruitful cooperation among countries of different social systems."

American imperialism is fully armed with the most deadly nuclear and conventional arms. So are its partners. What it is doing to the world is clear from the barbarous bombings and aggressive wars in Indo-China, against which the Vietnamese and Cambodians are fighting. It has not ended its aggressive activities in spite of repeated promises to withdraw from Vietnam and Nixon continues to carry on destructive bombing raids in defiance of American public opinion.

One has only to remember that Nixon, who signs a detente agreement with Brezhnev, supports the apartheid Governments of South Africa and Rhodesia, actively supports and arms the Portuguese imperialists to carry on their brutal massacres and military suppression of people of Mozambique,



Angola and Guinea-Bissau. It goes on with its conspiracies in Latin America, engineering military coups to topple the Governments which defy its dictat as is evident in the recent attempt at a military coup in Chile. It arms Israel against the Arabs and has revived the CENTO Pact whose declared aim is to fight Communism, is now arming the Shah of Iran to fight the Arabs and render support to the military circles in Pakistan. It is strengthening and is completing a chain of military bases from the African coast to Australia across the Indian Ocean, as in Diego Garcia Island, as well as new big naval and air bases that are being built in Iran's Arabian coast close to the Pakistan border. The CIA, it is known, is engaged in organizing counter-revolutionary activities against democratic and Socialist Governments.

The recent conference on European Security at Helsinki in which thirtyfive nations participated reveals how the imperialists are unable to pursue their declared reactionary aims in practice. The opposition to such a European Conference came from these countries in the past because they refused to recognize the existence of the GDR and the frontiers established at the conclusion of the war. Bonn, according to the imperialists, was the sole representative of Germany. The situation in the imperialist camp, the conflicts and contradictions compelled individual NATO States to shift their position, and Bonn's opposition crumbled when it recognized in its treaties with Moscow and Warsaw the inviolability of the frontiers of the GDR. This led later to Four-Power agreements on West Berlin and to the conclusion of a series of agreements between the FRG and GDR Governments which established them as two equal sovereign States and enabled both to join UNO as such. The FRG Government was also forced to conclude a treaty with Czechoslovakia declaring the Munich Agreement of 1938 as invalid from the very beginning.

These developments are welcome, revealing a retreat of the NATO camp on its former positions. It was because of this that the conference was made possible.

The proceedings of the conference, however, reveal that a number of NATO Foreign Ministers were at the old game of subversion. Instead of concentrating on problems of security, a number of them were keen on penetration and subversion in Socialist countries in the name of freedom of ideas and exchange of persons. While seeming to accept the postwar frontiers the demand was made to open them for purposes of subversion.

The Central Committee notes that during the course of these negotiations and before, the USSR has entered into a number of economic agreements with big monopolies from several countries. Other agreements are on the anvil. They include agreements for commercial credits, for import of technique, for building giant plants in the Soviet Union.

While the Central Committee generally stands for and welcomes growing trade and economic relations between countries belonging to different social systems, it however, warns that the imperialists will attempt to use such agreements to undermine Socialism and national liberation movements. These attempts must be defeated.

Rejecting the fantastic claims about the opening of a new era, the Central Committee considers the following warning to be correct : "The imperialists pursue a policy of detente with some big countries in the world in order to have a free hand to consolidate their forces, oppose the revolutionary movements in the world, repress the revolution in their own countries and stamp out national liberation movements while never giving up their preparations for a new war."

At the same time, it should be realized that these detente conferences and manoeuvres, whatever may be the ultimate intentions of imperialists, arise out of the growing weakness of the imperialist system, its crisis, its inability to hold all its adherents against the Socialist world, its incapacity to convince the masses in the capitalist world of the necessity of war, aggression.

Battered from all sides, forced to retreat on the soil of Vietnam, facing a disaster on the soil of Cambodia, unable

to restrain the resistance in neighbouring Latin America, with its oil resources threatened by the fighting Arabs, its military might matched by the might of the Soviet, concerned over the rapid advance of People's China, American imperialism is making desperate efforts to save its position and has to sing a tune of peace and reasonableness. In the midst of its economic crisis it has involved itself in one of the worst political crisis challenging the credibility of its entire system : the Watergate scandal in which the head of the State is virtually arraigned for almost every crime—falsification, corruption, illegal raiding of premises, violation of the freedom of other peoples, of the freedom of opposition parties. The mercenary character of the Presidential rule, the corruption practised by the capitalist administration stand thoroughly exposed. This is the real face of the proclaimed defenders of democracy and freedom of smaller countries of the world. This utter degeneration of bourgeois democracy is not seen in the USA alone. Similar depths of degradation have also been reached by others who run the capitalist States.

The military, political and moral prestige of the USA in the world is at a very low level.

The Central Committee is of the opinion that it will be an act of betrayal if the new agreements are exploited to create a screen of complacency, a feeling that now the fate of the world depends on peaceful competition only and not on accentuation of class struggle in each country. With such an outlook there is every danger of the liberation struggles and the class struggles in advanced countries being let down in the name of world peace.

The Central Committee considers that the objective situation is more favourable for a great advance of the forces of democracy, peace and Socialism. The imperialist camp is weakened and is unable to adopt the old postures. What is urgently needed is the unity of the Socialist camp and the revolutionary movement. Unfortunately, the Sino-Soviet differences have developed into open conflicts and they are

being used by the imperialists to save themselves, to buttress themselves. The Central Committee appeals to all parties believing in Marxism-Leninism to bend their efforts to forge the unity of the Socialist camp so that the favourable situation can be used to advance the cause of national liberation, democracy, peace and Socialism.

## **CPI(M)'s Homage to Comrade Ulbricht\***

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) pays its homage to the memory of Comrade Walter Ulbricht, head of the German Democratic Republic who passed away on August 1. The P.B. offers its condolences to the Government and the people of the GDR and the members of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

Comrade Ulbricht joined the working class movement in Germany at a young age. In the crucial period following the conclusion of the First World War, Comrade Ulbricht threw in his lot with Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, took a stand against the treacherous role of the Social Democratic leaders and formed the Communist Party of Germany which, under the inspiration of Lenin and the successful November Revolution, upheld the banner of revolutionary Marxism.

By his steadfast devotion to the cause of the Party, Ulbricht rose to occupy important positions in the organization. In 1923, at the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Germany he was elected to the Central Committee of the Party.

The rising menace of fascism found him working out the Party's line of unity of the working class, of united front with the Social Democratic Party to defeat the nazi counter-revolution. With Hitler's rise to power he, along with several hundred cadres and leaders of the CPG, went underground

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to carry on the battle against fascism. Forced to leave the soil of Germany, Ulbricht continued his battle against nazism and international fascism. He participated in Spain's battle against Franco fascism. After the defeat of Hitler, he re-entered Germany and was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Soon after he was elected to the Polit Bureau and later on, the First Secretary of the Party. In 1960, he was elected President of the GDR. During his last years, he saw the GDR achieving important successes in Socialist construction and securing international recognition.

Ulbricht's death removes from the scene one of the few remaining links with the days when Lenin directed the fight of the working class against international revisionism and dogmatism.

The P.B. offers its condolences to Ulbricht's widow and shares her sorrow.

## **CPI(M) Welcomes Indo-Pak Agreement\***

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in a statement issued in Calcutta on August 29, 1973, "welcomes the new agreements [between India and Pakistan] on prisoners of war and repatriation of civilians as an important step forward in the cause of friendship and understanding between the three countries of the subcontinent."

The statement adds : "The agreement to repatriate prisoners and civilians will no doubt bring joy to thousands of families in Pakistan and Bangladesh and we share their joy. It will help all democratic and progressive forces in the three countries to carry forward the struggle for friendship and peace. The Polit Bureau earnestly hopes that this important step will be followed by others including the recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan so that an atmosphere of confidence and equality permeates the sub-continent.

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## **Political United Front of Left and Democratic Parties for Carrying Forward Struggle\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M)**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) had a meeting in Calcutta from September 3 to 7, 1973. All the members were present except Comrade A.K. Gopalan who was convalescing in Trivandrum.*

The Polit Bureau noted with satisfaction that the Delhi Agreement between India and Pakistan arrived at with the full concurrence of Bangladesh has received the general approval of the mass of the people in the three countries. The agreement facilitates the resolution of the issues that have arisen between the two countries since the 1971 war and paves the way for the resolution of all disputes between the two countries by bilateral negotiations. The P.B. hopes that the unity of the democratic forces in all the three countries will help foil the game of U.S. imperialism to recreate tension on one pretext or another and strengthen its hold in this sub-continent.

### **Indo-Pak Relations**

The P.B. notes that there are some political elements in India which persist in their policies of hostility to Pakistan and therefore, have struck a discordant note in the general approval of the Delhi Agreement. The P. B. however, hopes that all the genuinely anti-imperialist and secular forces would unitedly resist and defeat the efforts being made by such elements. The P. B. calls upon all units and members of the

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Party to carry on a powerful campaign of united struggle against such political elements as try to maintain the relations of hostility between India and Pakistan.

### **Normalise Relations with China**

Now that relation between India and Pakistan are on the way of being normalised, the P.B. urges the Government of India to take initiative for the normalisation of relations with People's China. The ending of tension of the Indian sub-continent and between India and China would create necessary conditions for the anti-imperialist forces in this region inflict further defeats on imperialism.

### **Recognise P.R.G.**

The P.B. urges on the Government of India to recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and to support the proposals put forward by the President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the unification of North and South Korea.

The enormous increase in defence expenditure which followed the accentuation of tension between India and Pakistan and the outbreak of conflict between India and China has been an unbearable burden for our people. So, too, have our brethren in Pakistan and Bangladesh suffered from the militarist regime in Pakistan. The peaceful settlement of all questions in dispute among the three countries of the Indian sub-continent and between India and China would remove this huge burden and enable our own people and our neighbours to concentrate their attention and utilise their resources for developmental activities.

### **Withdraw the Emergency**

The P.B. protests against the attitude of the Government of India which persists in maintaining wartime emergency even though over a year and a half has elapsed since the Indo-Pak war has ended. The emergency should have been lifted immediately after the end of the war. There was no excuse

for maintaining in after the Simla Agreement of last year and much less after the Delhi Agreement which has been hailed by the peoples of all countries of the world.

### **Food Situation and Struggles**

The P.B. reviewed the food situation in the country and the struggles that have been waged in various States and regions. It noted with satisfaction that Left and democratic parties and organizations have come together in demonstrations, rallies, strikes, bandhs, dehoarding campaigns and various other forms of resistance to the pro-landlord and pro-wholesaler policies of the Central and State Governments. It greets the millions of people who responded to the call of the CPI(M) and other Left and democratic parties to join these various forms of militant struggle. It congratulates the cadres of all the Left and democratic parties who worked tirelessly to make these campaigns and struggles the success that they proved to be.

The P.B. is of the opinion that the food situation is going to continue to cause acute misery to the mass of urban and rural poor and middle classes. For, despite the talk of a bumper crop following a good monsoon, the food position is not likely to register any significant improvement over the past.

The pro-landlord agrarian policies of the Government are so ruining the mass of poor and medium-level cultivators that production is seriously affected. Furthermore, a narrow stratum of landlords and big cultivators are enabled by the policies of the Government to seize the bulk of the food that is produced in the country which they are using to reap enormous profits through sales at black market prices. The admitted fiasco of the "take-over of wholesale trade in wheat" followed by abandonment of even the proposal to take over the wholesale trade in rice has made it clear that the interests of the big landlords, wholesalers, hoarders and millers are completely safe in the hands of the Central Government. The Government has given complete freedom to the

landlords and speculators to sell foodgrains at any price they choose. In the absence of taking over the entire marketable surplus from landlords, the so-called fixing of prices on a "no loss no profit" basis is a fraud on the people as the prices fixed are only the present high ruling prices.

### **End pro-landlord Policies**

The CPI(M) as well as other Left and democratic parties has always held that a system of fair distribution of foodgrains to the people cannot be established unless the Government takes hold of the entire marketable surplus of landlords and prevents this huge quantity from becoming the property of a handful of big stockholders. The refusal of the Government of India to take this measure together with the fact that the State Governments and the bureaucracy are under control of landlords lies at the root of the admitted failure of the much trumpeted radical policy of State take-over of wholesale trade in food-grains.

The P.B. demands and appeals to all democratic organizations to join in demanding that this pro-land lord and pro-wholesale policy of the Government of India and all the State Governments should be ended and that an effective policy of procurement and fair distribution of foodgrains be adopted. It protests against the decision of the Central and State Governments to raise the procurement prices which would inevitably raise the issue prices. It demands that the urban as well as rural poor and middle classes should be provided with foodgrains at no more than Re. one per kg. of rice or wheat and that the quantum supplied should be not less than 450 grammes of foodgrains and 50 grammes of pulses per adult per day. This rate of issue price and this quantum of supply cannot be maintained unless the Government's policies are radically revised.

The P.B. is of the view that recent increases in the procurement prices are not justified since the landlords and non-working cultivators whose sales of foodgrains account for the bulk of the marketable surplus have been receiving big margins

of profit even at the old rates. As for the medium-level and poor cultivators who are unable to make profits like the land lords and non-working cultivators, they deserve higher returns for what they have to sell. This, however, can be done without increasing the procurement price if it is provided that the medium-level and poor cultivators in whose case there is no compulsory procurement will get a bonus for whatever they voluntarily hand over to the Government. The total amount to be paid by way of bonus to them would be a small amount compared to the huge amounts that are now being paid to the big landlords and non-working cultivators by way of higher prices. This huge amount which goes into the pockets of a handful of stockholders no doubt becomes a huge burden on the mass of consumers.

### **Bring Prices Down**

While thus demanding a radical change in the procurement prices and distribution policies of the Government with regard to foodgrains, the P.B. demands and appeals to all others democratic organizations to join in demanding that effective measures are taken by the Government to bring down the prices of all essential commodities such as edible oil, chillies, tamarind, sugar, cloth, kerosene, coal, etc. The fact that every one of these essential commodities is going higher and higher in prices, speaks volumes with regard to the class character of the policies being pursued by the Central and State Governments. That is why the Left and democratic parties who have launched their campaigns against hoarders and blackmarketeers have taken to dehoarding campaigns not only with regard to foodgrains, but in relation to several other essential commodities. The common people are realising that it is the anti-people policies of the Central and State Governments that are leading to such an unprecedented rise in prices of all essential commodities. The P.B. pledges itself that the entire CPI(M) would devote its energies to carrying forward the struggle against the price-rise.

### **Depth of Discontent**

The P.B. noted that apart from the food agitation, various other mass struggles have taken place. The huge struggle of the locomen, which paralysed railway transport for several days, the State Government employees' strike in Rajasthan, the strike of the power engineers in North India and the doctors' strike in Maharashtra which are still continuing the dharna of 25,000 teachers of Haryana—all of these strikes of the working class and middle class employees show the depth of popular discontent. The Government seeks to suppress these struggles by severe repression and terror. It banned strikes in the railways, the strikes of doctors and nurses and the State Government employees under the DIR and jailed thousands of leaders and active workers. It evicted the doctors from their quarters. All these have completely exposed the anti-working class and anti-democratic character of the regime. The P.B. is happy to note that in most of these struggles, the workers and employees concerned have successfully defied the authorities who have in most places been forced to make partial concession to the demands of the striking people. Workers and employees belonging to various T.U. organizations and owing allegiance to various political parties have come together in making these struggles successful thus showing the possibilities of united action in defence of the interests of the working people.

### **For Political United Front**

The P.B. is proud of the role played by the members and sympathisers of the CPI(M) in developing these struggles and in forging the unity of the Left and democratic elements in support of these struggles. It hopes that the process that has thus started will go forward so that the united struggles for which the Central Committee of the CPI(M) had called would be wider and stronger.

It is against this background that the representatives of our Party are meeting the comrades of the Socialist Party at

Delhi from September 18 to 20. The P.B. wants to assure the comrades and friends of all other Left and democratic parties that it would be the endeavour of our Party to see that the unity in action that has started developing is transformed into a political united front of all the Left and democratic parties consistently fighting the landlord-bourgeois regime and the various parties and organizations representing the big landlords and monopoly capitalists.

### **Right C.P.'s Policy**

The P.B. noted with satisfaction that the Right C.P. has joined our Party and other Left and democratic parties in several mass actions. That Party, however, still persists in its basic policy of disrupting the Left and democratic front by aligning itself with the ruling Congress. At the very time when it has been forced to adopt an apparently radical and militant attitude in other States, the Government headed by it in Kerala let loose an orgy of repression on the people fighting against the Government's policies leading to high prices and non-availability of foodgrains. On the day of the Kerala Bandh on August 2, the most savage repression and terror were let loose. Thousands were mercilessly beaten by the police in the streets and police lock-ups. This is the direct result of its determination to remain in ministerial offices at all costs. Even in West Bengal where it was forced to declare a one-day State wide bandh as well as another bandh in Malda against the policies of the State Government itself, it continues to be a partner in the PDA. The P.B. hopes that ultimately they will be forced to abandon their policy of alliance with the ruling Congress party and join the united front of Left and democratic parties.

### **Sympathy to Flood Victims**

The P.B. expressed its sympathy to the victims of the floods in Rajasthan, Punjab, M.P., Gujarat, U.P., Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa and demanded of the Government adequate relief to the families who have been rendered destitute.

### **Parliamentary Group's Mistake**

The P.B. reviewed the work of the Parliamentary Group of the Party which was entrusted with the task of acting as the tribune of the fighting people giving expression to their discontent against the regime. The P.B. criticised the Group for responding to the appeal of the leader of the Congress(O) and not proceeding with the no-confidence motion after it was admitted. The reason given that since the Congress(O), Jana Sangh and the Swatantra parties decided that the motion should not be proceeded with, insisting on a debate would have meant disrupting the unity of the Opposition, is untenable.

The P.B. reiterates its stand that what it is seeking to build is the unity of the Left and democratic forces as a viable alternative to the ruling Congress. Although cooperation with all parties of the Opposition in Parliament is not barred on democratic issues affecting the people and issues of corruption, there is no question of unity even on the parliamentary forum with the Jana Sangh, Swatantra and Congress(O).

The fact that these "Opposition" parties insisted on the postponement of the no-confidence motion at the very time when mass struggles against the Congress Government and its anti-people policies are developing rapidly, and when the Government has gone back on its declared policy of State take-over of wholesale trade in foodgrains clearly shows that what these parties are interested in defending are not the interests of the masses but those of the exploiting classes whom they represent. The appeal of the Congress(O) leader to postpone the discussion on the no-confidence, coming at a time when talks are reported for a merger between them and the ruling Congress, is significant.

## **On Overthrow of Dr. Allende's Government in Chile\***

**Statement issued by P. Sundarayya,  
General Secretary of CPI(M) in New Delhi on  
September 12, 1973**

*Comrade P Sundarayya, General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on September 12, 1973 :*

It is extremely shocking to learn the news of the overthrow of the three-year-old progressive Left Government of Dr. Salvador Allende in Chile by a military coup d'etat which led to the killing of Dr. Allende. For those who had been closely following the developments in Chile during the last three years, it was becoming increasingly evident that the reactionary and counter-revolutionary forces in Chile would not abide by democratic norms and forms, and the aggressive U.S. imperialist circles would resort to every heinous conspiracy to topple the Government of Dr. Allende and to perpetuate the monopolist exploitation of Chilean resources. I denounce this military coup d'etat in Chile as a highly retrograde act, and condemn the heavy repression let loose on the Left and progressive forces in Chile.

The Chilean experiment once again demonstrates how it is impossible to checkmate the violence of the counter-revolutionary forces without an organised people's armed force to defend the gains of revolution. I hope that the progressive forces in Chile would not take this reactionary coup d'etat lying down and would reorganise themselves to fight back the reaction and defeat it.

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions, the All-India Kisan

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Sabha, the Students Federation of India and other mass organizations have denounced the U.S. imperialist-inspired crime and demonstrations have been held in a number of places against U.S. imperialism and in solidarity with Chilean revolutionary forces.

## **Exploiting Classes will Never Relinquish Power Peacefully\***

**Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY",  
September 23, 1973**

The counter-revolutionary coup in Chile, followed by the ghastly murder of Dr. Allende, the elected President, who heroically fought to the last, has roused universal protests. Once more a small group of exploiters with the aid of the professional army officers have conspired against the people, the democratic mandate and their sovereign right to rule. They have dissolved the legislature, withdrawn all mandates and installed themselves in power.

This treacherous combination of army officers and vested interests had not the ghost of a chance to oust the President had they not been directly helped by the C.I.A.—the U.S. imperialist agency to organize counter-revolution in democratic and Socialist countries.

Following the coup hundreds of workers, peasants and democrats are being butchered by the military junta whose lust for blood and brutality increases every day with encouragement and help from the U.S. imperialists.

It is known that the military junta has connections with the Pentagon and in the fiscal year 1973, the United States had spent 12.4 million dollars to subsidise the junta's military preparations programme.

We express our solidarity with the fighting working class and people of Chile who are waging an armed battle and

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\*This Editorial is on the experience in Chile and overthrow of Dr. Salvador Allende's Government.

going through this fiery ordeal to defend their democracy, their independence, freedom from foreign exploitation.

September, 4, 1973, was the third anniversary of the Left victory at the Presidential elections. The Popular Unity Government, despite the obstacles and sabotage of the reactionaries, was proceeding with its programme and succeeding in mobilising ever larger number of people round it. The counter-revolutionaries were in a hurry because they knew that every day they were losing. Pablo Rodirgues, ring-leader of the Fascist party (*Patriay Liberateo*) expressed their mind when he said. "If the elections take place in 1976 Marxists will get 80 per cent of the vote. Hence we must act before 1976."

### **What Angered Them**

They correctly analysed the situation. For, the Popular Unity Government under Dr. Salvador Allende's Presidency was taking one step after another in popular interest. For the first time in Chile's history domination of foreign Big Business was done away with which shook the system of capitalist rule. Copper was nationalised. The U.S. imperialist positions in the economy were undermined which roused the anger of the imperialists. The state sector was expanded.

In eighteen months from November 1970 to May 1972, the Government expropriated and distributed to peasant families about five million hectares; big owners lost more than 835,000 out of the 1,250,000 hectares of irrigated land which produces 60 per cent of the total farm output.

The Government established control over 90 per cent of banking which enabled it to grant credits to larger number of small and middle farmers. It put sale of wheat under control and set up procurement agencies to stop speculation. Industrialisation of farming being one of its declared objectives in the agrarian programme accepted by the parties of Popular Unity, it placed large orders for tractors to help production. Annual growth of farm output increased from 2.5 to 5.8 per cent.

As soon as the Government took over, it increased wages, salaries, pensions and social benefits. A large-scale housing programme was undertaken. Unemployment was markedly reduced. It was eight per cent in 1970; by July this year it was reduced to three per cent.

All this armed the toilers with a new consciousness and confidence. The vested interests, the capitalists, the landlords and their parties fought every inch of this advance. Utilising their parliamentary strength, the reactionaries blocked every progressive measure. A Bill to increase the salaries of workers was debated for months, the Christian Democrats resorting to rowdiness in the interest of their nefarious aim.

Slander campaign, charging the Government and its Ministers with "abuse" of the constitution, has been a favourite weapon. The judiciary helped the counter-revolutionaries in every way. The moment the Government took action against fascist gangsters, the Opposition and the judiciary took up cudgels on their behalf, charging the Government with misusing its power thus giving free licence to the counter revolutionaries.

### **Economic Sabotage and Terror**

And Finally widespread economic sabotage and terror was organised. Arms were collected; instructions were sent for starving the Government and the people. Terroristic attempts were made. In June, an attempt at a fascist coup was planned. Finally, relying on certain sections of the owning classes, petty proprietors and others, the counter revolutionary elements organised a strike of lorry and taxi-cab owners, private businessmen and small shopkeepers.

The lorry owners and a small group of well-paid lorry drivers belonged to a union whose leadership was dominated by the reactionaries. Their strike was of strategic importance as in Chile motor transport plays as important a role as the railway system elsewhere. The lorry strike dislocated communication between the cities and towns. It disorganised supply of food to the people, of materials to

factories; machinery stood idle in the fields as fuel was not available. Here was an attempt to paralyse the economy completely and starve the people into submission.

As against this unholy and conspiratorial unity of certain sections of propertied classes headed by big capitalists and landlords, the working class forged its own unity and made every effort to counter the offensive. In August, the Communist and Socialist Parties issued a joint statement in support of the Government and cemented the bonds of working class unity. It urged the strengthening of class unity as the rallying point for all revolutionary forces in Chile and emphasised that understanding between them and the armed forces was essential for the success of the revolution.

### **Intense Class War**

The counter-revolutionary elements and classes were thus waging a class-war at every step, every stage, using every unscrupulous weapon to undermine the progress of the democratic revolution. No mercy was given. No quarters were given. No law or principle was observed. Capitalists, fascist gangsters and court judges worked in unison against the people.

On August 9, President Allende reorganised his Cabinet, appointing the Commanders of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force as Ministers of Defence, of Finance, of Transport and Land Development and bringing into the Cabinet the Director of the carabinero hoping to frustrate the reactionaries attempts to pit the armed forces against the Government and the people.

### **The Lesson from the Developments**

But this move did not lead to the desired result. After a few days of work as Minister of Public Works, Air Force General Cesar Reinz resigned saying he was not given full powers. This was followed by the resignation of General Carlos Prats, Army Chief of Staff, under pressure from the reactionary army officers. Shortly after two other military members of the Cabinet decided to quit.

Emboldened by this the counter-revolutionary Opposition in the Legislature openly called on the armed forces to revolt. The counter-revolution directed its final blow last week. The reactionary military officers, who could not forget their social connection, joined hands with the fascist brigands to bury Chilean democracy and the working class struggle for Socialism. In their ruthless struggle for dictatorship they are mowing down the working class and other democratic sections, massacring the best sons of revolutionary Chile. Once again they have shown that the exploiting classes will never relinquish their power peacefully, that they will not obey the verdict of the ballot box and those who assure to the contrary are just fooling the people.

The treacherous coup in Chile once more reveals that the vested interests and the reactionary army Generals drawn from the same class will never respect the democratic verdict of the people and will always try to drown it in blood. In this class-struggle, to retain their domination at all costs they respect nothing—neither the constitution, nor the democratic mandate, nor the will of the people—everything has to be crushed underfoot with the aid of bayonets, even with foreign imperialist help, to keep themselves in power.

The Chilean developments show that the exploiting classes will continue this battle till they are vanquished or vanquish their opponents. They will not allow people to introduce radical democratic reforms, much less Socialism, peacefully.

Chile has once again showed that the exploiters are prepared to hire themselves to foreign imperialists, take the latter's help to massacre their own countrymen. The Chilean counter-revolutionaries would not have dared to attack the people had they not been helped by U.S. imperialism.

Let it be realised that the Chilean military coup is Nixon's first present after signing detente agreements and promising peace all round. How well the Chilean developments confirm the following : "The imperialists pursue a policy of detente with some big countries in the world in order to have a free hand to consolidate their forces, oppose the

revolutionary movements in the world, repress the revolution in their own countries and stamp out national liberation movements while never giving up their preparations for a new war." (*NHAN DAN*)

The heroic working class and people of Chile have evoked the admiration and support from the entire international working class and progressive peoples of the world. There is no doubt that they will soon succeed in getting rid of the upstarts who seek to impose fascism on them with the help of the hated U.S. imperialists.

## **On the Anniversary of Chinese Revolution\***

**Greetings sent by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M)**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) offers its fraternal revolutionary greetings to the working class, the people and the Communist Party of China on the occasion of the anniversary of the Great Chinese Revolution.

Overcoming insuperable difficulties since the overthrow of the old regime, the working class and people of China have determinedly marched from one success to another in the task of building Socialism.

The entire capitalist world is being engulfed by inflationary economic crisis, high prices, currency devaluation, unemployment and threatened with shortages of vital commodities. Against this the Chinese economy stands firm, free from all the evils of capitalism, a shining example of Socialist mastery over economy.

Overcoming the effects of natural calamities of earlier years, People's China has again forged ahead in a spectacular way, implementing the principle of "taking agriculture as the foundation and industry as the leading factor".

In the current year China's foodgrains production will be 250 million tons. The output of farm machinery has increased by more than 20 per cent in the first quarter of 1973 over the corresponding period in 1972. Crude oil output increased by 16 per cent to 30 million tons. Sugar, tobacco and other industrial crops have registered an increase of 10 per cent to

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40 per cent. By the end of last year itself steelmaking capacity had reached 25 million tons.

Equally outstanding has been the progress in other fields—science, culture, education. China's defence capacity has been tremendously enhanced by its nuclear advance and the progress it has registered in nuclear weaponry.

China's advance on the international field is also remarkable. She has succeeded in establishing diplomatic relations with many more countries than before. Her legitimate status in the United Nations has been restored. The policy of isolating China, cordoning her off economically and politically has completely failed. Japan, West Germany, Britain, France—all want to develop rapid economic and trade relations with her.

In the background of the defeat of American armies in Vietnam, this remarkable advance of China, frustrating American conspiracies against her, should have led to a new correlation of world forces making the final and complete rout of American imperialism imminent. But the split in the Socialist Camp has prevented the revolutionary forces from reaping the full benefit. It is a matter of most profound regret that ideological differences between the Communist Parties of the two countries—the Soviet Union and People's China—have overflowed into State relationships. The gendarme of world reaction, the enemy of all peoples consistently hopes to utilise this situation to improve his position and attack the revolutionary movement. Chile—the counter-revolutionary coup in Chile—is the latest handiwork of this common foe. It shows that American imperialism is working desperately to regain lost initiative.

The Polit Bureau fervently hopes that on this day consecrated to the Great Chinese Revolution the international working class will remind itself of the necessity of unity of the Socialist Camp and vow to work for it steadfastly so that the countless sacrifices of the international working class are crowned with the final rout of American imperialism in the immediate future.

## **CPI(M)— S.P. Joint Communiqué Towards an Alternative to Congress Rule\***

*Following is the press communiqué released by Comrades P. Ramamurti on behalf of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Surendra Mohan on behalf of the Socialist Party in New Delhi on September 21 at the end of the three-day meeting between the two parties :*

The representatives of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Socialist Party met in New Delhi on September 18th, 19th and 20th, 1973, and freely exchanged views on the current political and economic situation as well as a number of issues confronting people's movement in a cordial atmosphere. The CPI(M) was represented by Comrades P. Sundarayya, Promode Dasgupta, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, M. Basavapurnaiah and P. Ramamurti. The Socialist Party was represented by Comrades George Fernandes, Ramanand Tewari, Madhu Dandavate, Prem Bhasin, Peter Alvares, S. Venkataram, P. Vishwambaran, M. P. Veerendra Kumar, Biman Mitra, Ashok Mukherjee, Madhu Limaye and Surendra Mohan.

1. They discussed at length the problem of the revolutionary transformation of the existing social order. The Socialist Party held that while the possibility of the ruling classes' recourse to illegal force resulting in an outbreak of violence on the last phase of the revolution cannot be ruled out, consciously and deliberately we have to prepare for a non-violent revolution.

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The Socialist Party believes that a Socialist State must have a framework of political and economic democracy, free elections and personal freedoms.

The CPI(M) explained that while it will strive for a peaceful transformation, historical experience shows that the ruling classes will not accept the verdict of the people and will not surrender power peacefully. The question of violence in the society depends on the ruling classes and the masses will have to be prepared for all contingencies. The CPI(M) holds that Socialist State assures widest and real democracy for the people. Such a State alone creates the material conditions for the exercise of widest democracy by the people.

There was, however, complete agreement that the preservation of the democratic framework and civil liberties was in the interests of the toiling people.

2. The two parties felt that the experience of the last 26 years has shown that whenever the people assert themselves through democratic means, the ruling classes increasingly resort to repressive measures and suppression of civil liberties and democratic rights.

The two parties, therefore, held that the people's movement cannot and should not be indifferent to attacks on democratic freedoms and gerrymandering and manipulation of elections. The people's movement must fight encroachments of civil liberties and campaign for reform of the electoral system including provision for proportional representation, so that public opinion is reflected in the election results. The two parties advocate extension of franchise to all those who are eighteen years of age and above.

3. There was a general discussion on the character of the State and Government as they have developed after Independence. The Government has been promoting development of capitalism dominated by large industrial houses. Its creation of the public sector too has subserved the capitalist development. It abolished the old zamindari tenures but in stead of achieving radical redistribution of land, it created a new type of large landowners as the dominant element in our

agriculture. The bureaucratic sections play an important role in the running of the post-freedom State and have developed a vested interest of their own in its preservation. The ruling Congress is the major party and chief instrument of the exploiting classes. This party is using anti-democratic methods for perpetuating its one-party rule.

(a) It was also agreed that a viable alternative to the ruling Congress should be developed which will lay the basis for the building up of a genuine Socialist society. The co-operation of other parties and groups which are in agreement with the approach of this document will be sought for this purpose. The two parties believe that only through mass struggles and popular campaigns against the anti-people policies of the Government and the projection of an alternative concrete time-bound programme can this alternative be successfully forged.

The Socialist Party was of the opinion that co-operation of all Opposition parties may be sought on such specific issues as civil liberties and free and fair election. The CPI(M) held that co-ordination in the legislatures with Right parties and synchronisation of action on such issues are permissible. But joint campaigns and actions with such parties would harm the popular movement.

4. The two parties examined in depth the food problem and the question of rising prices.

They demanded that the Government must accept the responsibility for providing foodgrains at the rate of 500 grams per adult per day and essential articles of consumption like edible oils, sugar, cloth, fuel, kerosene, etc. through the public distribution system not only to the urban areas and industrial centres but also to the village poor.

Discrimination in the quantity of foodgrains, sugar etc. as between the rural and urban population and between State and State should be stoutly resisted.

While opposing any increase in issue prices in the public distribution system, outside this system, the two parties would seek the co-operation of the people to seize surplus grain

from the hoarders and big landowners and sell it at not more than Re. 1 per kilo. The price of rice sold through ration shops should also be brought down to Re. 1 per kilo. Popular initiative alone can prevent large-scale distress and hunger in the days to come.

All essential articles of consumption must be sold at not more than 1½ times the cost of production. This 50 per cent above the cost of production should be inclusive of taxes, profits and transportation charges.

The margin between the procurement price and issue price of foodgrains should not exceed 15 per cent, whereas it ranges today from 35 to 50 per cent.

All the peasants who have holdings of less than 10 acres of wet land of average fertility or its equivalent should be exempted from levy.

State purchases at the declared support prices should be effective so as to prevent distress sales by small peasants.

Speculative bank advances should be stopped by the banking system to prevent hoarding.

5. The two parties are opposed to diversion of resources for the manufacture of luxury goods and private transport vehicles for the consumption and service of the affluent sections. They demand the application of resources for the manufacture of mass consumption goods and public transport vehicles to cater to the crying needs of the common people.

6. The question of unemployment was discussed. Only complete abolition of landlordism and effective distribution of land among the agricultural labourers and the poor, development of agriculture, small industries and major industries can solve this problem. Work or unemployment relief will be a major plank of the two parties.

7. The two parties were in complete agreement about the need for making India self-reliant. They agreed that foreign capital should be completely eliminated from the national economy. To begin with, foreign capital should be eliminated from drugs, pharmaceuticals and consumer industries,

and foreign collaboration in all non-essential sectors should be terminated.

8. The problem of caste, religious minorities and women was discussed. The Socialist Party and the CPI(M) explained their respective approaches.

The Socialist Party held that everything cannot be explained in class terms. Caste is an ossified class and that, too, has to be taken into account. Therefore, the Socialist Party advocated special opportunities for these retarded sections in order to overcome their social disabilities.

The CPI(M) agrees that special opportunities will have to be provided for the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward communities, religious minorities and women. It holds that the struggle against the outmoded socio-cultural institutions like caste, oppression of women and religious minorities is an integral part of the struggle for uniting the oppressed against the exploiting classes. It holds that class and caste should not be equated and the ruling classes often exploit caste to perpetuate their class domination. It is only by adopting a class approach that the toiling masses can be drawn into the common mass struggle for democracy and Socialism.

Both agreed that socially backward sections and the broad class of toilers largely overlap.

It was also agreed that an attack on caste has to be pressed on all fronts—social, ideological, economic and political.

It was common ground that the poorer sections of the upper castes must be drawn into the struggle for social equality; and the backward castes imparted class orientation.

The parties noted that atrocities on Harijans, Advasis, and religious minorities have been on the increase despite the Congress Government's profession of sympathy for these people.

9. The two parties stand for free compulsory and equal primary education of eight years duration and universal free secondary education. They also stand for the abolition of Public Schools which inculcate ideas of class domination.

10. The two parties advocate the replacement of English by the popular national languages as media of instruction and administration.

11. The two parties congratulated all those who have participated in recent struggles against food shortage and high prices. They, however, noted that many times these struggles were spontaneous and sectional and lacked a common focus. It should be the endeavour of all the radical parties to give them a common focus.

The protest actions against high prices, food shortages, unemployment and corruption should lead to a nation-wide Bandh and Hartal both in the urban as well as rural areas.

It was decided that this question will be pursued in consultation with other radical parties and mass organisations.

It was also agreed that an Action Committee will have to be formed to organize the Bandh and carry on sustained campaign and agitation on common issues. For this also talks have to be initiated with other radical parties and mass organizations.

12. It was agreed that a code of conduct to govern the relations between CPI(M), SP and other parties which would provide for amicable settlement of inter-party disputes—whether in power or in Opposition—should be formulated, and views of other parties should also be sought before finalising it. The two parties reject violence as a method of resolving inter-party disputes.

13. The two parties also discussed the question of decentralisation of power, and foreign policy, including relation between India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, Sino-Indian relations and Indo-Soviet relations.

The Socialist Party was not at all averse to development of friendly relations with the Soviet Union. But it had objection to the Indo-Soviet Treaty in as much as it felt that it was against non-alignment and would drag India in international conflicts and freeze Sino-Indian relations in a fixed mould.

The CPI(M) stated that the Indo-Soviet Treaty has helped

India against imperialism and in its economic development. Hence every effort should be made to defend the treaty and further strengthen Indo-Soviet relations. It was also firmly of the opinion that fresh initiatives should be taken towards the normalisation of relations with China.

The two parties discussed the question of nuclear weapons. Both agreed that India should not sign the non-proliferation treaty and should keep its options open. Both were opposed to nuclear monopoly and were in favour of total and complete disarmament. Further discussions on these and other subjects will be resumed later.

The two parties call upon the people to realise the grave dangers and the abysmal economic crisis that are facing the country consequent upon twenty-six years of Congress misrule and the drive towards one-party authoritarianism. Only a massive people's movement can create conditions that will liberate the country from the stranglehold of vested interests which have eaten into the vitals of our body politic. While pledging to work towards building up of such a mass movement, the CPI(M) and SP call upon the people to rally behind the demands and programmes outlined in this document.

The two parties also appeal to all radical parties, mass organisations, and individuals to join us in this effort to give a new orientation to our national life and to create a viable radical alternative to the Congress.



## **On Political Situation in Kerala\***

**Statement adopted by the Kerala State Committee of the CPI(M) in September, 1973**

*The following is the text of the statement adopted by the Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which met in Trivandrum on September 12 and 13, 1973, Comrade V. S. Achuthanandan presiding:*

The statement of the Right Communist Minister M. N. Govindan Nair that with the strike of the workers of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation, a "political crisis" has been created in Kerala, came for the special attention of the State Committee.

### **Cause of the Crisis**

According to the Minister, it is the confrontation between the Government of the ruling front and the trade union wings of all the parties except of the Muslim League that has been the immediate cause of the crisis.

But in reality this is a crisis which has been gathering for a long time. The basic cause of the crisis is the contradiction between the hopes aroused in the people by the ruling Congress which raised the slogan of "garibi hatao" to create illusions in the people to try and shore up its regime and the daily worsening life of the people.

Congress followers who see that far from the sweet promises made by the leaders being fulfilled, life is getting more and more impossible, are becoming restless. Ordinary Congress workers, specially those working in trade unions and mass

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organizations, are on many occasions forced to give expression to this restlessness and challenge the policies of the Government. Though they are very often stopped with injections of the poison of anti-Marxism and threats of disciplinary action, this tendency is again and again coming to the surface.

It is the same problem, in an even more intense form, that is facing the Right Communist Party also. All the castles they built about the ruling Congress—that after the expulsion of the “reactionary Syndicate Congress”, it has become a “pure Left party”—have crumpled. Along with other sections of the masses the ranks of the Right C. P. are also realising that the ruling Congress is the protector and spokesman of big landlords, big wholesale traders, hoarders and monopolists. Except the leaders who seek to further their personal interests by clinging to office, in the ordinary rank and file of the party, rethinking is beginning regarding policy matters. Trade unions affiliated to the AITUC and their mass organizations under the leadership of the Right CP are being forced to talk in the language of struggle and in places organize struggles.

In the RSP and PSP (Balakrishnan Group), the same tendency of taking a stand against the Government is coming up in trade unions and other mass organizations.

### **United Struggle**

All this has been seen most clearly on the question of the demands of workers of public sector undertakings like the Transport Corporation, Electricity Board, etc., and the struggles to win these demands. That is why a special target of the Ministers' criticism was the trade union leaders of the ruling parties who refused to dance to the tune of the Ministers but joined trade unions of the Opposition to give leadership for united struggle to the workers of these public sector establishments.

The result of this attack by the Minister against trade union leaders of his own party was something different from

what was expected. Though some leaders of the trade unions of the ruling parties withdrew from the transport strike, a vast majority of the members of their unions are firmly in the strike. Thus, united struggles of the working class irrespective of affiliation to ruling parties or Opposition is beginning to be a reality.

“The leader of a working class party”, the Transport Minister, has shamelessly declared that the strike would be firmly dealt with. He is the leader of the party which tried to suppress the NGOs when they went on strike a few months ago saying the NGOs are not workers but a section of the petty bourgeoisie. It is the same party which is today striving with all its might to suppress the strike of the transport employees who are undisputedly a section of the working class.

### **Just for Office**

At the same time, in States where it does not share office, the party of this Minister is organising struggles against the pro-monopoly-capitalist-feudal policies of the Congress and protesting against the repressive policies of the Congress Government. They have proved that theirs is a party which would not hesitate to abet any heinous crime of the Congress if only it can get a share in office.

It is the same attitude which they adopted to the five-party food struggle in Kerala prior to the transport strike. These people who are trumpeting that they have conducted a nation-wide food struggle which included dehoarding and as a part of it organized a day's picketing farce in Kerala also, did not stop from making thousands of people victims of lathicharges and lock-up torture in order to suppress the food struggle of the five parties. Not only no action was taken against the police officer who resorted to firing which killed two persons, this Government which has “a party of the working class” as a partner and is under its Chief Ministership did not hesitate to reward that officer. The Congress Police Minister who is dealing with his department

with the full backing of this party has let his police loose creating a situation where the honour and even lives of young women are in danger.

### **Betrayal of the Working Class**

They loudly claim they are a party which is fighting against the pro-feudal-monopoly policies of the Central Congress Government. But even Congressmen would think twice before putting forward some of the arguments that these people trot out to justify their own policies which are the same as of that same Central Government. They are most shamelessly rejecting the demands of the working class and other working people and slandering their movements.

They have crowned their betrayal of the working class with some of the recent statements of the Chief Minister and the Transport Minister. Finding that even their own ranks are not prepared to swallow these statements of theirs completely, the angry Transport Minister is using the threat of a "political crisis" to make his own party's ranks fall in line.

All the attempts being made by the Ministers to get statements by trade union leaders of the ruling parties that they have withdrawn from the transport strike and the fact that they have still not succeeded fully in this, show the extent of the depth of the "political crisis" the Minister talks about. Even if these union leaders are forced to withdraw from the strike by various tactics, there is no doubt that on many, many issues in the future this same confrontation will come up even more intensely.

### **The Crisis in the League**

Though the Minister has stated that this crisis has not affected the Muslim League, the League is facing one of the worst ever crisis in its whole history.

It may look as if it is the fight among the leaders in regard to the sharing of the benefits of office during the last six and a half years that has brought them to the verge of a split, but there is another important political issue involved in it.

It was when it allied with the Left and democratic forces that the League for the first time got a share in office. And these Left and democratic forces are precisely those forces which have always fought against Hindu communalism and for protection of the legitimate minority rights of the Muslims.

But after getting this share in office, calculating on consolidating it and extending it, the League leadership shifted to the Congress camp against the Left and democratic forces. The instrument for the horrifying police regime of the Congress was a Muslim League Home Minister. And the result? The League degenerated to the extent of not only being a mute witness to the worst and most devastating anti-Muslim communal riot in the history of Kerala (Tellicherry), but a protector of the organizers of that riot.

This naturally created tremendous unrest in the ranks of the League. Dissatisfaction against the Central Congress Government and the Kerala Coalition began to spread in the League ranks. But even at this stage what the League leadership did was not to atone for the crime they had committed in breaking their alliance with the Left and democratic forces. Instead they have taken to a two-pronged course—of attempting to have alliance with all the Rightist parties including the Jana Sangh against the Congress for the elections in U.P. and with communal demands like that for separate electorates for Muslims—a demand which can never be accepted by any democratic party—revive the old Jinnah Muslim League. If it proceeds in this direction the League will get more isolated from not only all the other sections of the masses but from the Muslim masses themselves.

In short, because the contradiction between the policies followed by all the ruling parties including the Muslim League and the economic and political life of the common people of Kerala, they are all facing a deep crisis. Instead of understanding this reality and correcting their wrong policies, what they are doing is to browbeat their own ranks, mount attacks on the masses and the Opposition parties. One instance of

this is the Government's arrogant attitude to the demand of the Opposition to convene a session of the State Assembly to discuss the food problem and police repression.

This demand was made by 53 Opposition MLAs who won almost half of the votes polled in the last mid-term election and constitute forty per cent of the strength of the Assembly. The ruling front has not even shown the elementary courtesy of formally replying to a written request of the MLAs. On the other hand, the Chief Minister, thinking that he has the votes of the ruling front MLAs who can be brought round with the threat of a "political crisis" and also has the police and the army, is challenging, "let us see what they do if the session is not called".

This has led to another sort of crisis. The Government has to face the organized Opposition parties along with the protest of its own ranks. If the Government ignores the hunger-strike which the Opposition MLAs have decided on in the same way as it has contemptuously rejected the demand for the convening of the Assembly session, the situation will become very grave. A situation will be created when the Ministers will not be able to move about without the protection of not only the police but also the army.

The State Committee warns them that the only way out of the situation is to correct their wrong policies in regard to strikes, the food agitation and the police administration.

If, on the other hand, the Government is bent on continuing on its present course, the State Committee appeals to all democrats to come together to develop a well-organized and strong mass movement against its policies.

## **CPI(M) Opposes Surrender to Landlords\***

**Statement dated October 5, 1973 issued in Calcutta**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on October 5, 1973 :*

The Government of India has announced increased procurement prices for ordinary rice, Rs. 111 to Rs. 119 per quintal (in terms of paddy Rs. 74-79), and for jawar, maize and bajra Rs. 70-72 quintal. It proposes to increase the issue price of these cereals, passing on the whole burden to the consumers. On the basis of earlier Government and Food Corporation of India practices, these issue prices may shoot up even to Rs. 1.70 per kilo of rice. On the same basis, it is going to increase wheat procurement prices also to more than Rs. 100 per quintal and issue price to Rs. 1.50 or more per kilo.

The Government has refused to compulsorily procure all the marketable surplus of foodgrains from landlords owning more than ten acres wet or 20 acres dry land, and has decided to purchase in the open market only a small amount of seven million tons of kharif foodgrains, and most probably about the same amount of rabi crop, and proposes to supply only to a few cities and scarcity areas, a ration of 250 gms. per adult per day, forcing the people to purchase the remaining grain in the blackmarket at even higher prices than now. Thus this increase of foodgrains prices is open invitation to the landlords, wholesalers and blackmarketeers to freely loot the people.

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But the Government of India is not prepared to guarantee these prices as floor prices for the small and working peasant who is forced to sell his grain at harvest time at low distress prices. It is prepared to guarantee them only Rs. 63.66 per quintal of paddy. High prices for landlords and low prices for the small and working peasant—this is the policy of the pro-landlord Government of India.

Our Party demands that these enhanced prices should be paid only to the working peasant, with less than ten acres wet or 20 acres dry land but in no case to the parasitic landlords owning more than ten acres wet or 20 acres dry. All their marketable surplus of grains must be compulsorily commandeered at the old procurement rates of 1972-73 crop year. They give enough profit margins to those landlords. The Government must take responsibility to feed all the people in both urban and rural areas at the rate of 500 gms. or  $\frac{1}{2}$  kg. per adult per day.

Our Party calls upon the people and democratic forces both in urban and rural areas to jointly wage struggles so that the working peasant gets these prices guaranteed to him, while all the surplus grain of landlords of over ten acres wet or 20 acres dry are procured and seized at last year's rates.

Our Party calls upon the people both in the urban and rural areas not to pay more than Re. one per kilo of foodgrains and force the Government to supply full rations at  $\frac{1}{2}$ kg. per adult per day.

Our Party appeals to all democratic parties and forces to unitedly wage determined struggles against the Government food policy and see that in no case food prices are increased beyond Re. one per kilo.



## **On Congress High Command's Formula on Mulki Issue\***

**Resolution adopted by the Secretariat of Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CPI(M)**

*The Secretariat of the Andhra Pradesh State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), meeting in Vijayawada on September 30, 1973, passed the following resolution on the six-point formula of the Congress High Command:*

At long last the Congress High Command has come forward with a six-point formula to resolve the deadlock created by the Mulki issue. This delay of almost one year which was responsible for much loss of life and property and innumerable sufferings for the people, is inexcusable.

It has seriously affected the development of the State which is already lagging behind. Many development works are at a standstill. The construction of the Visakhapatnam steel factory which was sanctioned as a result of the bitter struggle of the people of the whole State of Andhra Pradesh is still hanging in the air. Even famine relief works are stopped. The Centre is turning a deaf ear in regard to the Fifth Five-Year Plan allotments to the State.

### **Congress Encouragement**

The Congress rulers are responsible for all these evils. The selfish groups in the Congress have been raising the slogans of integrated State, separate Telangana, separate Andhra State, as it suited their power politics in pursuit of ministerial posts. The Congress party has been encouraging these groups,

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admitting and readmitting them into the organization, using them to divert the attention of the people who are very much discontented and dissatisfied with its anti-people policies. It was Congress groups that raised the slogan of "Jai Telangana" in 1969 and went out of the Congress. But the same groups were taken back into the Congress later. Again, in 1972, history was repeated. It was again a Congress group, that backed the "separate Andhra" slogan. But the Congress this time was split into three groups—"Jai Andhra" group. "Jai Telangana" group (the so-called Separate Telangana Congress Forum) and the "Integrationist Congress". It is evident that these groups are unscrupulous and do not hesitate to use any weapon and are prepared to commit any betrayals. The main aim is to see that power does not slip away from their hands at any cost.

The Congress party which has an overwhelming majority in the Assembly is itself responsible for the imposition of President's rule in the State. It nurtured and encouraged regionalism within its own ranks, got disrupted and brought in President's rule. It is only after delaying long, till it could regroup its factions, the Congress has now come forward with this six-point formula.

The notorious rule of the Congress has always provided ample opportunities for disruptive forces in the State. Instead of solving the problem created by the Supreme Court judgement on Mulki Rules, in a just and principled manner, the Congress rulers have fanned the flames of regional chauvinism by forcing down the five-point formula of the Prime Minister. The situation had rapidly worsened. This formula was one which helped disintegration in the name of "integration". As the Prime Minister herself stated it was an extension of the Mulki Rules. Both the official Congress and the Right Communists tried to impose this formula on the State with the aid of the police, the CRP. The reactionary parties and forces outside the Congress both in the Andhra and Telangana areas took advantage of this to fan separatism and demand the disintegration of the State.

### **CPI(M)'s Principled Stand**

The CPI(M) alone had taken a principled stand on this issue. This stand was explained, even before the five-point formula was announced, in a letter addressed to the Prime Minister by Comrade P. Sundarayya, General Secretary of our Party. Our Party demanded that if the integrity of the State was to be saved, the Mulki Rules and the Regional Committee should be abolished. The separate budget, the separate secretariat and other arrangements (for Telangana) that had led to the creation of a State within a State should be scrapped. It demanded that alternative arrangements be made for the development of backward regions in the whole State. It opposed the regionalisation of services. In its place, in view of the need for special safeguards for Telangana, it demanded that jobs both in the Government services and in public sector undertakings be reserved in the ratio of 2:1 between the residents of Andhra and Telangana (proportionate to the population). It demanded that Government expenditure should also be in the same proportion. It condemned the demand that jobs and posts be given only to "locals" and that there be no transfers between one region and another as it would only breed and incite localism and regionalism. It explained that only Statewide recruitment (any resident was free to get jobs anywhere in the State) but in the ratio of 2:1, that would in course of time lead to real integration. Our Party also demanded that educational facilities in the capital city (Hyderabad) be increased to the extent necessary. And yet the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which has taken such a democratic stand for the preservation of an integrated State and which also happens to be the biggest Opposition Group in the Lok Sabha has not even been consulted by the Congress. It is obvious that this is a reflection of the authoritarian drive to a one-party dictatorship.

### **Retreat Forced on Congress**

However, the Congress rulers could not escape a defeat. They had to eat the humble pie and retreat. The proposals

they made earlier had to be withdrawn. All their declarations and attempts to implement the Supreme Court judgement as "final" failed. The Prime Minister who by her five-point formula widened the scope of the Mulki Rules and wanted to implement it, is now compelled to support the six-point formula. Earlier she had made the five-point formula into an eight-point one by guaranteeing the continuation of the Regional Committee with a separate budget and separate secretariat. But now the same Prime Minister has to give up all this. The same High Command that had declared earlier that it was prepared to discuss all questions including the bifurcation of the State and thus jeopardised the integrity of the State has itself now been forced to rule it out completely.

The popular movements of workers and peasants gradually asserted themselves against regional chauvinism. As soon as it was realised that the separatists had no programme for bettering the lot of the people except rousing regional chauvinism and playing on sentiments, the common people and the progressive forces came forward to defend integration. Thus the separatists got steadily isolated. These developments stopped the Congress rulers from proceeding further on their earlier course.

The Secretariat of the A. P. State Committee of the CPI(M) reiterates its stand as the only correct solution to the problem. But it considers that in certain important aspects, the six-point formula is a victory of the people. The formula rejects bifurcation of the State. It proposes to end the Mulki Act and the Regional Committee. Consequently, separate budget and separate secretariat will also go. This formula also proposes to set up a development board for backward areas of the whole State. We are yet to see how the formula will be concretised and worked out. The Secretariat considers the above-stated positions to be broadly in line with the demands of the progressive-minded people.

The formula proposes the setting up of a central university in Hyderabad City. Because of lack of enough seats in

the educational institutions in the capital city and because proper quotas are not fixed to enable students coming from other parts of the State to obtain admissions, the people were agitated and demanded a solution to this problem. So, what is most important is that necessary arrangements be made in the twin cities for this. Students must be free to join any educational institution in any part of the State or in the capital city, irrespective of whence they come. There should be no regional or other restrictions.

### **Pernicious Provision**

But with regard to the question of allocation of employment opportunities, the six-point formula has utterly failed to keep the above democratic considerations and offer a proper solution. It brings to the fore the principle which extends the evil of regionalism to district levels. The proposal to fill all the posts including those of Tahsildars, Junior Engineers and Civil Surgeons mainly with local people is the culmination of regionalism in its crudest and worst form. This regionalisation of services at district levels will not help the integration of the State or emotional integration. On the other hand, it will lead to further worsening and inciting of regional passions. Hence the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat of the CPI(M) strongly condemns this regionalisation proposal. It demands that it should be replaced with the proposal that in regard to employment opportunities in Government services as well as in public sector undertakings, and with regard to Government expenditure between the Andhra and Telangana areas, the proportion of 2:1 will be observed.

It is the duty of all democrats and progressives to support those aspects in the six-point formula that conform to the democratic aspirations and achievements of the people while concentrating fire on the most harmful proposal of regionalisation of services and demand its withdrawal.

The Secretariat regrets to note that the leaders of the NGOs are insisting upon the breaking up of the State on the ground that one of the points of the formula affects the

interests of the NGOs. The NGO organisations are meant to defend and fight for the cause of all NGOs in the whole country and in the State, and not to pit the NGOs of one region against those of the other region. The Secretariat considers that the NGOs' leaders, in the name of the interests of a section of NGOs, are pitting them against the common interests of the people of the whole State by their demand of bifurcation.

### **Reactionary Forces**

Tha Jana Sangh, Swatantra Party and some other forces were in the beginning trying to rally the people who were opposed to the Mulki Rules on the plea that they, too stood for an integrated State, but an Andhra Pradesh without the Mulki Rules. But now when such opportunities to preserve an integrated Andhra Pradesh without Mulki Rules have opened up because of the six-point formula, these parties and elements continue to demand bifurcation. The CPI(M) vehemently denounces their attitude. These very same forces which fan the flames of mutual hatred on either side of the State saying that Andhra as and Telanganites can never sail together, hold joint meetings and demonstrations for disrupting the State. This only shows how nakedly reactionary and opportunistic these forces are. Therefore, the Secretariat appeals to the people to denounce and resist these separatist forces which are fanning regionalism in their game of opportunistic power politics. They are incapable of inspiring people for broad and noble aims and aspirations. They seek to rouse only narrow selfish interests and passions. So the Secretariat appeals to all progressives, students, teachers, NGOs, workers and peasants not to be carried away by such separatist regional passions, but fight them.

The CPI(M) ardently desires and stands for the unity and consolidation of Andhra Pradesh which is one of the biggest States in our country. Before us there is the great and noble task of overthrowing Congress rule and ushering in a new social order in our country and towards this we have to unite

all the toiling people in our Telugu-speaking State. It is with this view that the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat of the CPI(M) strongly supports the abolition of the Mulki Act and the Regional Committee which only continuously breed and strengthen regionalism. It also demands that the point in the formula for regionalisation (and districtisation) of services be scrapped and reiterates its stand that this be replaced by the principle of proportion of 2:1 (as a way to full integration).

## **All Support to Arab Fighters\***

**Statement dated October 12, 1973 issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta**

*The following is the text of the statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta on October 12, 1973 :*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) extends its whole-hearted support to the Arab peoples in their just and heroic war to throw out the Israeli aggressors from the Arab territories, which the Israeli rulers have been occupying defying the verdict of the world public. Israel, after its creation, instead of seeking the peace and goodwill of the neighbouring Arab peoples, has been engaged in extending its territories, has been acting as the instrument of the U.S. imperialists to suppress democratic forces in West Asia and the Arab world and to preserve U.S. imperialist domination in the oil-rich Arab lands. But for the full-scale military and material backing of the U.S. imperialists and their Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean Sea, Israel's aggression could have been defeated long ago.

The Polit Bureau hopes that the Socialist world will take all steps necessary to help the Arab nations to win their present war of liberation against Israel and against the U.S. imperialists. It calls upon the people of India and the Government of India to extend all their support to the Arab peoples in this critical situation in their national life, when they are undergoing innumerable sufferings and sacrificing thousands of lives defending their national honour, sovereignty and integrity.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, October 21, 1973.



## **On National and International Developments\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M)**

The Polit Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which met from October 24 to 27, 1973, in Calcutta, reviewed the international and national developments since its last meeting.

It expressed grave concern over the developments in West Asia. In spite of the brave fight put up by Egypt and Syria, backed by other Arab countries, for seventeen days and although they had recovered a portion of the East Bank of the Suez Canal, they had to yield territory on the West Bank of the Canal and beyond the Golan Heights in Syria. In spite of Soviet supply of arms to the Arab countries, Israel continues to have superiority of arms because of massive supply by the U.S. violating the 1967 Security Council resolution. This superiority in arms could only be met and defeated by still greater unity of the Arab countries and by involving the entire Arab peoples in the war of liberation by encouraging the democratic and revolutionary forces in these countries.

The developments after the cease-fire resolution was adopted by the Security Council clearly demonstrate that the U.S. was hypocritical in voting for it and it is actually encouraging Israel to continue its aggression on Arab countries. In these circumstances, the responsibility of the Soviet Union, which co-sponsored the cease-fire resolution in the Security Council, to see it through its full implementation is all the greater.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, November 4, 1973.

The Polit Bureau warns that U.S. imperialism will manoeuvre to secure domination of the Middle East. It is of opinion that peace in West Asia can only be restored on the basis of vacation of aggression by Israel, and a just solution of the problem of the Palestinian refugees.

The Polit Bureau is confident that despite temporary setbacks, the democratic and revolutionary forces in West Asia will assert themselves and backed by the anti-imperialist forces of the world, will defeat the machinations of imperialism and secure a just peace on the above basis.

The P.B. paid its homage to Comrade Allende of Chile whose democratically elected Government was toppled by the military junta and who was murdered by the junta which was aided by the U.S. imperialists in its crimes. It also paid its homage to the thousands of brave patriotic fighters of Chile who were butchered by the fascist gangs. It expressed its admiration for the brave fighters including Comrade Luis Corvalan, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, who are undergoing inhuman torture at the hands of the fascist junta and demanded an end to this torture and release of all those held in prison. The P.B. noted with satisfaction that despite this bestial terror, resistance to the fascist regime continues in many parts of the country. It greeted those brave men who are carrying on the fight and was confident that despite trials and tribulations, they will triumph ultimately.

### **Recognise PRG**

The P.B. noted that despite the Paris accords, the puppet regime of South Vietnam is continuing to be armed by the U.S. imperialists. The South Vietnamese puppet regime refuses to carry out the terms of the Paris Agreement, keeps lakhs of political prisoners in jails, denies democratic liberties, refuses to set up the Council of Reconciliation and Concord, launches aggression on the liberated areas and thus seeks to sabotage the Paris Agreement. The P.B. noted that these aggressive acts are being rebuffed by the Provisional

Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and the people in the liberated areas.

The P.B. noted with satisfaction that at the last non-aligned conference, a resolution was adopted unanimously recommending recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam by all governments.

Despite this resolution, to which the Government of India was a party, it still refuses to recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government. This can only be due to its fear of offending U.S. imperialism. The P.B. demanded that the Government of India should honour the resolution of the non-aligned conference and immediately recognise the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

The P.B. also demanded that the Government of India should immediately recognise the Government of Cambodia headed by Sihanouk as the legal Government of Cambodia and firmly support the resolution of this effect pending in the U.N.

It further demanded that the Government of India should raise the diplomatic relations with North Korea to the ambassadorial level.

### **U.S. Imperialism— Main Enemy**

All these developments underline the fact that despite *de-tente* with the Socialist countries, U.S. imperialism continues to be the chief enemy of liberation movements and all mankind. It continues its path of smothering the liberation movements and to impose neo-colonialism. Despite the deep economic crisis, despite the defeats it has suffered at the hands of the Vietnamese people, despite the low stock of the Nixon Administration among its own people due to the scandals of corruption that are rocking the U.S., despite its isolation in the world, it is able to pursue this course by taking advantage of the split in the Socialist Camp and disunity between the Soviet Union and China.

The Polit Bureau once again appeals to the leaders of these countries to close up their ranks and help in the process of inflicting further defeats on U.S. imperialism.

**Internal Situation**

Coming to the internal situation, the P.B. was alarmed at the continuing growth of the prices of all commodities of mass consumption, the disappearance of many essential articles from the market, and the failure of the Government to take any effective steps to curb the price rise. On the other hand, the Government has yielded to the demands of landlords to increase the procurement price of foodgrains. And what is worse, even when the new crops are yet to be harvested and procurement operations are far away, the Government has increased the issue price of rice and millets by 25 to 30 per cent and added to the transportation charges, thereby starting a chain reaction of price increase of other commodities. The P.B. condemned this callous attitude of the Government to the intense sufferings of the common people.

The Polit Bureau noted that while during the last two years mass sufferings on account of ever increasing prices, massive unemployment due to partial closure of factories due to power and other shortages reached colossal proportions, the industrial houses have made the highest ever profits and the scrips of the big industrial companies have reached an all-time high. This sharply underlines the intensified exploitation and looting of the common people by these enemies of the people. And yet the Government which talks of Socialism refused to touch these unconscionable profits of these foreign, Indian and collaborationist industrial houses.

The discussions that the Political Affairs Committee of the Cabinet had with six economists, the discussions that the Prime Minister had with J.R.D. Tata and G.D. Birla and the Prime Minister's statement in Bhubaneswar that "the thesis paper prepared jointly by L.K.Jha, B.K.Nehru and P.N.Dhar was still being thoroughly examined by the cabinet" (*The Hindustan Times*, October 18)—all these clearly show that in the name of increasing production, the Government of India is going to give big concessions to Indian and foreign monopolists and throw open the country for penetration by the giant multinational corporations.

On the other hand, it denied the just demand of the Central Government and other employees and industrial workers for a need-based minimum wage, and by practically accepting in toto the recommendations of the Pay Commission, seeks to impose its policies of wage freeze. High prices for landlords and unbridled profits for the exploiters and wage-freeze and intensified suffering for the toiling people—such is the policy of the Government.

### **Inner Congress Squabbles**

The P.B. noted that while the people's sufferings are mounting, the internal squabbles go on merrily in the ruling Congress party. Jockeying for power by different factions in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Mysore and in many other States is the order of the day. These internal fights are not based on any differences over policy issues but are the direct result of the terrible corruption that is rampant in the Congress party and revolve round the question of share in the ill-gotten money from corruption, power and patronage. Moral standards in the ruling Congress party have sunk to such abysmal depths that even after unbelievable corruption that was exposed by the PAC of the Bihar legislature, and publicly testified to by the Governor, no action is taken against the guilty.

The P.B. noted the intensified drive and manoeuvres of the ruling Congress to perpetuate its one-party dictatorship. For this purpose, it has no scruples to throw overboard all democratic norms. The decision to install a Congress Ministry in U.P. after the party proved its inefficiency and incompetence to rule the State as a result of which President's rule had to be clamped, the decision to send a Central Minister as the Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan—these are a few examples of the go by to democratic norms.

This was glaringly exposed by the judgment of the Orissa High Court which though it could not intervene and reverse the dissolution of the Assembly and imposition of President's rule when the Congress party lost its majority, condemned

unequivocally the abuse of power by the Governor and sacrificing democratic norms in refusing to call the Opposition leader who, the Governor admitted, commanded the majority, to form the Ministry.

The P.B. was of the opinion that the decision of the Central Government with regard to the Mulki Rules was welcome to the extent that it rejected the demand for bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, abolished the Telangana Regional Committee and scrapped the Mulki Rules. But the proposal for extending reservation of most of the Government jobs and seats in educational institutions to district and divisional levels would strengthen localism and separatist tendencies. The P.B. reiterates our Party's stand that the whole of Andhra Pradesh should be taken as one and its residents should be free to seek jobs and seats in educational institutions throughout the State, but for the time being in the ratio of the population of the Telangana and Andhra regions, viz., 1:2.

### **Struggles of the People**

The Polit Bureau was happy that people in every State have risen in struggles against these anti-people policies of the Government. Statewide and local bandhs, mass dharnas and other forms of protest, dehoarding of hoarded stocks have taken place in many parts of the country. The P.B. congratulated the working class for spearheading this mass protest.

An important feature was the further development of united struggles of the working class in which often AITUC and even INTUC unions joined strike actions with the CITU and other militant trade unions.

The Government has sought to suppress these protests and struggles by intense repression—by shooting and brutal lathi-charges, by resort to detention without trial under the DIR, P.D. Act and MISA. The P.B. demanded the release of all those detained and the repeal of all Acts providing for detention without trial.

In West Bengal, semi-fascist terror still continues. The position has deteriorated to such an extent that at the Labour

Advisory Board meeting held on September 10, representatives of all the central trade union organizations unanimously protested against gangster attacks on trade unions and unanimously adopted a resolution recommending to the Government that it should take urgent steps to—

- (i) prevent gangster attacks against trade union cadre;
- (ii) restore the unions forcibly occupied by others;
- (iii) enable the people who have been displaced from their areas to return to their homes; and
- (iv) to force the employers to take back all the workers who could not attend their factories because of the prevalence of terror.

No action, however, has been taken by the West Bengal Government on this resolution.

### **Police Raj**

Another important development has been that a virtual police raj prevails in the country—the police resort to torture and killings in the lock-ups of citizens and go scot-free, the unbridled powers of the police as highlighted by the merciless beating of a magistrate by the police in Meerut for no other crime than that he refused to sanction a lathi-charge against peaceful people protesting against the inaction of the police in the case of a kidnapping of a young college girl by ruffians.

The Kerala Government headed by Achutha Menon has excelled in police atrocities. Thousands have been tortured in police lock ups during people's struggles. Women have been raped in police custody, as a result of which two women have committed suicide. And yet the Home Minister shamelessly justifies these rapes by calling the victims 'prostitutes'.

### **Attack on Harijans**

Another feature in the recent period has been the increasing attacks on the Harijans in the rural areas by landlords. Even rape of Harijan women is being committed with impunity.

The P.B. condemned the Government for its inaction in all these cases of atrocities on the Harijans, which amounts to abetment by the Government of these inhuman crimes.

The P.B. was happy to note that despite this brutal repression people are not cowed, but the protest actions are mounting. It welcomed the preparations of the Central and State Government employees to launch a massive movement for the acceptance of their just demands. It called upon them to close up their ranks and forge unity in order to successfully resist the offensive. In the face of the mounting anger of the people, even the Right C.P., is forced to join the protest action in many States, however belatedly. The victory secured by the Loco Running Staff in their recent struggle is being sought to be nullified. The Railway Board which is the implementing authority is seeking to scuttle the agreement. The P.B. warned that grave consequences would follow if the Railway Board scuttled the agreement and the Government would have to bear the responsibility for the consequences.

The P.B. welcomed the decision of the nine Left parties in West Bengal to organise *dharnas* culminating in a bandh and general strike on November 19. It called upon the Right C.P. to give up its vacillations and take its place in this massive protest action of the people. It hopes that the AITUC and Right C.P. will not be deterred by the threats of the ruling party and would stick to their original decision to join the bandh.

The P.B. endorsed the stand by its representatives in the talks with the representatives of the Socialist Party. It is a further success to its line of united struggles and the efforts for creation and projection of a viable Left and democratic alternative to the ruling Congress.

The Polit Bureau pledges that it will vigorously pursue this path. It directs all its units to effectively intervene in the spontaneous struggles that are breaking out, give them a common focus and transform them into struggles against the basic policies of the Government.



## **Fight Back the New Imposts\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the  
CPI(M) in Calcutta on November 4, 1973**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on November 4, 1973 :*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly protests against the unconscionable price-rise of kerosene, petrol and other commodities decreed by the Government, taking advantage of the rise in the international price of imported oil. It was only last week that the Prime Minister boastfully announced that the crisis was over and the country could look forward to normalcy in the immediate future. And within a week, the Government decreed increased price for foodgrains and now an atrocious rise in the price of kerosene which is a vital necessity for large masses of our people.

There is no justification whatever for increasing the price of kerosene or petrol. The foreign oil companies who have been blackmailing the Government and have secured price-rises in the recent past can easily bear the international increase without loss. It is well known that some of these companies last year declared a dividend of more than 80 per cent under our "Garibi Hatao" Government. The Indira Gandhi Government dares not nationalize these companies; neither has it the courage to order them to restrict their profits and not saddle the Indian consumer with further burdens.

The Government in its greed for revenues has surpassed

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the foreign exploiters. Of the atrocious rise of 28 paise per litre in the price of kerosene, eight paise are due to the increase in international price and 20 paise are due to the insatiable desire of the Government to fleece the people. Similarly in regard to petrol, the rise in the price of crude will account only for seven paise while one rupee will be accounted for by the increased excise duty. None but a brutally callous Government, totally insensitive to the sufferings of the people, will dare impose such imposts on the necessities of life.

It should be remembered that kerosene has been the special target of the Government for a number of years. In the last few years, the excise duty on kerosene has risen from Rs. eight crores to Rs. 142 crores. And now this new addition. This is only one step short of banning the use of kerosene under the DIR or declaring it an offence under the MISA.

The rise in the price of petrol and diesel oil is bound to cast further burdens on wide sections of the population by increasing the cost of transport. The taxi drivers, the scooter and auto-rickshaw drivers are all going to face difficulties. The increased price for cooking gas will also affect large numbers of middle class families.

The CPI(M) calls upon the people and all democratic elements to protest against the Government measures and demand their withdrawal. The new excise duties should be withdrawn. The rise in the price of crude should be borne by the oil companies. Besides there must be a drastic reduction in Government's excise duties so that the price of petrol and kerosene can be brought down.

## **Resolutions Adopted by the Central Committee of CPI(M) in its Calcutta Session on 22-27 November, 1973\***

### **(a) HOMAGE TO MARTYRS**

The Central Committee dips its Red Banner in memory of our Party members and militants of mass organizations who were brutally murdered or shot dead by armed gangs of exploiters and by the police. The C.C. conveys its deep condolences to the families of these martyrs.

#### **West Bengal**

1. Based Mallick, Burdwan, July 6, 1973
2. Deepak Rai, Darjeeling, July 28, 1973
3. Rajen Kundoo, Howrah, July 29, 1973
4. Sisir Biswas, 24-Parganas, August 13, 1973
5. Anil Mandal, 24-Parganas, August 27, 1973
6. Nitai Naskar, 24-Parganas, October 25, 1973
7. Arjun Sarker, Murshidabad, November 17, 1973
8. Ranjan Biswas, Durgapur (Burdwan), November 18, 1973
9. Sheikh Ladla, 24-Parganas, November 9, 1973
10. Wife of Yasin Sardar, 24-Parganas, November 9, 1973
11. Atul Sardar, Bankura, November 3, 1973
12. Eradat Hussain, Murshidabad, November 17, 1973

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, December 2, 1973 in Supplement. It contains seven Resolutions— (a) to (g). The Resolution (e) on 'Certain Agrarian Issues' is a modified version of the Resolution adopted on this subject in Muzaffarpur Session of the Central Committee of CPI(M), refer Document under Item No. 9 of this Volume.

13. Rabin Sen, Raniganj, Burdwan, November 26, 1973
14. Mansur Ali, Raniganj, Burdwan, November 26, 1973

### **Kerala**

Two agricultural worker comrades, Comrades Bhanu and Narayana Pillai (Alleppey district), shot dead on August 2, 1973.

Comrade Kunhiraman (Calicut district) on October 25, 1973.

Comrade K. Damodara Kurup (Calicut district) on November 17, 1973.

Comrade Sukumaran (Cannanore district) on July 31, 1973.

### **U.P.**

Comrade Mithailal (Varanasi)

### **(b) CONDOLENCE**

#### **Comrade Chandra Sekhar**

The Central Committee pays its homage to the memory of Comrade Chandra Sekhar who died at his post serving the people and the Party as Secretary of the Delhi Regional Committee of the CPI(M).

Born in the district of Bijnor (Western U.P.) Comrade Chandra Sekhar came in contact with the Communist movement in his early life in Moradabad district and worked among the metal workers there. He joined the Party in 1950 and plunged himself in mass work there and remained Secretary of the Bijnor D.C. Comrade Chandra Sekhar had been a member of the U.P. State Committee since 1962 and Joint Secretary of the U.P. Kisan Sabha and later took up responsibility as Secretary of the Delhi Regional Committee from 1970.

Comrade Chandra Sekhar continued to devote his time and energy in a selfless manner to the cause of building the Party. He died in harness, while addressing a workers' meeting, of heart attack.

The C.C. dips the Red Banner in the memory of Comrade Chandra Sekhar and sends its heartfelt condolences to his wife and daughter.

### **Comrade Kunhikannan**

The Central Committee pays homage to the memory of A. Kunhikannan, one of the builders and outstanding leaders of the organized peasant movement in Kerala. Dedicating himself to the cause of the revolutionary movement of workers and peasants, he devoted his whole life for building the Kisan Sabha and the Communist Party. An active builder of the revolutionary movement, he was elected to the State Legislature and was functioning as a Legislator when he fell victim to a fatal disease, at the age of 50. The Central Committee conveys its sincere condolences to his family.

### **(c) COMRADE NARAYAN ROY**

The Central Committee pays its homage to the memory of Comrade Narayan Roy, a veteran revolutionary and a leading comrade of our Party, who passed away on November 1, 1973, at the age of 73.

Comrade Narayan Roy joined the Bengal revolutionary movement in his early youth, was arrested in 1930 in connection with the Dalhousie Square Bomb Case, sentenced to 15 years' life imprisonment and sent to the Andaman Cellular Jail in 1932. In jail, he became a Communist well versed in Marxist theory. It was he who also played the leading role in Communist transformation of many of the revolutionary prisoners, formation of the Communist Consolidation in the Andaman Jail and establishing of its link with the Party outside. Soon after his release from jail he became a member of the Party and remained a Party leader till his death.

When our Party separated from the revisionists he was with us. His dedicated life and amiable behaviour endeared him to all who came in contact with him. From 1952 to 1967 he was every time elected as a member of the Legislative Assembly. In him, the Party has lost a valuable leader. The Party pledges to carry forward the tasks for which he fought.

The C.C. conveys its condolences to Comrade Asha Roy, wife of Comrade Narayan Roy, and his near and dear ones.

**(d) POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION**

The conditions of the people have been rapidly worsening further during the last four months since the last meeting of the Central Committee. The scarcity conditions in relation to all necessities of life, the blackmarket prices at which people have to purchase most of all their daily necessities, the steep cuts in the meagre official rations rendering public distribution a farce, the recent inexcusable rise in the official issue prices of cereals, accompanied by an extortionate increase in the excise duty of kerosene and petrol, sum up the harrowing effects of the crisis and Government policies.

The hopeless economic situation, the fast growing disillusionment of the people in the policies of the Government and the consequent conflict between the people and the Government, the increasing loss of influence of the ruling party, form the background in which the landlords, monopolists and the U.S. imperialists are mounting increased pressure on the Government.

While the Government did nothing to mitigate the sufferings of the common people, its policies only helped the profiteers, landlords and industrialists to exploit the scarcity conditions to their own advantage. Profits of all industries, despite curtailment of production due to power shortage and a variety of reasons, were the highest in 1972-73. Industrial scrips reached peak levels in the share market. The report of the Reserve Bank of India on Currency and Finance for 1972-73 grudgingly admits that "the balance of forces in the economy has been shifting in favour of traders, rentiers and bigger farmers, industrial manufacturers and professionals". Contrary to assertions of the Prime Minister and other Ministers, the Report admits that the setback in agriculture was only the apparent cause of the accelerated price-rise; the weakness in the distribution system coupled with large-scale money expansion (an euphemism for reckless deficit financing) made speculative trading of stocks both attractive and profitable.

The prospect of a bumper crop, together with the two

million tonnes of wheat loan from the Soviet Union has not led to release of hoarded stocks in the market and to fall in the prices. Instead prices continue to soar or at best remain stationary even at harvest time. This is the direct result of the tremendous holding capacity of landlords and speculators augmented by the huge deficit financing and other policies of the Government.

The Government gave up the proclaimed policy of State take-over of wholesale trade in rice and other coarse grains as demanded by the landlords. It also conceded their demand for increasing the procurement price of paddy and other cereals by Rs. 20 per quintal.

The Government has fixed only about 15 million tonnes of foodgrains as procurement target out of an expected production of 115 million tonnes and has thus openly abjured its responsibility to make available to the common people food at reasonable prices and left them to the mercies of the greedy landlords and speculators.

This increase in procurement prices has not, however, benefited the small and medium peasants. In some States, they are making distress sales at prices dictated by the speculators. In most others they sell at below the floor prices to the speculators. This is also true of producers of commercial crops like jute, cotton, groundnut, sugar-cane, who are being made to sell at prices dictated by the speculators and industrial magnates.

If only the Government had commandeered the entire stocks of the landlords at lower prices and purchased the stocks offered by peasants by giving them a bonus, foodgrains could have been made available to the entire population at cheaper rates and the peasants saved from ruination. This the Government dares not do.

Such is the result of the class alliance between the bourgeoisie and landlords which the Congress Government represents.

The increase in procurement price of foodgrains would place Rs. 300 crores more in the hands of landlords for the

foodgrains procured by Government of the marketable surplus alone. The further increase in the prices sold in the free market by these landlords would place several hundreds of crores—altogether over a thousand crores in their hands. The increased money supply that all this would entail would make nonsense of the promise of restricting deficit financing. Bumper crop or no bumper crop, people will continue to be fleeced.

Prices of all necessities of life have been rising at a galloping rate. The effect of this on the rural poor has been disastrous. The conditions of the agricultural labourers defy description.

Denial of food to the people is accompanied by galloping unemployment. The utter incapacity of the economy to employ people is once again admitted by the Reserve Bank's Report on Currency and Finance for 1972-73, according to which compared to the rate of six per cent annual growth in employment in organized industries during the period of 1960-61 and 1965-66, the growth has been two per cent per annum since 1966-67. Actually, between 1969 and 1972 the growth has been less than one per cent and in 1972-73, it is even less. The huge unemployment in the unorganized sector like handloom, coir, etc., defies description. All the crash and non-crash programmes which were advertised have ended in a crash.

There are no prospects of industry picking up and opening sufficient avenues of employment. For, industrial stagnation, declining trend in per capita income dog the economy at every step.

The growth rate for 1972-73 has been pitiful and near stagnant. And the Minister for Industries has recently stated that the growth rate for 1973-74 is not likely to be more than two to 2.5 per cent. Not even 50 per cent of the Fourth Plan target of nine per cent annual industrial growth will be fulfilled.

This low base of industry and the steep price-rise have made nonsense of all the assumptions of the Approach to



the Fifth Plan document. Its claims to raise the levels of the lowest 30 per cent of the population have been blown sky-high. Its talk of self-reliance, despite which it provided for a Rs. 3000 crores of foreign aid to bridge the foreign exchange gap has evaporated. The foreign aid needs are now placed at Rs. 4000 crores. The Planners themselves are not able to finalize the Fifth Plan and only a 'Plan-Frame' is to be presented shortly. The resources position is being re-estimated and it is proposed to further rewrite the 'Plan-Frame' by February 1974. Thus an undeclared Plan holiday is in the offing. The promised 5.5 per cent growth in the economy and the claims to reduce unemployment have all proved thoroughly illusory.

All these are clear confirmation of our Party's assertion that the capitalist path of development in collaboration with foreign monopolists and relying on Western aid and in alliance with landlords promises no bright future for the country. In fact, this path of development faces a very deep crisis.

And yet the Government because of its class nature refuses to abandon the path. This very crisis makes it look more to the Indian monopolists and imperialists and foreign monopolists. Naturally, they exploit this vulnerable situation.

The wooing of U.S. imperialism and other Western Governments and Japan for more aid, the open invitation to U.S. monopolists by the Minister for Industrial Development during his recent visit to the USA and particularly to the multinational corporations for large-scale investment in India with the alluring prospect of cheap labour and the latest statement by the Prime Minister to the Congress Parliamentary Party that the monopoly houses should be allowed to expand in order to increase production and hold the price-line are all pointers to the further reactionary turn of Government policies. The meetings that the Prime Minister had with Tata and Birla go to confirm this.

These do show that the Boothalingam thesis, the paper prepared by the six so-called expert economists led by V.K. R.V. Rao with whom the Political Affairs Committee of the

Cabinet discussed the paper, the document prepared by the Jha-P. N. Dhar-B.K. Nehru combine and considered by the Government were all command performances designed to create the climate for far-reaching concessions to the Indian and foreign monopoly houses. They have all said exactly what the Government wants to do. This policy was already started in 1972 and the Government is rapidly moving along the precipitous path.

At the same time, trade and other economic relations with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries have expanded. Talks are already on for further expansion of trade and economic relations. The Soviet Union also came forward with its wheat loan but for which the foreign exchange situation would have worsened far more and talks are on for increased co-operation in the economic sphere.

Despite these favourable factors, the fact that the Government is wooing foreign capital including multinational corporations and giving big concessions to the Indian monopolists is a measure of the depth of the crisis of the capitalist path of development.

These trends which are getting accelerated place the economy, the people and their liberty in a vulnerable position. It is futile to think that Indian monopolists and foreign capitalists can serve the country's economy. They are interested in super-profits and looting the people. They are anti-people and anti-democratic. If in the bargain, the multinational corporations are also invited, the line-up of the enemies of democracy and independence will be menacing.

The U.S. pressure is already having its effect on the Government of India. At the last meeting of the AICC, despite repeated demands from the delegates, the leadership refused to mention Chile in their official resolution on international situation. Despite the unanimous decision in the Algiers Conference of non-aligned nations recommending recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia, the Government of India persists in

refusing recognition to them. It refuses to demand the withdrawal of American forces from South Korea and allow the Korean people to work towards peaceful reunification of their country without any foreign interference. It has recently concluded a trade treaty with the U.S. puppet Government of South Korea according it most favoured nation treatment.

The Central Committee warns the Government of India that the U.S. aims at undermining of the Indo-Soviet Pact and beware of their machinations.

The C.C. notes that the last four months have seen bitter struggles breaking out all over the country on the issue of prices, of short supplies, collapse of the distribution system, of wages and salaries. People have been resisting the attempts of the ruling classes to impose new and unbearable burdens on them. New strata and sections of society, such as doctors, nurses, engineers, college and school teachers and women have been drawn into struggles, isolating the Government more and more. The demand of doctors, engineers etc., against the privileged position of the IAS officers is significant.

There has been unbroken wave of resistance of the working class and employees. The use of the DIR, MISA and severe repression have failed to crush the strikes and the authorities had to retreat and deal with the leaders of strikes which they declared illegal and settle on terms which go against their declared policies. The most significant of these was the settlement arrived at with the leaders of the loco running staff. The Railway Board unable to reconcile with this crushing defeat is seeking to scuttle the agreement. The C.C. is confident that the heroic workers will foil their game.

Despite the semi-fascist terror continuing in West Bengal, there have been two Statewide bandhs in four months, besides innumerable strikes and mass actions. In Kerala also, there was a bandh and struggles of agricultural workers, workers and other sections have been a feature. Assam and other States have also witnessed prolonged and doggedly-

fought strikes, bandhs and other forms of mass actions against rising prices, etc.

Apart from attempts to crush the struggles through brutal repression, the Government is seeking to achieve its aim by attempts to split their ranks through helpful leaders and organizations whom they patronize. However, the growing urge for unity among the workers and employees often forces the splitters to join the ranks of the fighting people.

Significant in this context is the resolution of the AIRF wherein the ranks succeeded in forcing the acceptance of a proposal to call a conference of all railway unions except the NFIR and all Central Government employees' organizations. If this materialises and is genuinely pursued, it would be a significant contribution to forging all-in unity amongst Central Government employees against the decision of the Government on the reactionary recommendations of the Third Pay Commission as well as to the development of popular struggle against the effects of the crisis.

An important development in this period is the new awakening among Harijans who are mostly agricultural labourers and the Scheduled Tribes. Spontaneous struggles break out against economic exploitation and social oppression in many places. These struggles are brutally suppressed and atrocities including rape of their women are committed by landlords in collaboration with the police and administration. The Congress Ministries who shed copious tears over the plight of the Harijans and Adivasis do nothing against the perpetrators of these atrocities and their abettors in the police and civil services. In Maharashtra and Bihar, landlords in some places have organized para-military bands to suppress the peasants and agricultural labourers.

The inability of the Government to overcome the economic crisis and the ever-growing corruption have led to intensifications of factional struggles inside the ruling Congress party, and reliance on administrative actions and repressive bureaucracy and manipulation of the Constitution.

This was most glaringly seen in U.P. and Andhra Pradesh

where President's rule had to be imposed despite the Congress party commanding a big majority in the Legislatures. In Andhra Pradesh, the fight for the leadership continues. In Rajasthan, the choice of the Prime Minister for Chief Ministership was rejected. Factional fights have intensified in West Bengal where Ministers and MLAs form rival mass organizations, indulge in fights and clashes with guns, in occupation of each other's offices and local bandhs and protest against each other.

Moreover, these factions and groups constantly raise localist, linguistic and chauvinistic slogans and join hands with the most reactionary elements. The State Ministries are increasingly resorting to the technique of apparent fight against the Central Government, of raising demands based on localism and linguistic chauvinism.

The Andhra separatists constitute the most disruptive example of chauvinism. The Maharashtra Ministry's alliance with the Shiv Sena has now become open. It has now accepted the demands of the Shiv Sena and ordered industrial and commercial establishments that key personnel as well as 80 per cent of workers and employees from top to bottom should be local persons, i.e., whose mother-tongue is Marathi or who are domiciled in Maharashtra for 15 years. Mysore has followed suit. West Bengal and many other State Governments are raising the slogan of jobs for the sons of the soil.

This spells danger to one of the strongest assets of the country—the sense of national unity—and would undermine its unity and integrity. It also constitutes a grave danger to the growing class unity of the toiling masses and hence to the advance of democracy and Socialism in India. With the Congress Ministries creating this sordid record in national disruption, it is not surprising that separatist propaganda has started again in Tamil Nadu. All democratic parties must realize the grave dangers and unite to give a running battle to these tactics and prevent the masses from falling a prey to these disruptive slogans and propaganda and save their class unity. As against their disruptive slogan of jobs to the

sons of the soil, the democratic movement must demand recruitment through employment exchanges on the basis of seniority and all restrictions in registration in the exchanges should be removed.

Faced with growing resistance of the masses and loss of influence among the masses, the Central leadership in its drive to one-party dictatorship is not at all averse to combining with the most reactionary and communal forces. Indira Gandhi's certificate of secular outlook to the Kerala Muslim League, its acceptance of the demand of the Muslim League on the issue of Nehru's biography as a text-book, are examples of this thorough opportunism and appeasement of Muslim communalism. The recent meeting that the Prime Minister had with the Bishops of Kerala at Calicut is also designed to appease the Christian communal elements and win their support to the Congress.

Equally opportunistic are the approaches to the Shiv Sena in connection with the forthcoming by-election in a parliamentary constituency in Bombay.

The agreement with Kamraj whom she denounced as a reactionary obstructing the implementation of progressive policies, in connection with the forthcoming elections to the Pondicherry Assembly elections and the Parliament by-elections of Pondicherry and Coimbatore is the latest example of such rank opportunism. Efforts are afoot to absorb the bulk of the Congress (O).

Intolerent of any criticism even from her own partymen, she ordered the dissolution of the Socialist Forum and its leaders meekly accepted it. At the last session when the "supreme leader" threw overboard the previous pledge of rice trade take-over, none dared to raise his hand; not a murmur was heard.

All these naturally strengthen the forces of extreme reaction like the the Jana Sangh. The Congress leadership indulges in verbal broadsides against the Jana Sangh, but the real attack and suppression by brutal repression is reserved for the anti-imperialist democratic forces, the fighting masses

and above all our Party. The Kerala Government headed by a Right Communist vies with the Congress Governments in this repression. No scruples are shown in torturing the fighting people in lock-ups, and even raping fighting women. The DMK Government in Tamil Nadu has used every weapon resorted to by the Congress Governments.

Confronting the people with direct terror, allowing the police to run amok not only against political opponents but against ordinary citizens, ignoring tortures and rapes in police lock-ups, arming the police with a new penal code and Criminal Procedure Code, using every underhand means including falsification of elections, opportunistic alliance with open reactionary, communal and disruptive forces—these are the methods used by the Congress in its drive to one-party dictatorship.

The high-handedness of the police has been highlighted by a Delhi Court. In a recent case of shooting down by a police officer of a Home Guard officer, the Court passed strictures on the police and remarked that but for the massive protest action by the people of Shahdra the police officer would have been awarded a police medal for killing a *de a coit*. The enquiry reports of the Clive Hostel and Palayamkotta incident in Tamil Nadu also testify to the licence given to the police.

The Orissa High Court has unmasked the unscrupulous way in which Governors are used to subvert constitutional conventions in the interests of the ruling party.

The Central Committee is proud that our Party and comrades working in the mass organizations took the initiative in unleashing united movements and struggles. The mood of the masses is changing rapidly and the urge for united struggle is growing everyday. In response to this mood, the masses, many parties, groups and their followers are changing their stand and show eagerness to join the united struggle and actions. The July 27 Bandh of West Bengal in which the Right C.P. and five Left parties synchronized their call, the Bangalore, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi Bandhs

in which the Right C.P. and AITUC joined and the many joint actions of mass organizations in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Kerala have all been the result of the pressure of the masses.

It must be noted that the Right Communist Party is facing the crisis of its policies. The leadership refuses to give up its basic policy of alliance with the ruling Congress. And yet it is forced to join many of these joint actions. At places, it says that these actions are directed against the policies of the Congress. At other places, it says that it is not directed against the Government, but against the hoarders and monopolists. In West Bengal, it gave a call for a strike on November 17 and requested our Party and other Left parties to shift the date of their calls for a bandh from November 19 to 17. And when they did so, it made a somersault and refused to join the bandh at the behest of the Congress party. But such was the mood of the masses that in order to hide their betrayal and with a view to sabotaging the bandh on the 17th, the ruling Congress and the Right C.P. together organized a "cease-work" and march to the Secretariat on the 15th! In Kerala, the mass organizations conducted by the Right C.P. and the Congress join in common action and strike struggles. But the leadership resorts to threats including that of resignation of Ministry to compel the leaders of the mass organizations to withdraw them from the struggle. But the ranks refuse to heed the advice of the leaders and continue the struggle or are sympathetic to them.

However, the last four months also show that in spite of the most excruciating hardships and sufferings, the mass resistance has been halting, desultory and not sufficiently widespread. It has not succeeded in putting an imprint on official policies, in forcing the Government to change them at least temporarily in the interests of the people.

This is because the struggle did not become all-embracing. First, due to the weakness of the kisan movement, except for some spontaneous outbursts and more extensive organized struggles in Kerala and West Bengal and pockets



of other States, countrywide struggles did not develop in the rural areas despite the harrowing conditions of the rural population. Secondly, the working class and other struggles of the people in the urban areas could not be developed into fight for policy changes, for important democratic and economic changes. The struggles mainly remained at the level of protest actions or trade union demands.

The reason was that a centralising force was lacking. Our Party has always emphasised the necessity of a united front of Left and democratic forces. Without this, the mounting discontent cannot be led along the desired lines. It must, however, be noted that the growing struggles are bringing Left and democratic parties together in joint action.

The unity of Left parties in West Bengal and Kerala do provide viable alternatives. The sweep of mass struggles and their consciousness in these two States were consequently of a much higher order than in the rest of the country. To be able to develop such a united front all over the country as a viable alternative to the ruling Congress has been the endeavour of our Party.

The conclusion of successful negotiations between the Socialist Party and our Party in the month of September must be considered to be an important step in our struggle for a front of democratic and Left forces. The joint statement does not conceal differences on some important issues but at the same time, clearly shows how in the immediate present, the two parties can jointly push forward the mass struggles, defend the masses and put radical democratic alternatives before the people. Thanks to this agreement, the Socialist Party in West Bengal has now joined the Left parties for united actions and movements.

As noted above, the Right C.P. leaders constitute the biggest obstacle to the emergence of the Left and democratic alternative. By their policy of alliance with the ruling Congress its leaders shield the ruling party which has brought the country into this dire crisis and inflicted untold sufferings on the people. However, the mass struggles in which they

are often compelled to join, the dichotomy between their policy and actions, the contradictory statements they make, all these inevitably erode the credibility of a line which is being repudiated by their followers in action and a great discontent is developing in many States among their ranks against their basic line of alliance with the Congress.

Taking advantage of the discontent of the people, the Left-adventurists sometimes mislead some people into disruptive slogans, into wrong activities. This also hampers the united movement and struggle. Hence their tactics and slogans must be combated.

In these circumstances, the challenge has to be met by our Party and the possibilities of united actions and united front must be fully utilized on all fronts—working class, kisan, agricultural labourers, students, teachers, etc.

It is therefore of utmost importance that the struggle for the building of a Left and democratic front should be pursued with great vigour and every effort should be made to draw in the masses of the Right C.P. Every weapon of joint action at mass organization level, at party level, should be used so that the people see the Left forces in direct action. Independent activity of the Party of course forms the basis of this struggle. It is bound to be aided in a big way by the understanding with the Socialist Party. Political campaign and actions by our two parties together with many other parties as in West Bengal should be used as the lever to develop the struggle for the viable front.

The struggle for the Left and democratic front is primarily an instrument of building and developing mass actions, mass consciousness and mass organization. Electoral understandings and struggles at best form a small part of it. At the same time, it is necessary to give a rebuff to the ruling party in election battles and advance the cause of the masses against the Congress as well as the other Rightist parties.

The economic situation in the country, the developing joint actions which are the main lever for developing the front of Left and democratic forces demand of the Party

immediate attention to certain demands and movements that have arisen.

Reduction of high prices, restoration of ration cuts, regular and adequate supply of necessities of life, coupled with the demand for nationalization of wholesale trade in necessities of life and Government's responsibility to supply them at prices within reach of the people constitute some of the immediate demands for action.

In order to do this, the Government should take over the wholesale trade in foodgrains, by compulsorily procuring all the marketable stocks of landlords with above ten acres wet and 20 acres dry land at not more than the 1972 procurement prices, while ensuring the peasants the recently declared procurement prices. This alone will ensure a fair price for the consumer and protection to the peasants against the rapacity of the speculators.

These demands together with the demand for abolishing landlordism and taking away the entire land of landlords for distribution to the landless and poor peasants should become the central slogan in the fight for food.

Drastic reduction in excise duties on articles of mass consumption must be demanded.

The rise in price of petrol and kerosene have also brought to the forefront the question of nationalization without compensation of foreign oil refineries who have been making enormous profits.

The demands of the Central employees and loco-running staff will unleash united mass actions of Central and State employees as well as of industrial workers and urban employees. They will develop into the biggest rally against the official policy of high prices and mulcting the people. They must be fully supported.

The inordinate profits of the jute barons, their defrauding of the jute peasant, and the Government's growing concessions to them have raised the legitimate demand for nationalization of the jute industry. It has united all central trade unions in West Bengal. It has already led to a one-day pro-

test strike of two and a half lakh jute workers. It has to be agitated for and pursued. Simultaneously in view of the enormous profits made by the cotton textile industry, the high prices of cloth, nationalization of that industry has to be demanded.

The extortionate profits made by the sugar industrialists has brought the demand for nationalization of the sugar industry to the forefront. Although the Congress Government accepted the demand and promised to implement it three years ago, it has gone back on the promise. This demand also must be vigorously pursued.

Need-based wage is emerging as the central rallying slogan for all sections of workers and employees. Along with full neutralization of the rise in cost of living, the demand must become a weapon of uniting advanced and backward workers and employees.

It is urgently necessary to make a bid to rally the unemployed; demonstrations and mass actions of employed and unemployed in rural and urban areas for jobs or unemployment relief have become urgent. The demand has to be made to include the right to work among the fundamental rights of the Constitution.

The Party and mass organizations must demand lifting of emergency, withdrawal of the DIR, MISA and the release of all political prisoners and detenus and withdrawal of all cases foisted on workers of the democratic movement. A strong campaign must be launched against the widespread repression, especially in Kerala and West Bengal, the police tortures and demand full restoration of civil liberties. Efforts should be made to have broad-based civil liberties conferences in several States and the people made aware of the danger of one-party dictatorship.

Above all, it is of utmost importance that we mobilize the people against the official policies of increasingly conciliating landlords, monopolists and foreign capital and prevent further concessions to monopoly houses, inroads of foreign capital and multinational corporations. They must be roused

to the dangers emanating from these policies, and the movement for abolition of landlordism, for nationalization of foreign and Indian monopoly concerns must attain broad sweep. The battle for these policies has become urgent and brooks no delay. Neglect of this battle spells disaster to the country and the democratic and class movement.

The Central Committee calls upon all Left and democratic parties to realize the seriousness of the situation and come together for united action and struggles against the policies of the Government. It calls upon all its units to see the great possibilities that have opened up. More and more our Party is being looked upon as the most consistent fighter against the anti-people policies of the ruling Congress, as the consistent champion of secularism and unity of the class and mass movements and unity of the country. Its fight against disruption, divisive and communal forces and external reaction is winning recognition at the hands of many democrats and intellectuals. Greater responsibility rests on our Party. It calls upon them to redouble their efforts in mass mobilization and in taking the initiative to forge unity of the Left and democratic forces. This will change the situation and lead to the emergence of a Left and democratic alternative.

The C.C. demands that the Government must ensure the following essential commodities to the consumers at not more than the prices noted against them :

Rice and wheat	Re. 1 per kg.
Pulses	Rs. 2 per kg.
Edible oils	Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 per kg.
Sugar	Rs. 2 per kg.
Kerosene	Rs. 0.50 per litre
Coal	Rs. 10 per quintal
Long Cloth	Rs. 3 per metre
Standard cloth	Rs. 2 per metre

### **(e) CERTAIN AGRARIAN ISSUES**

1. In concretizing the "Tasks on the Kisan Front", as enjoined in the C.C. Resolution of 1966, in the course of

developing the kisan movement, certain differences cropped up in our Party. These relate to the questions of (1) land ceiling; our stand towards non-cultivating owners other than the landlords; (2) the rights of tenants-at-will (sharecroppers) *vis a vis* non-cultivating owners, especially small owners (with regard to fair rent, right of ownership and right of resumption); (3) issues connected with regard to agricultural labour struggle for land and wages; the attitude of the kisan movement towards introduction of tractors and other agricultural machinery; (4) how fair prices for the peasant produce are to be defined; and (5) the stand to be taken with regard to land legislations and the relation between mass struggles on concrete immediate demands and the propagation of the Party's programmatic agrarian demands.

2. The Central Committee reiterates the central slogan of the agrarian movement must be "abolish landlordism, both feudal and capitalist, without compensation, and distribution of all the land of the landlords to the agricultural labour and the poor peasant free".

3. This basic demand has to be concretely propagated and the movement and struggles are to be developed towards achieving it. The Congress Government has now come with new legislation on land ceilings tenancy, minimum wages, fair prices, taxation, etc. They claim that these ceiling legislations would abolish landlordism and enable the agricultural labour and the rural poor to secure land.

4. In our general propaganda and on the floor of legislatures when the ruling class Governments bring agrarian legislations, we must put forth counter proposals, basing on our programmatic stand, to expose the hollowness and pitiful character of the ruling class proposals and legislations especially when they are coming out with their solutions as basic solutions.

5. When we move our basic programmatic alternative amendments, and when they are rejected, we have to move various other amendments to get the next maximum possible concessions from the ruling classes, in the concrete reality

of legislative strength of the democratic Opposition, as well as the mass strength of the mass movement outside.

6. Whatever legislation is passed, we must develop mass movements to get the beneficial portions implemented and against the harmful provisions.

7. No legislation, however limited, under the present ruling classes and corrupt bureaucratic set-up gets implemented, leave alone the basic solutions, unless powerful mass movements are developed.

8. We must put forth the democratic demand for elected committees of agricultural labour and peasants to implement the legislation.

9. These basic solutions can be carried out in practice, only when the agrarian revolutionary movement develops in necessary strength, to enforce them and the final successful completion can be achieved only when the present State is replaced by a People's Democratic State. In our propaganda and agitation, we must constantly put this before the people.

### **Land Ceilings**

10. Our alternative to land ceiling legislation of the Congress Government is to put forth the proposals to abolish landlordism and ensure land gratis to the landless agricultural labour and the poor peasant, without affecting the rich peasant as a class.

11. The principal demarcating line between the capitalist landlords and rich peasants is that the capitalist landlords or their family members do not participate in the major agricultural operations (on their farms) through manual labour while the rich peasants or their family members participate in the major agricultural operations through manual labour.

12. Keeping this basic Marxist-Leninist concept, as to who is a rich peasant and who is a landlord, it is necessary to concretize this conception, in terms of landholdings, so as to effectively popularize the slogan of "abolition of landlordism".

13. Reports and experience from several States and regions,

except areas like the Rajasthan desert, show that an average family of five members, which owns ten to 15 acres of wet land, or 20 to 30 acres of dry land, depending upon the fertility and other agro-economic conditions, is normally a rich peasant family which participates in the agricultural operations of its farm with its manual labour. Those families, which own more than ten to 15 acres of wet land or 20-30 acres of dry land, normally do not participate in the manual labour on their farms, in the principal agricultural operations, and hence are to be characterized as landlords for the purpose of ceiling legislations.

14. "Wet lands" are all those lands which have assured water supply, from any source of irrigation, Government or private, like canals, tanks, wells (including tube-wells) energised or otherwise, springs, or from regular plentiful rainfall, that enables the peasant to raise at least one long-term crop.

Dry lands are all other lands with no assured water supplies and having to depend on inadequate rainfall.

15. The actual ceilings in different agricultural regions and tracts, within a State, within these limits, is to be determined by the State Committees. But if in certain States in certain special regions, or sufficiently large tracts, the limit of landholdings up to which a peasant family physically participates in cultivation, varies significantly, these limits can be decided by the State Committee, subject to confirmation by the P.B. and C.C.

16. Irrigated commercial crops, fruit and vegetable crops, plantations, etc., the limits of ceiling for such areas or fields are also to be fixed separately on the same basic principle of up to what acreage limit in such lands and tracts, a peasant and his family physically participate through manual labour, with the approval of P.B. and C.C.

17. All the lands of the landlords as defined above (including the land below ceilings) should be taken over for distribution among the agricultural labour and poor peasants gratis. If there are tenants on their lands, ownership rights



will be conferred on them free. The landlords shall neither be allowed to possess agricultural land nor be paid any compensation. In cases where some of them find no other alternative means, they will be rehabilitated by the Government.

### **Family**

18. For the purpose of these legislations (ceilings, etc.) a family is a working male adult, his wife and dependents the total member not exceeding five.

19. If that family has more members, each additional member is given one-tenth of the ceiling but in no case should the total landholding exceed one-and-a-half ceilings, whatever the number of extra members.

20. Where there is a joint family, say two or more male adults with their wives, children and dependents, then *each working male* adult and his family (his wife and dependents), will be considered as a separate family and given a separate ceiling.

### **No Exemptions**

21. Land ceiling legislation should not give any exemptions. Big plantations that for reasons of production cannot be split and distributed, should be nationalized. But small plantations must also be brought under land ceilings, and owners of plantations will not be allowed to hold other agricultural land, over and above the ceiling allowed in the plantations.

22. Religious and other charitable institutions and trusts should not be exempted from land ceiling or other agrarian legislations. The land of all such institutions is to be taken over for distribution among the landless and the Government may give them necessary grant for their functioning.

### **Priority**

23. Land will be distributed to the landless agricultural labour and to the poor peasants, Harijans and other Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes getting preference. For devel-

oping the united struggle for land, it may be necessary to give a small portion of land to the middle peasantry.

### **Attitude towards Non-Cultivating Owners**

24. Lands of small holders owning land less than half the ceiling, but eking out their livelihood in factories, small shops, schools, small Government jobs or as ordinary soldiers and junior army officers, or in any other profession, even if they are not cultivating their lands, shall not be taken. But if these lands are leased, then tenants shall have security of lease and pay fixed fair rents only. They will have the option to part with their lands to the Government and the Government shall pay them the market rate.

If such a small holder wants to resume cultivation of his land through manual labour, then the elected peasant committees must effect an equitable compromise between the tenant and the small landholders. For any land the small holder has to give up in favour of the tenant, he shall get full market rate from the Government, and the tenant gets the land free.

Where the tenant has already been conferred by law ownership right on the land of these small holders, as in Kerala or Chhotanagpur area or by similar legislations in certain other States, our Party campaigns that the small holder be paid full market rate for such lands by the Government.

The fair rent a tenant is to pay to the landlord is not to exceed one fourth of gross produce.

25. *Re: Landholders owning more than half the ceiling but less than one ceiling:* If they are not cultivating their lands through manual labour and if they have no other means of livelihood, they will be allowed to retain the whole of their land, provided they are prepared to cultivate it by their and their family's manual labour and earn their livelihood on it, and provided the land is not leased out to a tenant.

But, if his land is under a tenant he can resume only half of it, for personal physical cultivation to earn his living, leaving the other half to the tenants free. For the land he

gives up to the tenants, he will get compensation from the Government.

If he does not want to resume, all the land goes to the tenants and he is entitled to compensation from the Government.

26. If he has other means of livelihood but is getting his lands cultivated by wage labour he will be permitted to retain only that amount of land that would be enough to make the total income equal to that derived from the land ceiling, but in no case exceeding half of the ceiling. The excess amount of land would be taken for distribution, the Government paying compensation.

If his lands are under tenants, the tenants will get the ownership right free, the Government paying compensation.

### **Fair Price for Peasants' Produce**

27. Fair prices should be fixed and guaranteed at the time of harvest itself for the produce of an average peasant, so as to assure him a minimum standard of living, after meeting his agricultural expenses. But as far as the landlords are concerned, the high prices which by their monopoly of land they are today extracting must be controlled and checked. The retail prices for the mass of consumers of their essential supplies must be within their reach. If subsidies are to be paid by the State, it must be done.

### **Struggle for Wages and Land**

28. The Party must agitate for fixing fair wages for agricultural labourers, carry on the struggle to improve the wage rates; the struggle for wages must be linked to the struggle for land, and to rouse the agricultural labourers' consciousness to fight for land and its distribution.

29. The agricultural labour movement is opposed to the introduction of tractors and other modern machinery, as it would further aggravate the unemployment among the rural labourers and bring down their wages. This fight against the introduction of tractors and modern agricultural machinery should be linked with the struggle for abolition of landlord-

ism and land distribution to the landless and the poor peasants.

### **Struggle for Achieving Certain Immediate Demands**

30. While it is incumbent on our Party to continuously propagate and rouse the consciousness of the toiling masses to organize and fight for these basic solutions of their problems, both from legislative forums and outside, it is also incumbent on our Party to evolve suitable concrete immediate demands for actions. These demands will be formulated from area to area, depending upon the existing consciousness and organization and strength of the concerned sections of the people and also of the broad democratic unity and support that can be mobilized in support of the struggle. Even if a legal right exists, it may be necessary to move into action step by step, to get it implemented in practice. In planning actions, they must be for the demands which the people consider immediately within their reach and are prepared to actively fight for. While such immediate actions are carried on, simultaneous, continuous and constant propaganda about the legal and basic rights should be carried on to rouse the consciousness of the fighting masses.

The Central Committee once again stresses the urgency of concretization of our programme at State and local levels. It stresses the urgency of orientating our whole Party to base our work on the agricultural labour and poor peasantry and on the basis of that strength, champion and defend the interests of the middle peasant and make him our firm ally and win the rich peasant to our strategic front.

### **(f) ON CHILE**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) pays respectful homage to Dr. Allende, the elected President of Chile, who died fighting against the counter-revolutionaries instigated and aided by the U.S. imperialists.

It pays homage to the outstanding Communist leader, David Miranda, Jose Gregoria Lianda, the peasant leader, and thou-

sands of brave fighters in the cause of freedom, democracy and all-round advance of the Chilean people who in defending the Allende regime, were butchered by the counter-revolutionaries.

The C.C. pays its respect to the memory of Pablo Neruda, the world-renowned poet, who till his last day used all his talents in the cause of the revolutionary advance of the Chilean and international movement for freedom, democracy and social progress.

The C.C. greets the heroic people of Chile who are fighting under the extremely difficult conditions created by the military junta that has illegally seized power. Their courageous fight against the junta would inspire the democratic peoples throughout the world who are expressing their sense of solidarity with the Chilean people's struggle against military terror.

The courageous protracted struggle waged by the Chilean people leading to the election of Dr. Allende as the President of the country and the three-year-long running battle between popular forces and the reactionaries during the Allende regime constitute one more glorious chapter in the history of the international revolutionary movement headed by the working class. It shows how the toiling people headed by a working class can advance in their struggle against reactionaries if the fighting organizations of the people are headed by a united front of Communists, Socialists and all other revolutionary democrats. It was the formation of the Popular Unity Bloc consisting of the Communist Party of Chile, the Socialist Party and other revolutionary forces to win an electoral victory and to use the presidential regime to weaken U.S. influence in Chile and to further advance the revolutionary movement. This experience of Chile rejects the Left-sectarian thesis that the struggle on the parliamentary arena is useless and that it is revisionism and Right opportunism to resort to that method of struggle.

It showed at the same time that this advance of the revolutionary people would not lead to that "peaceful tran-

sition through the parliamentary path" which is held before the people by the revisionists. On the other hand, the advance registered by the fighting people headed by the united front of all the revolutionary parties, groups and organizations would be countered by the reactionaries who will resort to violence to bar the advance of revolutionary forces. This lesson drawn by Marxism-Leninism from the experience of world history has once again been confirmed by the manner in which the reactionaries in Chile, instigated and aided by the U.S. imperialists, carried on a running battle against the Allende regime for the entire period of its existence and ultimately overthrew it by methods of terror.

The emergence of the Allende regime in 1970 and its overthrow in September this year have thus confirmed the truth discovered by Marxism-Leninism that the working people headed by the working class and uniting all the progressive democratic forces in society can use the bourgeois parliamentary set-up in order to advance their movement but that such advance will not lead to any "smooth peaceful transition" from capitalism to Socialism. The advances registered by the fighting people can be consolidated and led to successful revolution only if the State structure built by the exploiting classes is smashed and a new State power of the toiling people created; the forces of violence and terror unleashed by the counter revolutionaries can be met only by a people's army.

The C.C. therefore calls upon all the members and friends of the Party, all genuine democrats to learn this lesson afresh and fight the Right revisionist and Left-sectarian distortions of the basic truth of Marxism-Leninism.

It goes to the credit of the common people of Chile, of their organized working class and all anti-imperialist political parties in the country that even after the Allende regime was overthrown and military terror has been established they are continuing their resistance. This resistance of the people combined with the maintenance and further strengthening of the unity of all revolutionary forces symbolized in the Popu-

lar Unity Bloc is the best guarantee that the struggle against the militarists would gather momentum. The C.C. is confident that the sacrifices made by Dr. Allende and thousands of others will not be in vain, that the cause which they died fighting for, would ultimately triumph.

The Central Committee associates itself with the worldwide solidarity movement for Chile, a movement denouncing the terror unleashed by the military junta, demanding the release of Luis Corvolan and thousands of others who are kept in prison and tortured and demanding the restoration of the popular democratic regime. The C.C. appeals to all the democratic parties, mass organizations and individuals in India to join this solidarity movement. It directs Party members and units all over India to play an active role in developing this solidarity movement.

#### **(g) WEST ASIA**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its solidarity with the Arab peoples who are fighting against the aggression by Israel, backed by the U.S. imperialists, in defence of their national independence and territorial integrity. For the first time, during the last 25 years of Israel-Arab military confrontation and conflicts, the Arab people were able to demonstrate greater unity among themselves and also score initial military victories disproving the myth of Israel's invincibility. It also demonstrated that the arms aid rendered by the Soviet Union and other Socialist States for the Arab peoples to defend their national independence and sovereignty could be of invaluable help, provided that aid was put to efficient and effective use.

The initial victories scored by the armed forces of the Arab States and the advance made by them in different sectors of the battle field had created confusion and panic among the ruling circles of Israel, as was evidenced in the incessant demand for the resignation of the Defence Minister of Israel for the military reverses suffered by them. These reverses also caused some alarm in the ruling circles of the USA,

and the U.S. Government had responded by stepping up massive military supplies to Israel, enabling it to go on the offensive in the West of Suez as well as in the region of Golan Heights.

It was in this background the cease-fire resolution of the Security Council was passed and the same was welcomed by President Sadat of Egypt and others. The U.S. imperialists, however, used this very cease-fire to assist Israel in consolidating its military victories, and in defying the implementation of the terms of the cease-fire resolution and to withdraw its armed forces to the line held prior to October 22, 1973.

Powerful sections of the ruling classes in different Arab States are themselves eager to strike a deal with the U.S. President Sadat of Egypt, for instance, has been trying to use the military and political support rendered by the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries to reforge his links with the U.S. Government. So, too, are some of the heads of the States and Governments of the Arab countries. Playing between the Soviet Union and the USA, representing as they do the regimes of semi-feudal, reactionary and anti-Communist character, they are proving unequal to fight the anti-imperialist and liberation wars in the real sense of the term.

Yet, the anti-imperialist upsurge of the Arab people and the heroic struggle which the Palestinian Arabs have been carrying on against the Israeli aggressors, forced all Arab Governments to cut oil supplies to the USA and those Governments supporting Israel's occupation.

In these circumstances, the genuine popular forces of national liberation and anti-imperialism in the Arab countries must unite and develop their struggle and be ever vigilant. This alone is the guarantee that the Arab cause will not be betrayed or compromised at the negotiating table during the coming negotiations under U.N. auspices.

The U.S. imperialists are still arming the Israel Government with more and more sophisticated weapons and hurling threats against Arab countries. The President of Egypt has



therefore to continuously alert his people about the war breaking out again at any moment. The U.S. imperialists are utilizing the sharp conflict between the Soviet Union and Socialist China which has already harmed enormously the national liberation struggles, once again, to help Israel in its occupation of as much Arab territory as possible and deny the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, during these peace talks.

Democratic forces throughout the world ardently hope, overcoming these differences the Socialist countries and especially the Soviet Union would take all necessary steps to force Israel to vacate Arab territories occupied during the 1967 war and to see the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people restored.

## **CPI(M) Welcomes Indo-Soviet Agreements\***

**Statement dated December 4, 1973, issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on December 4, 1973 :*

The series of agreements signed by the representatives of the Governments of the USSR and India, at the conclusion of the talks between the two, further strengthen Indo-Soviet friendly relations. They not only improve India's economic and trade relations with the Soviet Union, but also place the country in a better position to deal with U.S. imperialism which is mounting its pressure on India, taking advantage of the serious economic crisis that has been gripping India due to the capitalist path of development pursued by the Government. These agreements go to further reinforce the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation, the treaty that enabled India to inflict a rebuff to the U.S. and its machinations against the Indian sub-continent.

The agreements to increase the capacity of Bhilai and Bokaro Steel Plants to seven and ten million tonnes respectively, to help the construction of projects in non-ferrous metals, expansion of oil and gas industry, power engineering, ship building, civil aircraft industry, petro-chemical industry and to provide necessary finances to these projects and to plan for doubling of the trade by 1980 between the USSR and India are of immense importance to our economy and trade.

The P.B. of the CPI(M) welcomes these Indo-Soviet agree-

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ments as they will help to reduce dependence on the imperialists provided they are faithfully implemented and effectively used against the U.S. blackmail and pressure.

The P.B. is fully aware that the class character and composition of the present Indian Government, the bourgeois-landlord Government led by the big bourgeoisie, has its own class limitations in pursuing the policies of close economic and trade cooperation with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries. Past experience has shown that in spite of Soviet economic aid and offers of further massive aid, the Government of India instead of giving up its line of collaboration with the foreign monopoly capital, used it to bargain with them to secure more favourable deals for itself. Its dependence and collaboration with the foreign monopoly capital continues. Even now proposals for inviting multinational corporations are being considered by the Government. The P.B. does not underestimate the significance of continued collaboration between the Indian big bourgeoisie and foreign monopoly capital, and its adverse impact on the growing economic and trade relations between India and the Socialist world. It warns all the democratic progressive and peace-loving forces in the country to be ever vigilant against the bourgeois-landlord class forces, firmly entrenched in power, which do not hesitate to undermine the good and friendly relations with the Socialist world in furtherance of their narrow, opportunist class interests.

The P.B. while rejecting all demagogic claims that the present Government of India with its class policies is out either to liquidate imperialist stranglehold on the Indian economy or is putting the economy out of the crisis and pulling the country on the path of non-capitalism and Socialism, appeals to all the Left, democratic and progressive forces in the country to do everything in their power to strengthen and consolidate the friendly economic and trade relations between India and the Socialist world, and to demand of the Government of India to use the Soviet and Socialist aid to weaken and eliminate the hold of foreign monopoly capital on our economy and social life.

## **On Communal Riots in Uttar Pradesh\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the  
CPI(M)**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is seriously concerned with the outbreak of communal riots in Uttar Pradesh in Allahabad and Meerut. It extends its sympathies to those families who have lost their dear ones in these riots and who have become victims of loot and arson.

The Government has imposed curfew for the last few days and ordered the police to shoot at sight arsonists and looters. Yet, the riots are continuing. The communal riots are being engineered by the vested interests of both the communities on the eve of the coming U.P. elections, to profit by roused communal passions. The Government has again and again failed to prevent these outbreaks as it is not prepared to attack the vested interests who are behind these riots and not rounding up all those anti-social elements, who are indulging in these riots.

The Polit Bureau appeals to all the democratic elements and leaders of both the communities to jointly rouse the people and force the Government to take necessary steps to stop these riots and protect the lives and properties of the minority community. It appeals to them to help restore peace and good relations between the two communities.

## **Riots on Karnataka-Maharashtra Border Issue\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of CPI(M)**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemns the activities of the reactionary forces who are fanning the riots between Kannada and Marathi people on the issue of border adjustment between the two States. Already thousands of people, Maharashtrians from Belgaum and other neighbouring areas of Karnataka State and Kannadigas from Maharashtra State have fled from their homes and have sought shelter in the other State. Large scale attacks on Maharashtrian minorities in various towns of Karnataka and similar attacks on Kannadigas in various parts of Maharashtra and especially in Bombay by the Shiv Sena and its supporters are being reported in the Press.

The Polit Bureau holds the Government of India responsible for these repeated deplorable riots as it has refused to take a principled stand on this linguistic border issue and allowed it to smoulder during the last 17 years. The Congress Ministry in Maharashtra continues to hobnob with the Shiv Sena and allows it to rouse these passions.

The Polit Bureau demands that the Government of India should immediately solve the Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue on the basis of village and contiguity as was done in the case of the Andhra Pradesh-Tamil Nadu border problem in 1959, as per the Pataskar Formula. It also demands

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that apart from the solution of the border issue, the Government of India and the respective States must take necessary steps to safeguard the rights of linguistic minorities and develop fraternal relations between different language groups in each State.

## **Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad CPI(M) Polit Bureau's Homage\***

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, our Kaka Babu, one of the founders of the Communist movement in the Indian sub-continent, in the early twenties, has passed away this morning, December 18, 1973, at the age of 85 after a prolonged illness. He dedicated all his energies, a life of service and sacrifice for the cause of the toiling masses for over five decades. He strove to build a powerful Communist Party, loyal to Marxism-Leninism, as the powerful weapon to destroy British imperialism and the bourgeois-landlord rule in India and establish a People's Democratic State to build Socialism and a Communist society in our country.

We recall his tireless efforts in the twenties and thirties to link up the scattered Communist groups and individuals from all over India and to develop a disciplined centralised Communist Party, as a section of the Communist International. His hard life in Calcutta in those days, his jail life during the Kanpur and Meerut trials and after conviction, his contempt of the British authorities and the way he upheld the self-respect and prestige of a Communist revolutionary will ever be a glorious example to be emulated by the younger generations.

Political freedom of the country did not bring the opening to Socialism which Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad and other Communists had visualised. Under the bourgeois landlord classes, which took over power, Communists continued to be

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targets of attack. Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad whose contribution to the struggle for freedom is inestimable, was imprisoned thrice in free India—in 1948, in 1962 and in 1964. The Communist that he was, with his firm allegiance to Marxism-Leninism he understood the character of the new Indian State and the struggle that had to go on for Socialism.

We see his strict adherence to proletarian internationalism and Marxism-Leninism during those days when the fascists were hurling their forces against the Soviet Union, and the working class and the toiling masses of the whole world were mobilising all their energies to help the Soviet Union crush the fascist menace. We see it in him during those days when he stood firm advocating friendly negotiations with Socialist China to settle the border conflict and opposed chauvinistic trends.

That was why we see that when the split occurred in the world Communist movement in the sixties, he steadfastly inspired the Communist ranks in our country to stand up against international revisionism and international sectarianism and helped our Party to loyally apply Marxist-Leninist principles to the concrete conditions in our country.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad had been very particular in looking after the needs of every Party cadre. His meticulous care and attention made him the Kaka Babu for everyone of us. But he never tolerated any sign of personal looseness or slightest indisciplined behaviour and the way he admonished such derelictions, upheld before us all the very high standards of Communist life and discipline.

We are proud that stalwarts like Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad were in the forefront and were leading our Party.

Our Kaka Babu is no more but the movement to build which he devoted his entire life will continue and triumph and we who are left behind take the pledge to carry this task forward.

We dip the Party's Red Banner in homage to Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad and bow our heads in reverence.



## **Defeat Congress, Right Reaction\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta on January 21, 1974, on February Elections in U.P. and other states**

*The following is the text of the statement of the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on the February elections issued in Calcutta on January 21, 1974 :*

The Polit Bureau appeals to the members and friends of the Party in U.P. and other States where elections are taking place in February to join the other Left and democratic parties, mass organizations and individuals in defeating the ruling Congress and its allies on the one hand and the forces of Right reaction on the other, in strengthening the forces of democratic Opposition.

These elections are of great political importance to the people not only of the States concerned but of the whole country. A strengthening of the forces of democratic Opposition in these States now would help the progressive democratic forces throughout the country and pave the way for that decisive defeat of the Congress regime for which they have been fighting.

### **Background**

These elections are taking place three years after the mid-term election to the Lok Sabha and two years after the elections to the State Legislatures in the rest of the country when the ruling Congress headed by Indira Gandhi made such alluring promises as those of wiping out poverty,

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curbing monopolies, carrying out land reforms, making India self-reliant, and so on.

Every one of these promises, like the promises made earlier by the undivided Congress, has been broken and the people have been made to suffer. Prices of essential commodities have been rising higher and higher. Food has gone out of the reach of the majority of the common people. The much-talked-of plan of State takeover of wholesale trade in foodgrains has ended in a fiasco. The result is the outbreak of famine conditions unprecedented anywhere in India since the 1943 famine in British-ruled Bengal.

While the common people have been made to suffer the tragic consequences of shortage and high prices as well as increasing burdens of taxation, growing unemployment and so on, the top layer of monopolists, big landlords and their hangers-on have been enabled to grow richer and richer. The much-talked-of plans of curbing the monopolists have shared the fate of other plans with which the ruling party tried to cheat the people.

### **Struggles**

It is against this background that the country has witnessed, during the last several months, widespread struggles participated in by all sections of the people, sections within the ruling party itself being obliged to join them. Strikes launched by workers and middle class employees; various forms of struggles waged by peasants and agricultural labourers; food agitations, bandhs and dehoarding actions which have rallied all sections of the people—these manifestations of the people's discontent have shown in unmistakable terms that the people are rapidly shedding the illusions entertained by them on hearing the false promises of the leaders of the ruling Congress party.

This discontent of the people was reflected in a series of by-elections which took place in various parts of the country. Banka in Bihar, Neeleswaram and Paravoor in Kerala, Dindigul in Tamil Nadu, Ahmedabad and recently Sabarkantha

in Gujarat, Central Bombay and other constituencies in Maharashtra—all these show that the people are increasingly coming into political action against the regime, rather than confining themselves to agitations and struggles on specific economic issues.

### **Bribes, Threats**

The leaders of the ruling party are naturally worried over the possible impact of all these on the electorate in U.P. and other States where elections are taking place in February. Conscious that the mood of the people in 1974 is basically different from that of 1971 and 1972 they are making herculean efforts to avert the catastrophe awaiting them. In order to collect crores of rupees for their election fund, they are giving concession after concession to the owners of sugar mills and other capitalists. Unscrupulous use is being made of all departments of the State machinery to induce the electorate to vote for the ruling party, as is seen in the inauguration of so many new projects in U.P. on the eve of the elections. The Prime Minister has also warned the people that if they do not return her party in the coming elections, the States where her party is defeated will be deprived of the developmental projects to which they are entitled. Never before has any Government in the country made such a shameless use of its authority to bribe and threaten the electorate; never before has the ruling party been in possession of and used so much black money for winning victory in the elections.

### **Opportunism**

Knowing that all these tactics of bribing and threatening the electorate would not by themselves yield the desired result, the ruling party is coming to opportunistic alliances for fighting the elections. It has abandoned its earlier demagogic stand of "fighting reactionary forces" and has instead come to open electoral alliances with the Congress(O) in Tamil Nadu and Shiv Sena in Bombay. While unceremoniously kicking

the Right Communists out of the fold of alliances in such States where it is more profitable to befriend such openly Right-reactionary parties, the ruling Congress has resorted to the tactics of bribing and corrupting the Right C.P. with a few seats in U.P. and Orissa. The leaders of the ruling Congress have shown that they have no principle except the one and only "principle" of holding on to power with the support of whoever is prepared to prop them up.

### **Right C.P.**

The Right Communists have been true to their traditions of stabbing the Left and democratic movement in the back. Even though life has proved the untenability of their basic political line, forcing them not only to join the other Left and democratic parties and mass organizations in several mass actions but also to oppose the Congress in elections as they had to do in Central Bombay and now in Tamil Nadu, they have no sense of shame in begging the Congress for a few seats in U.P. and Orissa. Claiming to be champions of the unity of Left and democratic forces, they have so isolated themselves from the Left and democratic movement in the country that they are completely at the mercy of the ruling Congress. And this at a time when increasing sections within the ruling Congress itself are being obliged to speak out against the policies and practices of the Central and State Governments headed by the Congress party.

These electoral manoeuvres of the ruling Congress party and its faithful ally, the Right C.P., have as their background the ruthless attacks launched by the Central and State Governments against the rising wave of mass struggles as well as against the mass organizations and Left and democratic parties heading this wave of mass struggles. The callousness with which food agitations and bandhs are being dealt with ending in the shooting down of dozens of people even in such states as Gujarat and Maharashtra, where, as is well-known, the Left and democratic movement is extremely weak, has confirmed the truth that the real target of attack launched

by the Central and State Governments is the militant movement of the common people. The campaign unleashed by the ruling party and its allies against the CPI(M) and other parties of the Left Opposition—a campaign which ended in the semi-fascist terror in West Bengal and the intense repression resorted to by the Kerala Government —was only the cover behind which the attacks on the fighting people was sought to be hidden.

### **Forge Unity**

It is against this background of starvation, high prices, shortages, unbearable burdens of taxation, increasing unemployment and brutal terror that States having 20 per cent of the total population of the country are having their elections in February. The Polit Bureau hopes that the voters in these States would so exercise their rights as to take to a still higher level, the successful political struggle waged by the people in a few constituencies where by-elections took place during the last few months. The P.B. expects other Left and democratic parties, organizations and individuals to remove all the obstacles that stand in the way of forging the unity of Left and democratic forces against the regime. It assures them that the CPI(M) would play its role in the forging of such a unity of Left and democratic forces.

### **A Warning**

The P.B. warns the members and friends of the CPI(M) as well as all friends belonging to other Left and democratic parties and organizations as well as individuals, against the parties of Right Opposition who are trying to take advantage of and divert the discontent of the people into channels which are disruptive of the unity of the common people against the regime. Reactionary, obscurantist, and fissiparous ideas are sought to be imposed on the people who are told that the solution for all the troubles facing them lies in such slogans as “jobs for the sons of the soil” and Hindu revivalism. The P.B. hopes that other Left and democratic parties, mass or-

ganizations and individuals would be vigilant against the demagogic slogans raised by these reactionary, obscurantist and fissiparous forces.

The CPI(M) is convinced that the future of the democratic movement in the country lies in the unity of all the Left and democratic forces against the Congress regime, as well as against those who are trying to divert the people's discontent along disruptive lines.

## **Fight Back These Ferocious Attacks\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M)  
in Calcutta on January 17, 1974**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on January 17, 1974:*

Faced with the mounting resistance of the working class and the people against the increasing burdens by way of ever-increasing prices, the Government of India is resorting to more ferocious methods of attacking and suppressing the struggles of the people.

The employers seek to break the resistance of the workers to increasing burdens by declaring lock-outs, imposing prolonged starvation on the workers and forcing them into submission.

Not only do the Congress Governments of the Centre and the States consciously encourage these new tactics, but they themselves have taken increasing recourse to these new methods in the recent period. All trade union rights won by bitter struggles over decades are sought to be reduced to nullity. The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) severely condemns the Government for these anti-working class and pro-monopolist policies.

For years when the loco running staff were demanding the reduction in the hours of work from the 14 hours a day in the heated engines, the Government refused to even talk to them. At last, when they were forced to go on strike, it declared it illegal under the DIR, arrested thousands and

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resorted to mass victimisation. It then declared that it would negotiate only when the strike was withdrawn and sought to rouse the common people against the striking workers by using the propaganda media at its command by calling them anti-social.

It was only when all these attempts failed to cow down the workers, that the Government was compelled to negotiate and agree to reduce the working time to ten hours.

However, the Government and the Railway Board refuse to forthwith implement their own promises and seek to scuttle the agreement under various pretexts.

In the case of the Indian Airlines, the most elementary principle of negotiating with the unions, which have been recognised over years, the proposals for change of shifts was abandoned and the management unilaterally imposed new conditions of work. They refused to discuss with the unions the hardships this change would entail and when the workers retaliated against the curtailment of elementary trade union rights, the management imposed an illegal lock-out. A vicious propaganda barrage was let loose that the Airlines people were the most highly paid, concealing the fact that 11,000 workers' wages totalled only 30 per cent of the total wage bill, while 4000 of the top people's salaries and emoluments totalled 70 per cent of the total wage bill.

The management insists that imposing conditions of work is an absolute prerogative of the management and the workers cannot have any say in it and wants individual employees to sign an undertaking to that effect. It even refuses to accept that these conditions of work should be subject to law. Thus the employees are being reduced to the status of bond slaves.

It is unfortunate that in the absence of cohesion and unity between the different sections of the Indian Airlines staff and workers, they could not frustrate these machinations of the Government.

The same method is now being sought to be resorted to in the case of the LIC employees, who only demand that the



promise given in writing by the previous Chairman and repeated by the present Chairman when he took over, that at the next revision of their wage scales, they would be brought on a par with the State Bank employees, be fulfilled. The management suddenly issued a circular withdrawing the right to hold meetings and demonstrations within the premises, but outside the offices, which had been conceded to them over two decades and resorted to mass victimisation. It has further imposed lock-out in several divisions on the same pattern as in Indian Airlines.

In face of the severity of attacks on the living standards, other sections of the working people such as doctors, house surgeons (internees), nurses, etc., are also forced to resist the attacks and resort to strike. The Government is resorting to the same method of repression, resorting to DIR etc., in their case, too.

State and Central employees seeking to protest against the mounting attacks on their living standards and trade union rights are threatened with break of service as it happened in the recent protest strike of the Punjab State Government employees. Large-scale victimisation is taking place of trade union functionaries who are either suspended indefinitely or whose services are summarily terminated as in the Accountant-General Offices in Trivandrum and Madras.

The Kerala Government headed by the Right Communist Chief Minister Achutha Menon vies with other Congress Governments in its vindictive attitude towards its employees. It has imposed on them the policy of "no work, no pay" for the days they were on strike, although the self same employees are asked to complete arrears of work without any additional payment.

The Government seeks to utilise the services of unions which do not represent the mass of workers to impose its will on the workers. This is being witnessed in the case of the loco running staff, in the LIC negotiations, in the jute and textile workers' struggles. This is seen in the negotiations in the various public sector undertakings.

The Polit Bureau congratulates the jute mill workers all over the country and the textile workers of Bombay who have seen through this game of using the INTUC for thrusting unwanted agreements on the workers and are courageously carrying on united strikes. Their struggles have exposed the hollowness of the claims of the INTUC unions which are recognised by the Government as representative unions of the workers.

The AITUC, led by the Right Communists, often abets the Government in disrupting the unity of the fighting workers. This is seen in the LIC, in the negotiations in many public sector undertakings and in the Central Government employees' organizations. It thereby helps the Government to make the CITU and other fighting organizations of the working class the main target of its attack, for they are standing in the way of the Government's policies of passing on the burdens of the crisis on to the working class and working people.

The P.B. appeals to the AITUC and other central organizations to draw the proper lessons from the struggles of the jute workers and the textile workers of Bombay and not to play the disruptive game of the Government but stand by the workers in foiling this disruptive game.

The Government which shows such firmness in dealing with the workers fighting against the erosion of their real earnings shows no such firmness against the employers and profiteers who have exploited the scarcity conditions to the utmost to reap enormous and unheard of profits, both legally and illegally. On the other hand, it actually seeks to further whet their appetite for more profits. This was seen in the seven and a half per cent increase it presented to the sugar magnates for the non-levy sugar. This was seen again in the case of the jute barons. At a time when the jute barons have actually reduced the price of raw jute, and the export prices of jute have risen, the Government actually reduced the export duty. Similarly, when cotton prices have tumbled pauperising the poor cotton growers, the prices of cloth have

risen enormously and the Government is actually thinking of increasing the price of standard cloth.

The P.B. calls upon the entire working class irrespective of their trade union affiliation to resist with all their united strength these ferocious attacks on their living standards and trade union rights, particularly of imposing illegal and prolonged lock-outs, and defeat the Government.

The P.B. is happy to note that in face of the all-round attack on all sections of the people, and the increasing placating of Big Business, the propaganda barrage against the struggling workers is not cutting much ice with the common people.

The Polit Bureau warns the Government that these tactics will not pay and is confident that the united struggles of all sections of the working people will frustrate these ferocious and vicious attacks and anti-working class policies of the Congress Government.

## **On Maharashtra By-Election Verdict\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta on January 18, 1974**

*The following is the text of the statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in Calcutta on January 18, 1974, on the Maharashtra by-elections :*

The big Congress reverses in the parliamentary and Assembly by-elections in Maharashtra underline the rapid process of people's disillusionment with the Congress and constitute a verdict against its anti-people policies. At times, this discontent is capitalised by organisations like the Congress (O) as in the Sabarkanta by-election in Gujarat. But this happens where the Left and democratic movement is weak and it is unable to give purposeful direction to the anger of the masses.

The results of the Maharashtra by-elections demonstrate the rising anger of the people against the sufferings imposed by high prices, shortages of foodgrains and other essential commodities and the refusal of the ruling party to take steps against the vested interests in land and trade. Developments during the last year have demonstrated to the masses the utter bankruptcy of the Congress rule, the hypocrisy of its promises and its impotence before the landlords and blackmarketeers' lobby. Wide sections of people in all States have protested against the deteriorating economic conditions by organising bandhs and strikes which the ruling party attempted to suppress ruthlessly. Not less than 15 people

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, January 27, 1974.

have been shot dead in Gujarat alone whose only crime was that they demanded food. In Maharashtra, the trade union movement has been unitedly organising several bandhs and protest strikes against Congress policies which recently culminated in the strike of two lakh textile workers for higher wages and other demands. The Maharashtra Bandh of January 2 was a Statewide mass protest during which several people were killed in police firing.

Finding that it was rapidly losing its influence, the ruling party tried to meet the situation by forging a dirty alliance with the Shiv Sena. It also joined with this fascistic Communist-baiting organisation to organise a bandh on the Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue which was intended to rouse the worst type of chauvinistic feelings between the two peoples to secure the votes of the Marathi people. It is well known that Congressmen and their allies often charged some Sena leaders with having connections with the CIA. Yet an alliance was forged with the full understanding of Indira Gandhi and the High Command though attempts are made to plead ignorance and pass on the buck to local leaders. It was because the Left vote remained undivided that the Right C.P. candidate won and the Jana Sangh and other reactionary parties were also defeated.

The Congress party also struck a deal with the opportunist leaders of both wings of the Republican Party who promised block voting for the ruling party's candidate. The alliance came to grief because the younger section of the untouchable Republicans led by Dalit Panther denounced it and declared a mass boycott of the election. The Congress goondas and police thereupon perpetrated unheard of atrocities on the Republicans which led to their complete non-participation in the elections.

These factors together with the fact that two lakh textile workers were on strike in Bombay, jointly led by the Left unions with the INTUC acting as the strike-breaker sealed the fate of the Congress candidate. People turned with revulsion from the ruling party for all its misdeeds and the

Congress candidate could not poll even one-third of the vote the party got in the 1971 elections. Even the Jana Sangh candidate got more votes than the Congress nominee. The Bombay verdict is the verdict not only against the official policies of the Congress but also its opportunist alliance.

Our Party knowing that the election was taking place in the midst of rising indignation against the ruling party's policies and its opportunist alliance, concentrated on routing the ruling party, seeing at the same time, that the extreme reactionary forces did not gain out of the situation. It therefore lent its support to the Right C.P. candidate while denouncing the policy of collaboration and compromise, of alliance with the Congress, pursued by that party.

The low polling in the Bombay election has got its own implications. It shows that large chunks of the masses, angry with the Congress, have refused to vote for it but have not yet come to the stage of voting against it. This apathy is a dangerous sign of frustration and may help the reactionaries. It is the task of the united Left forces to convert this discontent into an active political force against the Congress.

The election also showed that the opportunist policy of the Right C.P. allying itself with the Congress against the Left forces has no sanction from the masses. The Right Communists willy-nilly had to appeal to the other Left forces including the CPI(M) and had to take a strong anti-Congress stand for electoral purposes and abandon their sycophantic cry of strengthening Indira Gandhi's hands. With two lakh textile workers on strike, in the background of the huge Maharashtra Bandh and several people killed during the course of the bandh, the Right C.P. could not have adopted any other line. The line of alliance with the Congress and disruption of Left forces stands condemned by the verdict of the Bombay election.

The three other by-elections in Maharashtra took place in the same background of continuous fight against high prices and food shortage and the broken promises of the Congress

Government. In the two Assembly elections, the Congress was routed by traditionally Left parties, the Peasants' and Workers' Party and the Socialist Party.

These results show a growing radicalisation of the masses and unmasking of the Congress rule in one of its strongest States. But these conditions of disillusionment and rapid anger against the Congress are not confined to one State. All over the country, popular anger is being expressed through innumerable strike actions and bandhs; strikes have spread not only to employees but to members of various professions and the Government is coming down with a heavy hand on all the fighting forces applying DIR, MISA and subjecting the participants in the strikes to lathicharges and police bullets. These form the background to the elections in U.P., Orissa and Manipur. In this background what is required to give a rebuff to the Congress in the U.P., Orissa and other States is a firm and determined united front of Left forces coming before the people as an alternative force having an alternative programme.

The CPI(M) calls upon all democratic forces to help in building such a front. It considers the Right C.P.'s policy of alliance with the Congress as betrayal of the Left forces and calls upon its ranks to fight it and play their role in mobilising the democratic forces against Congress rule. The Maharashtra verdict itself has shown that the masses are in no mood to tolerate any opportunist alliances with the Congress, and any party which forgets this stands in danger of being repudiated by the people.

## **CPI(M) Protests against Gujarat Repression\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M)  
in Calcutta on January 27, 1974**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on January 27, 1974:*

The Polit Bureau condemns the police firings in Gujarat and the brutal repression launched against the hungry people demanding food. Already 35 people have been shot dead, hundreds injured in police lathicharges and firings and many hundreds arrested. Brutal atrocities are being perpetrated against the students. The entire State is rapidly becoming a huge concentration camp with curfew imposed on tens of thousands of people. All the important towns of Gujarat are under curfew. The army has been called to aid the police.

The Central and the State Governments must be branded as the joint criminals in this brutal offensive against a starving people. Instead of acknowledging its responsibility the Central Home Minister, Dixit, devoid of all sense of shame and decency, absolves his Government, slanders the people of Gujarat by presenting them as playthings of reactionaries. The Central Government's appeasement of landlords and sanction of high procurement prices have encouraged further profit-grabbing, and caused the collapse of procurement. The State Government did nothing to ensure adequate procurement of stocks and went on making one concession after another to the vested interests, and when the people demanded food, they unleashed the police against them. The

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Gujarat butchery is the price for appeasement of landlords and speculators. The present Ministry has no right to continue.

The Polit Bureau congratulates the fighting people of Gujarat on their courageous struggle. It offers its condolences to the families of the martyrs.

In a later statement issued on January 29, the Polit Bureau strongly protested against the arrest of Comrade Dinkar Mehta, member of the Gujarat State Committee of our Party and of Shri Subodh Mehta, Secretary of the Right C.P.I. The Gujarat Government has shot down 40 people for the crime of demanding food. Unable to face the rising anger of the people it has called in the army to suppress them. At the same time it has gone on pleading with the wholesale traders and currying favour with them. It has not arrested a single one of these wanton criminals. And now it crowns its infamy with the arrest of Left leaders. The Polit Bureau demands their immediate release. The Polit Bureau warns that there is a concerted move to attack the Left parties. The Maharashtra Chief Minister has given a hint about it in his recent speech.

## **CPI(M) Protests Punjab Leaders' Arrests\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta on February 20, 1974**

*Text of Polit Bureau statement issued in Calcutta on February 20, 1974 :*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) severely condemns the action of the Punjab Congress Government in arresting Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet, member of the Polit Bureau of the Party, Comrade Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri, member of the State Secretariat of the Party and over a hundred of the leaders and activists while holding a demonstration in connection with the State Conference of the Kisan Sabha in Sangrur on February 17. These mass arrests are an unwarranted attack by the State Government and the Polit Bureau demands the immediate release of all the arrested comrades.

Punjab in recent days has witnessed the all-out efforts of the Congress rulers to suppress the democratic rights of the people. Almost all the cities and towns are under Section 144. Mass arrests of students, teachers and workers have been taking place. The Polit Bureau demands an immediate end to this policy of repression and the restoration of democratic rights of the people.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, February 24, 1974.

## **CPI(M) Welcomes Recognition of Bangladesh by Pakistan Government\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M)**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) welcomes the recognition of Bangladesh by the Pakistan Government. Due to the delay in recognition, many problems have accumulated hampering the forging of friendly and mutually beneficial relations between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Polit Bureau hopes that now the leaders of the three countries will soon be able to settle their outstanding differences and act in common to frustrate the U.S. imperialists' manoeuvres of playing one against the other, to dominate the whole of South-east Asia. The Polit Bureau appeals to the democratic forces of all the three countries to be vigilant and make their Governments develop mutually beneficial friendly relations and defend the democratic interests of the peoples of the sub-continent.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, March 3, 1974.

## **Build Left and Democratic Front to Defeat Congress Policies\***

**Call given in the Statement adopted in the meeting of the Polit Bureau of CPI(M) held in Calcutta on March 7-10, 1974**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which met in Calcutta between March 7 and 10, 1974, considered the economic and political developments in the country since its last meeting.

There has been a further deepening of the economic crisis and aggravation of inflation, with prices soaring week after week. The official index of wholesale prices has registered an increase of 27 per cent in 1973 over the previous year while the increase in the price of necessities of life in the retail market has ranged between 50 and 75 per cent and in a few cases even 100 per cent.

### **Intensification of Sufferings**

It is in this background that the Railway and General Budgets for 1974-75 were presented to Parliament on February 27 and 28, 1974.

The Railway Budget imposes imposts leading to increase in freight charges on almost all commodities including coal, and passenger fares including III class fares.

The General Budget also has enhanced excise duties on many articles of consumption by the common people including kerosene. It seeks to conceal the real extent of deficit financing as the previous year's budget did. In addition, the State Governments have imposed on the people a new taxation burden of Rs. 250 crores to Rs. 300 crores.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, March 17, 1974.

The result of all this would be a further increase in the prices of all mass consumption goods and intensification of the suffering of the common people. According to a survey conducted by the All-India Consumers Council, already, within ten days of the presentation of the budget, even before the new taxation proposals have come into effect, retail prices of mass consumption goods have risen between 20 and 50 per cent.

While fleecing the people through additional taxation and increased price burdens, the budget grants relief to people with high incomes. It grants steep reduction in personal income-tax to top sections under the specious plea that it would stop tax evasion. No wonder Big Business circles have unanimously praised the Finance Minister.

Official procurement efforts have ended in a dismal failure. Even the pitifully low target of 6.5 million tonnes of kharif grains could not be reached. This threatens the complete collapse of even the existing meagre public distribution system which distributes more hunger than food.

### **Plan in Doldrums**

The high taxation, rising prices, procurement collapse accompanied by the high rise in international price of oil, entailing a huge additional draft on our foreign exchange resources have rendered meaningless all the tailored calculations of the Fifth Plan. The Plan itself is in doldrums. The Plan allocation of Rs. 4000 and odd crores for the first year of Fifth Plan is less than 50 per cent of the annual average target of Rs. 7500 crores for the public sector based on 1972 prices.

There is thus no escape from the Congress-imposed misery, food shortages and high prices. Already in the last few months, people's distress has exceeded all previous limits leading to widespread militant protests which the Government attempted to suppress in cold blood.

### **Proud Record of Struggles**

From Kerala to Bengal, from Bengal to Bombay, and Punjab, the toilers have been waging one struggle after another. The

textile strikes of Tamil Nadu and Bombay, the jute strike of Calcutta, the strikes of agricultural workers of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and other States, the strikes of loco workers and other railwaymen, of LIC employees, of doctors and engineers, student agitations, the big bandhs against high prices, the mass agitations of women, constitute a proud record of our people's fight against misery.

On innumerable occasions the Congress Government attempted to suppress these struggles of starving people with brute force. The DIR and MISA were used to arrest the strikers, meetings were banned, curfew was imposed; police opened fire killing several people; CRP raided people's houses and attacked women and children— all to terrorise the people.

But the fighting people carried on their struggle heroically, forcing the Government to retreat many a time.

Outstanding has been the upsurge of the entire people of Gujarat against high prices and food famine imposed by a corrupt Congress Government in league with the landlords, hoarders, speculators and monopolists. The heroism of the people knew no bounds. They have defied and continue to defy ban orders, curfew, the police, the CRP and even the Army. The struggle which started against high prices, has outstepped the bounds of economic demands, compelled the resignation of the Ministry and today is centred round the demand for the dissolution of the Assembly, and for a new opportunity to give their verdict on the misrule of the Congress party which they put in power two years ago with great hopes.

Despite the terror the masses continue to forge their unity to meet the challenge of the Congress rulers. The railwaymen's convention called by the AIRF and participated in by all railway workers organisations barring the Congress-controlled one was a remarkable effort to achieve unity to secure immediate demands made pressing by the rapidly eroding real wage and deteriorating economic situation. United movement and action of this vast mass of the exploited sections will no doubt contribute to the strengthening and deepening of the democratic movement.

## **Ruling Congress Losing Support**

Recent developments also show a steep fall in the popular support to the Indira Congress. This is seen in the series of defeats that the party suffered in a number of by-elections to Parliament and Assemblies. This is seen in the defeats suffered by the party in the elections in Manipur and Nagaland. Above all, this is seen in the elections to the Assembly in Uttar Pradesh, the biggest State in India and the home State of the Prime Minister. Although the Congress has succeeded in winning a bare majority—215 out of 424—in the Assembly, the fact that despite unprecedented abuse of State power and use of big money, the percentage of valid votes polled by it fell from 48.6 in the parliamentary elections of 1971 to 32.6 in this Assembly election tells its own tale. This is the real measure of the fall in the prestige of the Indira Congress.

In Orissa, also, the Congress could get only 69 out of 146 seats and its percentage of polling has fallen from 40.8 in 1971 Lok Sabha elections to 37.4 in the present elections.

## **Weakness of Left Forces**

However, it is disturbing to note that this loss of popular vote and support to the ruling Congress has been capitalised, in the main, by the avowed reactionary parties like the Jana Sangh, Congress (O), BKD, Swatantra and others who have increased their poll percentage compared to the 1971 general elections as well as the 1967, 1969 elections in U.P. This is due to the weakness of the Left and democratic forces, a weakness further accentuated by the disruption of the united Left and democratic fronts, engineered by the ruling Congress party in 1969-70 and which was actively aided by the Right C.P. leadership. The absence of a well-organised and viable alternative of the Left and democratic front, with its alternative programme and policy to that of the anti-people line of the ruling Congress, was successfully exploited by the ruling Congress to present itself to the electorate that it alone was the inevitable alternative to the parties of extreme Right reaction.

Life and events have shown clearly that the policies and practice pursued by the ruling Congress party and Government have actually strengthened the forces of extreme reaction and the vested interests they represent despite the false claims of the ruling Congress party and its Right C.P. ally that they have been pursuing policies which would weaken and undermine these forces. The Right C.P. leaders must further bear the full responsibility not only for breaking the Left and democratic front but also for screening the misdeeds and reactionary policy of the Congress. In West Bengal, they screened the terror, directed against our Party. Today, in some places they themselves are victims of Congress hooligans.

It is quite evident that the menace of these growing extreme right reactionary forces cannot be liquidated by supporting and allying with the ruling Congress party as the Right C.P. leaders and their international patrons shamelessly advocate.

### **Build Left and Democratic Front**

To defeat Congress policies and frustrate the advance of extreme reactionary parties, it is absolutely essential to build a front of Left and democratic forces as a viable alternative to the ruling Congress party. Such a front will have to be based on an alternative Left and democratic programme.

The P.B. considers that what is of utmost importance and urgency is that while intensifying the mass struggles, every effort should be made to popularise the alternate policies and programme. The Left and democratic parties should unitedly demand among others—

1. The take-over of the wholesale trade in foodgrains and essential articles, by commandeering the entire marketable surplus of landlords with holdings of over ten acres wet land or of equivalent dry land and procurement from others voluntarily by offering them a bonus over the rate paid for commandeered grain of the landlords.

Guaranteed supply of foodgrains at half a kg. per adult



per day at not more than one rupee per kilo of rice or wheat and other essential commodities to all the urban and rural population. These prices should not per kilo be more than Rs. two for sugar and pulses, Rs five to six for edible oils, 50 paise per litre of kerosene, Rs. two per metre of standard cloth and Rs. ten per quintal of coal.

2. The immediate abolition of landlordism by seizure of all the lands of the landlords who own more than 10-15 acres wet or 20-30 acres of dry land, and their distribution to the landless labourers and poor peasants.

3. Confiscation of all foreign capital, nationalisation of all monopoly concerns and nationalisation of the sugar, cement, jute and textile industry.

4. Need-based wage for workers and employees; full neutralisation against rising cost of living; work or relief for the unemployed; trade union and democratic rights.

5. Withdrawal of Emergency. Release of all political prisoners. Full civil liberties and democratic rights for citizens.

The P.B. attaches the utmost importance to the struggle for alternate policies and programme. It directs all its units to intensify this struggle by the independent activity of the Party, by intervening in spontaneous mass struggles that are breaking out and by giving a correct policy orientation to these struggles.

It appeals to all Left and democratic parties to draw the proper lessons from the recent developments and intensify their efforts to forge a united platform and lead the masses around this platform.

## **Resolution on Pondicherry\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on March 7-10, 1974**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) considered the situation in Pondicherry State after the recent elections to the State Assembly. The ADMK-Right C.P. alliance has emerged as the single largest group with a strength of 14 members in a House of 30, while the Congress (R)-Congress (O) alliance has a strength of 11 only.

The CPI(M)'s opposition to the Indira Congress because of its anti-people, pro-monopoly and pro-landlord policies is well-known. Hence, it will endeavour to frustrate the Congress party's attempts to manoeuvre itself into power in Pondicherry.

From the time of the split in the DMK and the emergence of the ADMK in Tamil Nadu, the Right C.P. has been making frantic efforts to bring about an alliance of the ADMK, Congress (R) and Right C.P. in Tamil Nadu. The ADMK leadership was not only averse to it but was itself making efforts towards the consummation of such an alliance.

Despite all these efforts such an alliance had not come about only because Indira Gandhi chose to forge an alliance with the Congress(O) in the Pondicherry elections and in the by-elections to Coimbatore Parliamentary constituency and the Coimbatore West Assembly constituency.

It is pertinent to note that the leadership of the ADMK has not demarcated itself from the policies of the Indira Congress. Even when it had to fight against the Indira Congress in the

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Dindigul Parliamentary by-election and in the recent elections to the Assembly and Lok Sabha in Pondicherry and Coimbatore, it had refused to demarcate itself from the policies of the Indira Congress. As for its fight against the DMK Government, it mainly harps upon the corruption charges against the anti-working class and anti-people policies and practices of the the DMK Government.

After the elections when the leadership of the ADMK approached our Party in Tamil Nadu for support to a Ministry headed by the ADMK the Secretariat of the Tamil Nadu State Committee wanted the ADMK leadership to issue a public statement categorically stating its opposition to the basic policies of the Indira Congress and pledging that its Government, if formed, will not use the police to suppress the struggle of the working class and other democratic struggles. This the ADMK leadership has refused to do.

As for its partner, the Right C.P., it is in an alliance with the Congress (R) in Kerala, West Bengal, U.P., Orissa and in a number of States and is a servitor of the ruling Congress party.

The CPI(M) has always held the opinion that the largest party or alliance should be allowed to form the Government and that its majority support should be tested on the floor of the Assembly and should not be decided by the Governor.

Now that the ADMK-Right C.P. alliance, as the largest group in the Pondicherry Assembly, has been allowed to form the Ministry in Pondicherry, the Polit Bureau warns that unless the ADMK takes up a position of firm opposition to the basic policies of the Indira Congress and a democratic attitude to the struggles of the workers and other democratic sections of the people, its regime in Pondicherry will fare no better than the Congress regimes in the States and in the Centre.

Therefore, the CPI(M) will decide its attitude to every measure of this Government on merits. It is confident that the people of Pondicherry will judge the ADMK and its Ministry on the basis of its profession and actual practice.

## **Resolution on Gujarat\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on March 7-10, 1974**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its grave concern over the situation in Gujarat, where police firings on unarmed people, curfew and prohibitory orders have become a daily occurrence for the last two months.

The responsibility for the present developments is entirely that of the Congress party and the Central Government. The Government by its policies of aiding the landlords, hoarders, speculators and monopolists brought about a situation where the prices of all daily necessities in general and foodgrains in particular had risen to such dizzy heights that they were simply not available to the common people. Protest demonstrations and bandhs made no impact on the Congress Governments in Gujarat and on the Central Government.

When the people found that a callous and corrupt Government, despite their demonstrations and bandhs, was impervious to their demands and took no steps to make food available, the people themselves took the issue into their own hands and started dehoarding the hoarded stocks. The Government's answer to this was not action against the hoarders, but lathi-charges and police firings.

This set the whole of Gujarat into flames. A mass upsurge, the like of which Gujarat had never before seen, swept the entire State. The entire people rose against the Government and came out into the streets.

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The Government intensified its terror on a scale unknown in the history of the country. The CRP roamed about in every city, curfew was imposed in 46 towns. Whole cities were handed over to the Army. The number of those who were shot dead exceeded the number dead during the Quit India movement and in the struggle for Maha Gujarat.

All these, however, could not cow down the people, who defied the ban orders, defied the police, CRP and the Army and came out in their thousands in the streets. A glorious role in this historic struggle was played by the students and employees.

This compelled the Ministry to resign and the imposition of President's rule.

The people of Gujarat have become so desperate and have become so disillusioned with the corrupt rule of the Congress(R) that they are demanding the dissolution of the Assembly and holding of fresh elections and the struggle for the realization of this demand goes on unabated.

The pressure of the masses is so intense that over 60 of the members of the Assembly have already resigned their membership of the Assembly.

And yet the Central Government refuses to accede to this just and democratic demand of the people and is continuing its reign of terror, of brutal firings and curfew.

The Polit Bureau repudiates the subtle attempts of the Government of India to dub this mass popular upsurge against the corrupt Congress regime as a measure inspired by some rich people and the vested interests. This is an unabashed attempt to conceal its own abominable corruption and criminal policies of inflicting starvation on the common people.

While reactionary elements may try to take advantage of the discontent of the people, the P.B. asserts that the entire responsibility for this situation in Gujarat is that of the Congress Government.

The Polit Bureau expresses its indignation at the Government for this brutal terror. It pays its homage to the scores of people who have laid down their lives in the struggle for

food and against the brutal terror of the corrupt Congress Government.

It congratulates the brave people of Gujarat who have been fighting with unexampled courage, valour and determination against the Government's policies for the last two months.

It rejects the argument of the Government that the question of dissolution of the Assembly can only be considered after normalcy is restored as totally untenable. It is pertinent to point out here that in 1959 the Congress party in alliance with the Catholic Church and Nair Service Society started a movement against the then Communist Government in Kerala on the question of the Education Bill and mobilised a section of the people only. Compared to what is happening now in Gujarat that struggle was a small affair. No mass shootings were there. No ban orders, not to speak of curfew, were imposed. No one was detained without trial. No fissures were there in the ruling party. And yet Indira Gandhi, as President of the Congress, called upon the Government of India to remove that Government and dissolve the Assembly which the latter promptly did. This only underlines the partisan use to which the Government is putting the Constitution and exposes the hollowness of its argument.

The Polit Bureau demands the immediate dissolution of the Assembly, an end to the terror and an opportunity to the people of Gujarat to give their verdict on the two years of misrule of the Congress party.

The Polit Bureau directs all its units to mobilize the people in solidarity with the fighting people of Gujarat and in support of their just and democratic demand for the dissolution of the Assembly.

## **Resolution on Shiv Sena\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on March 7-10, 1974**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its strong condemnation of the Maharashtra Congress Government and of the Central Government for their direct and indirect encouragement to the anti-national, anti-working class fascist Shiv Sena organization.

Raising the chauvinistic slogan of jobs for only the "sons of the soil" in the midst of rising unemployment due to Congress policies, the Shiv Sena was used to split the unity of the working class and incite the Marathi-speaking people against the other linguistic and national minorities in Bombay.

The Maharashtra Government offered encouragement and police patronage to the Shiv Sena, whose leader expressed his admiration for Hitler and organized gangster attacks against the Communist and Left trade unions. The employers used its services for strike-breaking purposes.

The minorities in Bombay, which comprise mainly of the working class, middle class employees, shopkeepers and others have been living in nightmarish conditions for the last few years. The full story of the burning of hutments in slums, gangster and murderous attacks on minorities, attacks on trade union leaders, raids and looting of shops owned by minorities during the processions organized by the Shiv Sena is yet to be told. The minorities were made to feel that they were living in a strange and hostile place.

Recent events have once again brought to the forefront the

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patronage extended by the Congress party to this fascistic organization. The ruling party with the full consent and sanction of Mrs. Indira Gandhi entered into an alliance with it in the Parliamentary by-election from Bombay. It used it to carry on organized gangsterism against the untouchables led by the Dalit Panthers who were opposed to the Congress.

This was the climax to the use of Shiv Sena against the minorities a few weeks prior to the by-elections. Giving full encouragement to it to rouse anti-Kannadiga feelings in connection with the Maharashtra-Karnataka border dispute, helping it organize a bandh, the Congress party tried to cash in on the feeling of linguistic chauvinism. The Sena gangsters were given full liberty to intimidate the city's minorities.

The burning of hundreds of hutments, looting of shops, attacks on hawkers who belong to minority groups, the terror in dispersed localities prior to the by-election—these rendered the life of minority citizens completely unsafe.

The unscrupulousness of the administration and Shiv Sena knew no bounds. When the Gujarati-speaking people of Bombay along with the rest of Bombay's citizens recently protested against the high prices, with tolling of bells, they were mercilessly singled out for cruel repression to teach a lesson to the minorities, with the Shiv Sena uttering threats of violence and intimidation.

The hypocritical assurances of Naik about protection to minorities and the white-washing speech of Dixit in Parliament are specimens of Congress double-dealing. Both, however, reveal the deteriorating situation which requires special guards and police to be posted in railway compartments to protect the minorities. Under these conditions, none will attach any value to the wordy denunciation of the Shiv Sena by Government spokesmen in Parliament. While Dixit was denouncing the Shiv Sena in Parliament, a Minister of the Maharashtra Government was praising it for fighting Communism.

Smt. Indira Gandhi's laboured efforts to dissociate herself from the Congress-Shiv Sena alliance in Bombay



constituted a clumsy attempt to cover a heinous sin against the unity of the country. She knew fully well the doings of her yes-man, Rajni Patel, in Bombay which were fully reported in the Press.

The reservation circular of the Maharashtra Government is no step to allay the severity, much less to solve the unemployment problem, in Bombay. It is a pure attempt to divert attention from the responsibility of the Congress rulers and incite worker against worker. It was Indira Gandhi who blessed these diversionary anti-unity tactics faced with the bankruptcy of her own policies. This offending circular if it leads to reprisals and retaliatory action in other States, may end in chaos, disunity and disaster for the country. The problem of unemployment has to be tackled as part of the struggle to end the capitalist path and nothing that stands in the way of such a struggle should be tolerated. The Polit Bureau expresses its full sympathy and support for our people's demand of full employment. It however warns that it cannot be solved by infights among the workers and employees.

The P.B. congratulates the trade unions of Bombay and Left political parties on their united struggle against Shiv Sena gangsterism to protect their brethren from Kerala, Karnataka, U.P. and other States. The P.B. appeals to the working class, students, employees, all sections of toilers in Maharashtra to meet the menace of the anti-national Shiv Sena and protect the unity of the country and the fighting toilers. Thousands of Maharashtra toilers are working in other States and the Shiv Sena activities constitute an incitement to start similar anti-national activities in other States. Bombay's working class with its fighting traditions must resolutely fight the Shiv Sena politics which plays into the hands of the nation's enemies.

The ruling party is disrupting the unity of the country and seeks to disrupt the unity of the working class in its unscrupulous game of keeping itself in power.

The CPI(M) calls upon all progressive and democratic parties, all people and members of Parliament standing for

the unity of the country, to denounce the Congress Government of Maharashtra and the Central Government for their encouragement to the anti-national Shiv Sena and demand complete protection to the minorities in Bombay. Without defeating this unholy alliance, the unity of the country cannot be protected and the growth of this fascistic organization cannot be checked.

## **Resolution on Asian Security Pact\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on March 7-10, 1974**

The recent agreement between the USA and Britain to develop Diego Garcia Island, just a thousand miles from India, in the midst of the Indian Ocean, half way between Africa and Australia, into a full-fledged major naval and air base of American imperialists with their nuclear missiles, poses a grave threat to the security of Afro-Asian nations and other littoral countries of the Indian Ocean, especially to India and the oil rich Arab countries. The USA has also concluded an agreement with the Portuguese fascist regime to build military bases in Nacola and Lourenco Marques in Mozambique. These along with other bases, from Asmara bordering on the Red Sea in Ethiopia, Aldabara, Seychelles, Cocos, and Christines Islands in the Indian Ocean and North West Cape and Darwin in Australia, completes the chain of military bases of American-British imperialists. Coupled with these bases, the Americans are actively engaged in developing big military bases in Saudi Arabia and Iran and are pouring in billions of military hardware with the most sophisticated planes, ships and missiles. They are also arming Pakistan.

The American imperialists are threatening Arab nations with military reprisals and demanding the removal of the oil embargo. They are encouraging Iran and Israel in their aggressive policies against the Arab nations.

The American imperialists, defeated in Vietnam after a brutal open aggressive war of over two decades, were forced

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to withdraw their armies from Vietnam. Still, they continue to violate Paris Agreements, continue to back up the puppet Thieu Government with hundreds of millions worth of new weapons, with more than 20,000 military advisers in civilian garb and support the stooge Lon Nol Government in Cambodia. The U.S. imperialism continues its military bases in Thailand, Philippines, in Okinawa and Japan, and backs up the Indonesian military regime and is in close alliance with it.

The security of Asian peoples and independence of Asian States are constantly being violated by the American imperialists. It poses a continuous threat, in spite of repeated defeats it has suffered from the Socialist and national liberation movements. That is why our Party considers that it has become urgent to forge unity amongst the Asian countries and peoples to defend their security and sovereignty and rebuff the American imperialists' threat and manoeuvres.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) notes in this connection the moves of the Soviet Government to forge an Asian Security Pact.

Our Party considers that it is meaningless to talk or envisage an Asian Security Pact without pinpointing the real nature and source of threat to the freedom and security of Asian nations. The real enemy to Asian nations is American imperialism and the threat arises from its aggressive designs in Asia. It must be declared that the Asian Security Pact is aimed against American and other imperialists' designs in Asia, and for immediate abolition of all war bases of America and withdrawal of all American forces from Asian soil and from the islands in the Indian and West Pacific Oceans.

Secondly, our Party considers that the effective participation of the mighty Socialist China, the most populous State in the world, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam along with other Asian countries who stand against the American imperialists and their Asian allies is absolutely essential to make such a front practicable and fruitful. These countries suffered most and

for a prolonged period from aggressive wars waged by the American imperialists and their allies.

When the Soviet leaders do not come out with these clear-cut objectives, the Chinese leaders in the context of the present-day Soviet-China conflicts, considers the Asian Security Pact as another move of the Soviet Government directed against it and to forge collusion deals with America. The Chinese leaders have become silent on American war bases in Japan, the Pacific Ocean, South-East Asia and in the Indian Ocean. Sometimes, they even support American moves as check-mating the Soviet. Our Party considers this attitude as harmful to the struggle against American imperialism.

Our Party has again and again declared that the leaders of both the Soviet Union and China in their efforts to improve their relations with American and other imperialist powers and in pursuance of the short-term needs of their foreign policies are resorting to steps that are causing damage to the national liberation movements and world revolutionary cause.

Our Party hopes that the present differences and conflicts between the Soviet Union and China will be overcome soon and they, in solidarity with democratic and anti-imperialist States and forces in Asia, will forge a real Asian Security Pact of mutual co-operation and assistance to completely eliminate imperialist hold and in the first instance, American imperialist hold in Asia.

Our Party demands that the Indian Government should pursue a policy of maintaining and further developing friendly relations with both the Soviet Union and Socialist China and, along with other anti-imperialist forces and countries in Asia and Africa, strive to frustrate American aggressive designs and its drive to establish military bases in the Indian Ocean.

## **A Welcome Move\***

A number of Left and democratic parties are to meet in New Delhi on April 4 and 5, 1974.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Socialist Party, Right Communist Party, RSP, Forward Bloc, Forward Bloc (Marxist), Socialist Unity Centre, Biplabi Bangla Congress and RCPI have already agreed to participate in the meeting. The SSP, Peasants' and Workers' Party and Lal Nishan are among the invitees.

The Socialist Party has to be congratulated for taking the initiative to convene this meeting.

The representatives of these parties will be sitting together to plan out joint mass actions including an all India General Strike and Hartal.

The move has come in the wake of a series of struggles all over the country of all sections of the people. It is the simmering wrath of the people against Congress policies which have created for them miseries defying description that has been bursting out in these struggles, many of them spontaneous as in Gujarat.

Jute, textile, plantation and other sections of the working class have gone into actions and railwaymen are preparing for a general strike in defence of their living standards; agricultural workers in rural areas have been fighting grim battles for work and wages; teachers and employees have

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been organizing struggles to stop the erosion into their earnings; State Government employees all over the country are to strike for a day on April 9; doctors and engineers have been on strike for their demands; students and youth have been agitating in various parts of the country for educational reforms, jobs or unemployment relief: all sections of the people, specially large numbers of women, have been drawn into actions for food and against high prices.

It is many of these struggles led jointly by various Left and democratic parties that have now led to the New Delhi meeting.

The realization has been growing from the experience of these struggles that all the Left and democratic forces must come together to defend the people. None of these parties can claim to be equally strong in all the States and it is their coming together alone that can give an all India sweep to the struggle against the anti-people policies of the Congress Government. Without that, these policies cannot be fought and defeated and the people defended.

The joint statement of the Socialist Party and the CPI(M) in September last was one step towards this coming together of Left and democratic forces.

Now another major step is being taken with the New Delhi meeting.

The situation is already serious and will worsen further for the people in the coming days. The Congress rulers, incapable of giving food and jobs and halting the price-rise, are bent on suppressing the people with bullets and bayonets.

To the defence of the people—that today has to be the main concern of all the Left and democratic forces. And in this there is no scope for any narrow interests of any party.

The Left and democratic parties, we are sure, will chalk out a programme of joint actions and movements that will inspire our suffering people and that will lift the people's struggle to a higher level and place it on the road to winning their demands.

It is out of such joint actions and movements that ultimately a united front of Left and democratic forces will emerge as a viable alternative to Congress misrule.

We wish the New Delhi meeting all success and hope it will mark an advance towards the creation of such a united front.



## **Make May 3 A Success Urgent Call to Party Units\***

**P. Sundarayya**

You must have by now received the full text of the communique issued on behalf of the Left and democratic parties who met at Delhi on April 4 and 5. Later on we will be sending detailed accounts of the discussions and stands that different parties took on the issues that came up. But whatever concessions and adjustments that each of the participants had to make to arrive at this agreed draft, the main thing is that we are all agreed that May 3 be observed as **DAY OF NATIONWIDE PROTEST ACTION** simultaneously in all States and voice agreed popular demands.

The purpose of this Action Day is to channelise these struggles and effectively combat the anti-people policies of the Government and for urgently needed changes in its policies and other measures.

It would have been much better if all the participants had agreed to forthwith give call for an all-India bandh instead of asking the participants and other Left and democratic parties and mass organisations that broadly share the call of action, had decided the form of action in each State that they in their States would be able to carry out from demonstrations to bandhs. But the Right Communist Party felt that giving such a call from this meeting itself without preparing their own party's units in different States and also without having consultations and agreement of mass organisations

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, April 14, 1974. Refer Document under Appendix (XV) of this Volume.

and others who were not participating in this meeting, the feasibility of implementing that decision on an all-India scale would be difficult and as such it should be left to different States to decide the best suitable and effective form of actions possible in the prevailing conditions in that State.

### **CPI(M) Efforts for Unity**

Our Party, the CPI(M) has been fighting for a Left and democratic alternative in the country. In the background of growing discontent, it has been felt necessary that unless the Left and democratic parties come together a democratic orientation cannot be given. But the Right C.P is for unity with the so-called progressive sections of Congress or with progressive Congressmen. Other Left parties like the Socialist Party were not seeing the danger posed by the parties of extreme Right and not categorically dissociating from them. A significant achievement of this meeting is that on the one hand the Right C.P. has agreed to fight against Government policies with other Left parties and the Socialist Party has agreed to call upon the people to be vigilant about the danger of Right reactionary parties and other reactionary forces.

### **Forms of Action**

In this call of national protest action nothing is debarred, from demonstrations to bandhs. Of course, bandh includes strike action in industries, Government and municipal offices, etc. Further, for a broad action, consensus is required and as such no one party can veto any form of action. Our Party should try to persuade and convince representatives of these participating parties as well as other Left and democratic parties that the most suitable and effective action would be bandh. With strikes in all Government and non-Government concerns and especially in the present all-India context it is also feasible to try and arrive at a consensus for bandh itself. But if one or other participating party or mass organisation feels that they cannot associate with the call for bandh in that particular State, if the consensus of others is

for bandh, others may certainly proceed for bandh. But we will also have to take into account the fact that whether the non-participation of that particular party that does not agree to take part in the action for bandh would mar the future course of joint actions for campaigns and struggles for achieving those demands which we have agreed upon, and then it may be advisable not to go in for a Statewide bandh and only to confine to the next best form of commonly agreed action. It is for the others to judge and take suitable action.

### **Delinking Railway Strike**

In the course of our discussions, our Party as well as the Right C.P. wanted the railway strike to be delinked from this nationwide protest action day. We insisted that the two should be delinked in the very interest of the railwaymen. The railwaymen who are preparing to go on indefinite strike to achieve their economic demands and who are pressing for a negotiated settlement, failing which they will have to go into strike action, should have enough time to go through the negotiations whose course cannot be foreseen. So a nationwide protest action cannot be synchronised with the railway strike. Organisations of railwaymen while negotiating for settlement must also have enough time to mobilise public support and make necessary organisational preparations for their own successful conducting of the strike.

Secondly, a one-day nationwide political protest action has the limited objective of channelising the mass discontent and mass struggles bursting out in the context of the serious deterioration of their conditions on an all-India plane as a first step to warn the Government that if it does not change its policies and accept or concede substantial relief to various sections of the people as we have formulated in the charter of demands, it would have to face much more effective mass actions for various demands and the active implementation of many of these slogans to the extent possible depending upon mass participation and organised preparations to enforce the particular demand.

If we attempt this political protest action to synchronise with the railway strike, issues of all sections of the people which we want to focus get relegated to the background and the dominating issue would be the demands of the railway workers. As such the general public might feel that our nationwide protest action is only to back up the railway workers' demands.

While it is delinked and the railway strike comes after this, say a week or so later which we have suggested to the leaders of the railway workers, this successful nation-wide protest day would also give a fillip to and strengthen the cause of the railway workers' action itself and the Government will be compelled to take greater caution before it dares to reject the railwaymen's demands.

The participant parties along with other Left and democratic parties will again have to meet and review the situation after this nationwide mass protest action to plan out concrete mass action to enforce other demands in different States as well as on all-India scale.

### **Danger from Reaction**

In this connection our Party units must note that though we reject the undue apprehensions of the Right C.P. about the danger of an extreme Rightist coup as realistic, the danger of extreme reactionary parties utilising this mass discontent for their own nefarious purposes and diverting this mass upsurge into wrong channels is there. Our Party documents and resolutions have repeatedly warned about it. As such we are all agreed in the course of this mass action to see that Rightist parties and other reactionary forces and the vested interests in whatever garb they may appear are not allowed to misdirect it into anarchic actions. In this connection, we want to stress that our Party units must make special efforts to combat the mischief that is likely to be played by the extreme reactionary parties and persuade all other participants to be equally careful without toning down in any way the mass action.

### **Start Work Right Now**

So immediately contact the State leaders of the participant parties and also other non-participating Left and democratic parties and mass organisations and get their acceptance for effective action. Call conventions as early as possible where the form of action and detailed plan of action can be chalked out. Start the campaign immediately through public meetings, posterings and leaflets in different places.

As far as the demands formulated are concerned, wording and formulation of the demands are such as to get the maximum agreement. We could not concretise them in greater detail nor could all of our demands be included.

From the communique itself you must have seen the SUCI reservation and their fantastic Leftist demand that (1) they want to take away all retail trade in all essential commodities and only the public distribution system should continue, and (2) that land should not be given to the agricultural labour and the agricultural labour should be guaranteed only employment and wage. But in any case at the end they made the declaration that for the sake of unity they are agreeing to this joint action.

We want to stress that while joint platforms and meetings in the course of this action will have to be held wherever necessary, we should also hold our own separate meetings and explain our Party's point of view about the necessity of going into action even on this limited programme.

Lastly, we stress on our Party units to work their hardest to see that this all-India wide mass action, first of its kind wherein most of the Left and democratic parties have joined together and forged a front, becomes successful. The greater the success of this protest action, the greater will be the opportunities to develop more and more joint actions. That will pave the way for further consolidation of unity at least in action of these various Left and democratic parties.

## **Railway Workers' Glorious Strike of 1974\***

### **Workers Facing Army, Police, Arrests**

The strike is on as scheduled from 6 a.m. on May 8—the first all-India general strike on the railways since 1960.

The Action Committee has congratulated railwaymen all over the country for their magnificent response to the strike call—"the strike is unprecedented in the annals of the trade union movement and opened a new chapter in its history".

Even with handing over the Indian railways to the Army, CRP and BSF, and the Territorial Army, with unprecedented repression—6000 arrests before the strike began and about 4000 on the first day of the strike, with dismissals galore in all the zones and further threats of dismissals and filling of posts through promotion of "loyal" employees and fresh recruitment, with everything that is available in the armoury of the Government being put to use, it has not been able to prevent the strike from being an unprecedented success. While General Managers claim near-normalcy, every single report from every important station and workshop shows that the railway services are totally dislocated, that the authorities are lying.

Among those arrested in the last two days (earlier report on centre pages) are Comrades Ahilya Rangnekar and D. S. Vaidya in Bombay and Comrade G. K. Parmar, Secretary of the Gujarat unit of the CITU.

The nearly two million railwaymen had done everything possible to reach a negotiated settlement on their demands, but the Government's rejection of the demands, shutting the

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\*Report published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, May 12, 1974

door to negotiations and the monstrous repression it has unleashed, have forced the strike.

### **Government's Insincerity**

Even a cursory narration of the rapid developments in the last three weeks or so will lay fully bare the responsibility of the Government for the strike.

The demands of the railwaymen are long-standing ones but the Government had shown no inclination to discuss them with the organizations of railwaymen.

Only after the National Convention of Railwaymen in New Delhi on February 27 took the decision to give the Government time till April 10 and to go on strike any time after that if the Government did not concede their demands and set up a National Co-ordination Committee for Railwaymen's Struggle (NCCRS) and an Action Committee, that on the eve of April 10, the Union Labour Minister initiated talks with the leaders of the railwaymen and later the Railway Minister also had talks with them.

While Government spokesmen talked of negotiations to arrive at a settlement, etc., the utter lack of seriousness on the part of the Government was seen right from the beginning. Instead of the Railway Minister himself conducting the negotiations on such an important and serious issue, a member of the Railway Board who had no authority to negotiate was charged with conducting talks with the leaders of the railwaymen. They, on their part, determined to explore every possibility of a negotiated settlement, held talks with the Railway Board member.

These talks could lead nowhere. Leave alone their demands, the railway bureaucrat was not even prepared to talk about the victimisation that was still continuing.

Railwaymen's leaders asked the Government to give its decision on their demands by April 15 and also took the decision, since the negotiations were not getting anywhere, to serve strike notices on April 18 with the strike to begin on May 8.

That they were still for a negotiated settlement was shown when they responded to Railway Minister L. N. Mishra who said that the Railway Board member's was not the last word and that he himself would meet them on April 18.

The Government again demonstrated its lack of seriousness. Valuable time had already been lost and it was also clear that unless the Railway Minister himself took a hand, the negotiations would not move forward. But the Railway Minister who now talks so pontifically of national interests and so on was more concerned with the petty job of securing the sinecures of his henchmen in Bihar. Deputy Railway Minister Mohammed Shafi Qureshi was asked to conduct the negotiations.

Because of the death of Qureshi's father, the first meeting itself had to be adjourned and it was clear that the negotiations would not be resumed before April 27. Even at that stage, when time was running out fast, the Railway Minister refused to take charge of the negotiations himself.

Three or four sittings with the Deputy Railway Minister made it clear that it was not the Government's intention to conduct any serious negotiations.

The Government is now making a lot of noise about the concessions it has made.

### **Concessions—or a Hoax ?**

What are these concessions?

The Miabhoy Tribunal's recommendations in regard to working hours and casual labour would be totally implemented. This would mean eight hours of daily work and 48 hours of weekly work. George Fernandes has pointed out that the Miabhoy recommendations would cover only certain categories of employees and exclude large sections—the loco running staff, for example, and as such did not meet the demand of the railwaymen which is for eight-hour day for all categories and proper overtime wages.

On casual labour, the Government's offer, in line with the Miabhoy recommendations, was that casual labour would not be employed in workshops, locosheds, yards and wagon



depots. Fernandes has pointed out this does not fully meet the railwaymen's demand for de-casualization.

As regards victimisation, the Deputy Railway Minister was categorical that no blanket order for withdrawal of all cases would be made, all that he could offer was that if the cases were listed out, he would go into them individually.

The offer on foodgrains supply also fell short of the workers' demand. The Government's offer was to set up fair-price shops in all colonies housing 300 or more railway employees to serve all railwaymen irrespective of their salaries against the demand for adequate quantities of foodgrains at subsidised rates through departmentally run stores.

When it came to the major demands, treatment of railwaymen as industrial workers, job evaluation and regradation, need-based minimum wage, pending that parity in wages with public sector undertakings, 8.33 per cent bonus, etc., the Government was adamant that none of these demands could be accepted.

What the Government was trying to do was to make a show of giving some concessions on smaller issues like hours of work, casual labour, foodgrains, etc., to create confusion and disruption and persuade enough railwaymen to dissociate from the strike.

That the negotiations were meant to be an eyewash can be seen not only in the lack of seriousness of the Government but also in the fact that the Prime Minister in her letter to the Chief Ministers had *ex parte* rejected the demand for bonus and parity with public sector wages.

### **Infamous Act of Perfidy**

Again, this was made clear when in an infamous act of utter perfidy the Government arrested George Fernandes and two other members of the Action Committee, about 50 per cent of the members of the NCCRS, along with large numbers of railwaymen and leaders and activists of Left and democratic parties and trade unions. The arrests were made in the morning of May 2. That evening the Railway Minister had promised

to meet the railwaymen's leaders for the final round of negotiations. The Government had also promised not to make any arrests while the negotiations were on.

L. N. Mishra has lyingly put out that Fernandes was arrested because he was not interested in the negotiations as he did not attend a meeting on May 1. Sri Mishra lied because he knows Fernandes was going to Lucknow to attend a May Day rally and that two members of the Action Committee would attend the meeting on its behalf which they did and finalised the minutes.

Even then, the Action Committee said it would resume negotiations if the arrested leaders were released unconditionally. The Government, riding the high horse, said, no negotiations until the strike notice is withdrawn.

It was the Government that thus shut the door of negotiations and it must bear the fullest responsibility for the consequent situation.

### **Vilification and Slander**

After the arrests, along with the show of armed might—alerting the Army and Navy, calling out the CRP and BSF, deploying the Territorial Army, etc., to create terror and panic among the railwaymen, the Government also began the dirtiest vilification and slander campaign.

Railway Minister L. N. Mishra talked about political adventurism in trade unionism, said that George Fernandes had in mind a deeper purpose than a mere strike and his programme was directed towards creating economic chaos in the country.

George Fernandes in his letter to the Prime Minister characterised this as “preposterous”—there is no politics, he wrote, in railwaymen wanting the same wages, bonus, hours of work and other terms of service as employees of the Modern Bakeries and other public sector undertakings.

L. N. Mishra in his radio broadcast on May 6, after revising upward, without giving any reason, the figure of Rs. 500 crores—itself a totally inflated and bogus figure—to

Rs. 700 crores as the expenditure involved if all the demands of the railwaymen are accepted, said that the AIRF had suggested that Government could raise this money by increasing fares and freights. Sri Mishra quoted some figures. Second Class (Third Class till its recent promotion without any increase in amenities) fare would increase by Rs. 18 from Howrah or Bombay to Delhi and by Rs. 25 from Madras to Delhi and coal from Raniganj to Delhi will cost Rs. 25 more per tonne. The Railway Minister deliberately mentioned Second Class fares—why not a steep rise in First Class and Air-Conditioned Class fares?—to pit the common people against the railwaymen just as the partial strike which the Government itself imposed by withdrawing a large number of passenger trains was intended to do.

Why didn't Sri Mishra mention that the railways are carrying 60 per cent of the freight at below the cost of operation, that the railways are losing year after year crores of rupees by giving concessions in freight rates to sugar, jute and textile industries and for carrying bamboos to mills owned by Big Business houses? That during the current year, the railways are underwriting "social burdens" to the tune of Rs. 225 crores—to maintain uneconomic lines, loss on suburban earnings and loss of freight carried at below cost? Why should railwaymen be penalised for all this?

Why did Sri Mishra not mention that the railways were required to pay a dividend of 5.5 per cent on the capital at charge—Rs. 185 crores during the current year, that the railways had generated a surplus of Rs. 3000 crores in the last 19 years—all because labour productivity in the open lines of the railways has increased by 64 per cent in the last two decades—and yet railwaymen are refused treatment as industrial workers and parity in wages with public sector undertakings most of which are running at a loss?

### **Show of Mailed Fist**

Neither Sri Mishra nor his Government has any answer to these questions. Hence the mailed fist.

The latest in the show of this mailed fist is the Gazette Extraordinary notification of May 5 by the Labour Ministry freeing the railway administration from obligations under the Payment of Wages Act. The concerned provisions require payment of wages within a specified time limit. The tactics is the same as was employed in Indian Airlines—deny the employees even their earned wages for the days they have worked to starve them into submission.

The Government has forced the confrontation—the railwaymen are facing it with the fullest backing of the democratic forces, parties, trade unions, mass organizations and other Central Government employees who have already started a work-to-rule action and will go on strike from May 10.

## **Police Rampage in Andhra Villages\***

**P. Sundarayya**

In the by-election from Vuyyur constituency to the Andhra Pradesh Assembly, an Independent candidate, Dr. K. Ranga Rao, was supported by the CPI(M) and the ranks of the Right C.P. as well as other Opposition parties. The Congress candidate, Sri K. Ram Mohan, is the son of a notorious Congress leader and separatist Andhra movement leader, the late Sri Kakani Venkataratnam. The late Sri Venkataratnam and his son are notorious for their pro-landlord and anti-people activities and high-handed and rough dealings with the people. Dr. Ranga Rao won the election with a 5000 vote majority over the Congress candidate.

### **Attack on Candidate**

In the course of the election campaign, Sri Ram Mohan organized his bands and attacked Dr. Ranga Rao, the candidate of the Opposition and inflicted a head injury on him. The Chief Minister, Sri Vengal Rao, made rabid speeches in support of his Congress candidate, asking his followers to teach a lesson to Dr. Ranga Rao and his supporters, and especially Communist Party of India (Marxist). "Don't allow the Red Flag to enter the villages, beat and drive out the Marxists from the villages in this constituency."

While counting was going on, on April 29, the police posted to ensure that the supporters of the Independent candidate and of the Congress remain separate and do not come

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into clashes, chased away the Independent candidate's supporters, lathi-charging them and injuring five or six of them; because at one stage, they raised the slogan, "Dr. Ranga Rao Zindabad" as against the Congress supporters raising "Ram Mohan Rao Zindabad". The CPI(M) leaders on the spot stood between the police and the people and controlled the people and saved the situation. A stone that was thrown just missed the leader of the CPI(M), Comrade M. Subba Rao, State Committee Secretariat member, and hit a constable who was standing by his side. The officer-in-charge threatened that he would take necessary action to avenge the injury caused to his constable, and he was waiting for orders from the Superintendent of Police.

### **Chief Minister's Arrival**

At 2.45 p.m. Dr. Ranga Rao was declared elected by a 5000 majority and the huge congregation that came to cheer Dr. Ranga Rao was addressed by CPI(M) leader, Comrade Sriman Narayana and Dr. Ranga Rao and the procession started moving towards the villages of the constituency. Just at that time, the Chief Minister, Sri Vengal Rao, came on the scene followed by his escorts. The crowd raised the slogan, "Down, Down with Vengal Rao" and surrounded his car. Again the leaders of the CPI(M) jumped into the crowd and pushed the people back and allowed the car of the Chief Minister to proceed. In this *melee*, the glass at the back of the car was broken and as the Chief Minister himself told the Press Conference next day in Hyderabad, no stones were hurled at his car and when he saw the people's congregation, he diverted his car and reached Hyderabad safely.

### **Police Brutalities**

But as soon as his car left, and most of the procession proceeded on its way, police officials with lorry-loads of CRP attacked the dispersing crowd and started a brutal lathi-charge against them. They entered the houses and shops in Gannavaram and beat mercilessly the inhabitants. This un-

provoked and indiscriminate lathi-charge on the peaceful citizens continued for long. That night they again raided the houses of the supporters of the CPI(M) and beat the sleeping inmates including women and children brutally and arrested 60 people and locked them up. Comrades J. J. Rao and S. Subramanyam, two of the district leaders of the CPI(M), belonging to Gannavaram were arrested in their houses in the morning of April 30 and taken to the police lock-up and brutally beaten. Comrade J. J. Rao had his hand fractured in three places and his whole body and legs and back were swollen due to the brutal beating. I personally went to the sub-jail on May 2 and saw the prisoners, 43 of them out of the 60 lodged in jail with injuries, lathi blows, blows with the butts of rifles and bruises inflicted by sharp iron rods.

They narrated to me the various brutalities which the CRP and the police officials, especially the Circle Inspector, K. Subha Rao, had been indulging in the whole night and the next day Comrade J. J. Rao's hand was fractured in the morning of the 30th itself by the merciless police beating in the lock-up, but no X-ray was taken and the fracture was not bandaged.

It was also strange that none of the arrested persons were produced before the Munsiff Court but on the papers placed before the Magistrate, the District Munsiff simply passed the order remanding them to sub jail. They were thus deprived of even showing their bruised bodies and injuries to the Magistrate and demanding proper treatment. It is also amazing that this Magistrate who is also the Superintendent in charge of the sub-jail, did not even bother to see the inmates in the jail or make necessary medical arrangements for them and later he, who so readily obliged the police by remanding these prisoners, refused even to give them bail. This is how the independent judiciary functions in our country.

### **Terror Let Loose**

I met a large number of women and villagers in Gannavaram and neighbouring villages. They complained of the midnight

police-CRP attack on the sleeping villagers in Kesarapalli, Mastabad, Dhabajigudem, Buddavaram, Athukur, Pedda Avutipalli. Terror is let loose in those villages creating an atmosphere similar to that of 1948-49. The Circle Inspector and other police officers are openly boasting that they will teach the Communists such a lesson that they would never raise their heads again. I learnt that instructions have been issued by these police officers that if Comrade A. Sriman Narayan is caught, he should be shot or maimed and crippled so that he becomes a living corpse. The local landlords had raised a fund of Rs. one lakh to murder this comrade. Comrade Hanumantha Rao, Secretary of the State Committee of the CPI(M), has sent telegrams to the Union Home Minister demanding proper enquiry and punishment of the guilty police officers for the brutal lathi-charge and withdrawal of the cases.

It is also significant that immediately following Sri Vengal Rao's visit this brutal lathi-charge has taken place and large-scale terrorisation is let loose and vindictive prosecution of innocent people and the leaders of the CPI(M) is being persisted in. Thus, it is a calculated move on the part of the Chief Minister and the concerned police officers to resort to terror to browbeat the people to prevent them from expressing their free will in any election or from joining any movement however peacefully, to ventilate their own demands. This brutal lathi-charge was followed by large-scale arrests in Vijayawada, and in a number of important towns, of railway workers and CPI(M) leaders on the plea that they were organizing the National Protest Action on May 3 and were extending support to the railwaymen's strike.



## **All India General Strike Backs Railwaymen**

### **Unprecedented Solidarity Action in Support of Railway Strike\***

Today, May 16, 1974 is the ninth day of the railwaymen's strike. They enter the ninth day with renewed confidence from the fact that the working class and the entire toiling people of the land organized a magnificent countrywide General Strike on May 15 to demonstrate their full support to the striking railwaymen.

These nine days have been of the utmost trial for the railwaymen. Over 20,000 of them are behind prison bars, thousands have been thrown out of their jobs. A vindictive Government, in its pettiness, has attacked their women and children, thrown numberless families out of their quarters. Outdoing even the worst private employers, the Government of "garibi hatao" has cut off electricity and water to their families.

Starving—their earned wages for April having been denied to them—hunted, knowing that their women and children are the targets of constant and brutal attacks from the police, the heroic railwaymen, defying the terror of the Congress Government, have continued their action. All glory to them!

The Government through its Railway Minister had predicted that the strike would fizzle out in two-three days. The railwaymen have proved it wrong. Trains run by the Army and police forces with the accompanying accidents, do not constitute a fizzling out of the strike. Lying propaganda on

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\*Report published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, May 19, 1974.

All-India Radio or costly advertisements in newspapers, do not change the reality that the railwaymen are on strike for the ninth day, that the wheels are not moving the way the authorities are claiming.

The Government said the railwaymen were isolated, the people would defeat their "politically motivated" strike. May 15 is the answer. The entire Governmental machinery, the entire Congress apparatus were mobilized to defeat the all-India General Strike. The common people rallied to the railwaymen in one of the mightiest solidarity actions. One slogan rang across the country: release the railwaymen's leaders, negotiate with the railwaymen!

Even that has not made any sense to the tin-pot dictators in New Delhi. They report that there will be no negotiations unless the strike is withdrawn. Earlier they went through the motions of negotiations even while treacherously preparing to arrest the negotiators from the railwaymen's side. Even today while they talk of negotiations once the strike is withdrawn, they reject the two main demands of the railwaymen—bonus and parity in wages with public sector undertakings. These demands, Government spokesmen from the Prime Minister downwards are categorical, will not be considered, will not be conceded. What then are the negotiations for?

The leaders of the striking railwaymen have made every effort to reach an honourable negotiated settlement. They have offered to resume negotiations if all the Action Committee members are associated with them even while they are in prison. With over 60 per cent of the Co-ordination Committee members and most of the Action Committee members imprisoned by the Government, the Action Committee thus made the only proposal that is feasible for the resumption of negotiations.

The Action Committee has at the same time made one thing clear: the strike will go on till a negotiated settlement.

But the Government wants to impose its conditions.

President Giri himself is reported to have advised the

Prime Minister to arrive at a negotiated settlement without imposing conditions which might be humiliating.

But the Prime Minister and her Government continue to remain deaf.

The working class and working people of the country see the hideous anti-worker face of the Government.

The common people have begun to see that this Government of "democratic Socialism", which talks of financial stringency when it comes to the demands of its employees, is pouring thousands of crores of rupees into the coffers of the vested interests—through its policies like handing back wholesale trade in foodgrains to the private trade, decontrol measures like that of tyres and tubes (and of vanaspati in the offing), legalizing the blackmarket prices, more and more concessions to the monopolists.

The solidarity of the common man with the railwaymen demonstrated on May 15 is born out of the realization that the railwaymen are fighting the battle of all the working people.

It has been inspiring—the unity of the Left and democratic forces, the mobilization of the toiling people of the entire country behind the fighting railwaymen: the consciousness of the people, their militant resistance have taken big strides forward. The Congress rulers may ignore this—but only at their own peril.

## **Polit Bureau Greets the People\***

### **For Giving Massive Solidarity Support to Railway Workers' Strike**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) greets the working class of India and other toiling sections for the successful General Strike on May 15, 1974, expressing their full solidarity and powerful support to the railwaymen's strike which has already lasted for more than a week.

This solidarity strike at the call of all central trade union organizations and democratic parties—in spite of opposition from the INTUC and the Congress and organizations attached to it, and in face of terrific police repression and the organized violence of Congress-inspired youth gangs—has been a great success. The railway workers will get inspired with this demonstration of full support by all the toiling sections of our people and continue their struggle for winning their legitimate demands.

The Polit Bureau demands that the Government of India immediately stop its repressive measures against the railwaymen, their women and children and start negotiations with the Action Committee and arrive at a settlement on the question of bonus and parity of wages.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, May 19, 1974. Refer Document under Item No. 54 of this Volume.

## **Terror Created to Break Railway Strike\***

### **Railway Workers' Colonies Converted into Police Camps**

The glorious railway strike is a turning point in the life of the country. In two short weeks the Government of India and the ruling Congress party have smashed to smithereens their own claims to be Socialist and shown that they are no different from those hated rulers throughout history for whom the toilers have been nothing but instruments of profit. Nor is this the "propaganda" of those "agitators" whom Smt. Gandhi so hates. It is what the common people throughout the land are seeing with their own eyes, and no soft words and sweet slogans can erase the experience of these days of unprecedented terror and repression on railwaymen and their families. Smt. Gandhi and her Government have been seen for what they are—thoroughly anti-people, the representatives of the worst reaction in the country.

There is not a single railway colony in the country—not one which has not been turned into a police camp where every new day brings more intense harassment, more hounding, more beatings and arrests for railwaymen and their families.

#### **Mounting Arrests**

N.M. Berry and others of the Railway *War* Board display proudly everlengthening lists of arrests, like medals won on the battle-field.

On the Western Railway, on May 14, there were 3900

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\*Report published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, May 26, 1974.

arrests; by May 17, the figure had shot up to 6800. In the South-Eastern Railway, there were 2000 arrests by May 14; by May 17, it was 3900. The total number in jails will be approximately 30,000 including political workers, trade union activists and members of railwaymen's families.

Railwaymen in Bhopal were paraded through the streets handcuffed like common criminals. In Bihar, hundreds of railwaymen had left their quarters and taken shelter in the Dangua Posi jungle area near Jamshedpur. Armed policemen combed the area day and night and arrested them. In Mughalsarai among those arrested was Comrade Satyanarain. Tewari, member of the U.P. State Secretariat of the CPI(M) In Asansol, Comrade Robin Sen, CPI(M), M.P., has been arrested. In Andhra Pradesh, specially in the Khammam and Nalgonda districts, large-scale arrests of CPI(M) leaders and activists have been made.

The number of dismissals and suspensions is rapidly mounting. In Assam alone a thousand of the permanent staff have been thrown out of their jobs and on the North Eastern Railway, more than 10,000 temporary hands who had joined the strike have been dismissed. In one day, from May 16 to 17, the number of dismissals on the South-Eastern Railway shot up from 1131 to 2229. In the Southern Railway, till May 16, 1200 of the workers arrested were served with dismissal or suspension orders. These are figures fed to the daily Press by official quarters. The reality is that many, many more have been arrested and dismissed.

### **Starving into Submission**

The strikers, besides facing arrests and dismissals, have to worry about where their next meal is to come from. In an unprecedented action, which would bring joy to the hearts of the most hated dictator, the Government has directed the railway authorities to deprive the workers of their wages for the month of April. Fair price and ration shops in the railway colonies are mostly closed so that even credit facilities are not there. In several areas, railway workers are not being

given rations even when they can pay. In Tinsukia, Assam, not a single striker has been permitted to draw his rations. Even those inside jail are facing the same horror. In New Jalpaiguri jail, for instance, where hundreds of strikers are kept, no foodgrains have been given for the last week. Even foodgrains brought by their families are kept by the jail authorities and not given to them. It is nothing but trying to literally starve the workers into submission.

On top of this is hourly, daily harassment by the police and the summary eviction orders being served in their thousands.

In New Delhi, there was a public outcry after the ghastly police attack in the Kishanganj railway colony on the wives and children of the strikers when they were dragged out of their quarters. That professional liar, N. M. Berry, told newsmen that only one eviction order had been served and that also on the widow of a former employee who had no right to be there. Here is what a Correspondent of *The Hindustan Times* reported : "Large-scale evictions of the families of striking railway employees from the staff quarters have become the talk of the town... The railway authorities have posted eviction notices on 353 staff quarters in various colonies. Families have been given 12 hours to vacate the quarter or face eviction by the police. Neighbours of the evicted families said the police did not even allow time to take out their belongings. Household articles, beds and trunks were all locked up inside." (May 17).

### **Terror in Railway Colonies**

This is what is happening in the Capital, but even worse than this, nightmarish is what is happening in places like Kanchrapara, Kharagpur, Mughalsarai, etc.

In Kharagpur, protesting against the arrests of a large number of workers, a massive demonstration was taken out on May 18 in front of the local police station. As in Kanchrapara on May 12, a large police contingent attacked the demonstrators with batons and bayonets. The armed men

broke into the colonies here. Indiscriminately they beat up all —not sparing even the women. A large number of people including several women sustained severe injuries from teargas shells, bayonets and batons. One young boy was bayoneted to death. These police brutalities only attracted a larger number of women to the police station where they staged another huge demonstration. The police responded by resorting to another round of brutalities with lathis, bayonets and tear-gas.

More details of the gruesome atrocities in the Kanchrapara railway workshop colonies on the Eastern Railway have come to light. In the six-hour campaign of terror here on May 12, the police, CRP, Home Guards, Border Security Force, etc, assaulted hundreds of women. As the police broke into the colonies in the morning, they dragged three women having their bath in a tank. Half-naked, they were dragged along the road and thrown into the police vans. Holding them by the hair, the policemen beat and kicked and abused the women all the while. As hundreds of women surrounded the police, all of them were kicked about and beaten up with lathis. The police forces also brought in some prostitutes to set them upon the women here. These prostitutes beat and abused the women and looted all the ornaments on their person.

The police did not spare even the 63-year-old Sudhamoyee Banerjee. Thirteen-year-old Ira Adhikari was first kicked down and then beaten with the starting handle of a car by the Officer-in-Charge as she cried for the release of her mother. Another woman, Geeta Bhattacharya, who was pregnant was severely kicked and then beaten with lathis by the CRP. Since then she had suffered from profuse bleeding.

The railway colonies in the New Jalpaiguri area, the meeting point of the Eastern and North-East Frontier Railway, have been, since May 8, scenes of repeated police and goonda attacks. The women in these colonies took out, on May 15, a huge protest demonstration. Two women from among the demonstrators were picked up and thrown into a police van. The women reacted to this by organising a much larger



demonstration. The police came down upon them with lathis and teargas, badly injuring some of the women. Twelve women were arrested. New Jalpaiguri observed a hartal on May 16, too, in protest.

### **“Persuasion” in Mughalsarai**

Last week, we\* reported how the bigwigs of the Provincial Armed Constabulary and the Home Ministry in Uttar Pradesh had flown to Mughalsarai to “persuade” the workers to give up the strike. This is what *The Statesman* (May 17) says: “Besides a strong police force posted at its entrance, each staff colony is swarming with constables ever on the alert. Even the usually irrepressible children fear to stir out of their homes and instead watch the empty streets with fearful eyes. A large number of workmen have fled their homes as they do not want to be ‘persuaded’ by the police to work.”

And this is what the wives of the strikers in Mughalsarai told a Correspondent of *The Times of India*, “...a large contingent of BSF personnel and policemen surrounded the colony in the early hours and conducted a door-to-door search for striking employees.

“The wife of an employee showed newsmen the smashed doors of her flat and alleged that a group of policemen had forced their way into it and taken away her husband who is on strike. Tears rolled down her cheeks. Another woman complained that some policemen had not only misbehaved with her but also hit her two-year-old child on the head...Large contingents of the BSF, the CRP and the RPF continue to be posted at the colony.” (May 15).

In protest the women organised a mass gherao of the Divisional Mechanical Engineer. The Home Guards were called in to disperse the women.

In Maligaon, Assam, where police raids are a daily feature, the women came out in protest. Their demonstration on May 16 was lathi-charged.

\*Means “PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY”.

### **The Knock that Strikes Fear**

On the other side of the country, in Bombay, it is almost exactly the same story. "A knock at the door of a tenement these days strikes fear in the hearts of the residents of railway colonies. Wives and grown up children of the striking railway employees are in a disturbed state of mind. The wife of a guard in Parel colony said that she had been keeping awake every night since the strike began.

"Starting from the early hours of the morning, police vans fitted with loudspeakers enter the colony at least three times a day. The high pitch announcements that the strike is illegal and the strikers will lose their jobs are followed by arrests of the employees in their houses."

In fact, so intense is the repression that three senior officers of the Central Railway in Bombay protested against the harassment of the striking railwaymen. They are stated to have told the administration that unnecessary harassment of the striking workers and their families should stop immediately. (*The Indian Express*, May 15).

### **Molestation of Women**

In the South, the Right Communist leader, Sri M. Kalyanasundaram, after visiting various railway colonies, told Pressmen that there was a "reign of terror" at major centres on the Southern Railway like Villupuram, Golden Rock, Madurai, Dindigul, Podanur, Erode, Salem and Jalarpet. The police were breaking open the houses in the colonies during the night. Any worker found was beaten up while being arrested. There were numerous cases of police molesting the womenfolk, particularly in those cases where the workers had been forced to leave their homes and take shelter in fields and palm groves.

In Bihar, railway colonies in Gaya, Jamalpur, Jhajha and Dehri-on-Sone are particular targets of attack. Here, too, as in Mughalsarai, huge contingents of the BSF, RPF and local police make frequent raids. In Gaya, the property of 30 striking workers has been attached. Their family members including

small children were dragged out of their quarters. (*Indian Nation*, May 15).

In Gangapur, Rajasthan, a 1500-strong demonstration of strikers marched through the streets demanding an end to repression. They were brutally lathi-charged and teargassed.

In many of the centres, arrested workers have been forced to join duty at the point of the bayonet. This has been the case in Delhi, in Poona, in West Bengal. In Naihati, for instance, arrested workers were kept locked up, isolated from their families and made to work long hours. From Naihati and Kanchrapara there are the most horriific reports that *drivers forced to join duty have been chained by the leg in the driver's cabin* for hours together. The railway authorities have labelled this "police protection for loyal workers". And it is these workers forced to work who have again gone on strike in Delhi, Mughalsarai, Igatpuri, Sabarmati, Ajmer, etc.

## **CPI(M) Greets the Railwaymen\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta on May 28, 1974**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on May 28, 1974 :*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is constrained to observe that the precipitous withdrawal of the railway strike, asking the workers to resume work within twelve hours, has thrown the railwaymen at the mercy of a ruthless administration and is bound to cause confusion and resentment in the ranks of the workers.

The P.B. is of the opinion that the assessment behind this decision is wrong. It seems that the leaders from jail who sponsored it were of the opinion that the strike had virtually collapsed and workers' resistance was no longer effective. They accepted the picture presented by All India Radio. On the contrary, the full effect of the strike was now being felt and the Government and the railway administration were face to face with a serious situation. Notwithstanding weaknesses in some pockets, the strikers were in a strong position to bargain for an honourable settlement. One has only to read the dispersed reports in the daily Press to realise how the adamant attitude of the Government has brought about a standstill in economic operations.

The unilateral withdrawal, of course, means the administration is free to do anything with the railway workers. Thousands are in jail. Thousands are under dismissal orders.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, June 2, 1974.

Hundreds have suffered at the hands of the police and undergone torture. For them there is no redress. Everyone will be screened. Those whom the administration charges with "violence" will be victimised.

The P.B. is of the opinion that this situation was mainly brought about by the Right C.P.—AITUC leaders who in pursuance of their collaborationist line have been undermining the strike. Mouthing radical phrases, pretending to be part of the united movement, inside the NCCRS and outside, they helped the panicky propaganda of the Government and suddenly counselled regional and group decisions—a call for splitting the strike. They climaxed their efforts when the crucial stage in the struggle had been reached and the administration was face to face with the effects of its anti-working class attitude.

These open strike-breaking efforts of the AITUC leaders seem to have precipitated the decision for withdrawal.

The P.B. expresses its full admiration for the heroism, courage, spirit of self-sacrifice displayed by all sections of railway workers. Such unity of action, solidarity and heroism spread all over the country was never seen before. The women—the wives and daughters of railwaymen—have covered themselves with glory by their resistance to police brutalities. Their courage and sacrifice certainly deserved a better outcome.

However, the P.B. calls upon all railway workers to hold fast to the banner of unity and maintain their high level of consciousness and discipline. We are not vanquished and defeated soldiers; we go back at the call of an organisation and not at the dictates of the Indira Government. Our differences are an internal matter and we will have to settle them. Against our oppressors, the workers must maintain their unity and solidarity.

The Polit Bureau calls upon the entire trade union and democratic movements to rally behind the railway workers. The Government intends to victimise large numbers and imprison hundreds charging them with "violence". Against

this, the voice of the united movement must rise in protest and warn the Government. The railway workers stand in need of solidarity from all sections. The workers following all central organisations including the AITUC and INTUC must rally in their defence and see that justice is done to them.

## **A Glorious Strike and Struggle of Indian Railwaymen\***

**B. T. Ranadive**

The railway workers of India have made history by waging perhaps the longest railway strike of the world. For three long weeks they carried on a heroic battle of resistance in face of mass arrests, mass dismissals and widespread terror against them, their women and children.

The precipitous withdrawal of the struggle which has thrown the workers at the mercy of a ruthless administration does not lessen the great and historic role of the strike and its participants. The determined and courageous fight put up by the NCCRS (National Co-ordination Committee of Railwaymen's Struggle) leadership till the forces of compromise overwhelmed it, will also be remembered. Its fight came to an end with the wrong and harmful advice from leaders in jail including George Fernandes, Convener of the NCCRS.

The strike was rendered inevitable by Government's refusal to discuss basic demands like need-based wage and pending it, parity in pay with public sector scales, consideration of railway workers as industrial workers, bonus, full neutralization of the rise in cost of living, implementation of eight hours' day for all, cheap grainshop, scientific job evaluation, full trade union rights, etc. The Government flatly refused to discuss the first three demands and regarding the rest resorted to equivocation, subterfuge and even plain lying.

On May 2, in the style of dictators, it suddenly arrested

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, June 2, 1974.

George Fernandes, President of the AIRF and Convener of the NCCRS, the main party to the negotiations, P. K. Barua, General Secretary of the powerful All-India Loco Running Staff Association, and a constituent of the NCCRS along with others.

The battle was on and from May 8, all sections of railwaymen joined together in an unprecedented strike action spreading over all parts of the country. The active network was reduced to grave-like stillness.

### **Lying Propaganda, Brutalities**

The Government took to lying propaganda. It claimed that only eight per cent of the workers had joined the strike. Only after the withdrawal, it revealed that 15 lakhs out of 17 lakhs were on strike.

To undermine the morale, the Government circulated falsified reports about trains running, stations opened, goods carried. The reports were so palpably false that not only the railway workers but the people also protested against them. All India Radio was revealed as a lying organ and became the object of public ridicule.

But lying propaganda was not the only weapon used by the Indira Government.

Never before in India was there such terror spread over all parts of the country, in all States, in all important towns and cities. Never was there more determined resistance so uniformly courageous everywhere, in all States, in all towns and cities.

The brutalities of the Indira police knew no bounds. A confidential report of the Government's Labour Department deprecated this inhuman terror. The police raided the houses of the railway workers, who fell into their hands.

There are cases of rapes on workers' wives and daughters. Filthy abuses and insults were heaped upon thousands. And yet the heroic women faced the tormentors courageously and helped to sustain the fighting morale of their husbands.



### **Massacre of Democratic Rights**

There was general massacre of all democratic rights. Not one liberty was allowed. Meetings were prohibited. Unions were virtually illegalised with the arrests of important leaders and warrants against active workers. More than 50,000 were arrested. Worker members of territorial forces who were asked to break the strike declined and hundreds were summarily punished. Twenty thousand workers were served with dismissal notices. In places, hired Congress goondas pretending to be members of youth organizations and led by Congress MLAs were used for gangster attacks against the workers. More than 20,000 were evicted from their homes. The DIR, the MISA and a horde of other weapons and agencies including the Army and the territorial personnel were brought into operation against the strikers.

The battle of the railway workers became the battle of the entire trade union movement, of the entire Indian people fighting for democracy.

The working class, the entire trade union movement and the people lent their full support to the cause of the railway workers. The Government did its best to incite the people against the strikers, but the former realized the common bond of suffering, stood by the railwaymen and displayed a high degree of democratic consciousness. Women's and students' organizations, employees' and peasants' organizations have endorsed the cause of the fighting strikers. In a large number of places the peasants of surrounding areas sheltered the workers who had to leave the colonies to escape police terror.

The result has been that a large number of trade union leaders, and leaders of political parties, supporting the railway workers have been jailed by the Government under the DIR. The railway strike has thus evoked the broadest sympathy with all the Left and democratic parties championing it.

Notable has been the protest of intellectuals, teachers, writers from Calcutta and Delhi, protest against brutalities and repression, which also demanded immediate justice to the workers.

The Press of the country, contrary to its usual hostility to the cause of the downtrodden by and large, gave factual accounts, exposing and unmasking official claims. The isolation of the Government was complete. The Press and its patrons realized that the policy of the Government was inflicting irreparable damage on the economy.

### **From Whence This Valour?**

From whence the valourous courage and determination of the workers? It was derived from the tremendous sense of unity and oneness developed through the NCCRS which brought together all the railway organizations and all the central trade union organizations together. The unity of more than a hundred railway organizations working under the banner of the NCCRS has inspired the railway workers with full confidence in their mighty strength and confidence of success.

Under the united banner the 17 lakhs of railway workers have carried on a glorious struggle despite terror, despite the false propaganda of the administration and despite the waverings and vacillations of certain leaders who did not believe that the workers were capable of such prolonged resistance. The leadership of the NCCRS held the flag firmly and supplied a fighting and militant lead.

Why has such a heroic struggle ended with this pell-mell retreat? Was it the inevitable consequence of broken resistance, of inability to carry on the struggle any more in face of the terror, starvation, sufferings and jailings? In trade union struggles, in mass struggles, such occasions do arise when defeat has to be openly acknowledged and orderly retreat has to be planned. Could the withdrawal be regarded as part of the tactics of class struggle imposed by loss of capacity to fight any longer?

### **Unrealistic Assessment**

This is precisely what it was not. The post-haste withdrawal which did not give even twelve hours' notice to the thousands

of fighters to go back was based on an unrealistic and panicky assessment of the situation that the strike had fizzled out. Normally, when a unilateral withdrawal is declared or a victorious capitalist class peremptorily demands return to work, at least 48 hours' notice is given so that thousands who leave the place during the strike are able to present themselves in time. Even this minimum requirement of thousands of workers was dispensed with. The situation was exactly the contrary. No doubt the strike had developed some important weak patches. All the areas were not equally strong. In some areas the trek back was strong enough to give the appearance of an early end. If after three weeks of an all-India struggle such unevenness had not developed, it would have been a miracle.

The wonder was that 17 lakh workers, virtually bereft of a wide network of organizations, had struck together all over India; that they held out for three weeks despite unheard of terror and mass dismissals. The reality was that in spite of the figures of hundreds of workers resuming work, circulated by the Railway Board; the economy had in the third week reached a breakdown point and the Government and the administration were in a desperate condition; that in spite of the stories about running of trains, the movement was marginal and could not relieve the situation.

### **Effects on Economy**

The Government had earlier taken some steps to accumulate stocks of vital commodities at different places; they had cancelled passenger trains for this purpose. They were using thousands of lorries and trucks to keep the goods moving. Because of this the full effect of the strike took some time to mature. In any case, none is foolish enough to expect a railway strike to produce instantaneous effect on the working of the economy and the mood of the Government.

In Durgapur, by May 15, the schedule of coke pushing had been reduced to 158 ovens per day as against a normal of 220 ovens, 41 ovens had to be blanked. Hot metal schedule

was reduced to less than 50 per cent of the average. Furnace No. 4 was blanked for 201 hours. In the steel smelting shop the schedule of production had been drastically cut down and the shortage of hot metal from blast furnaces resulted in idling of 971 furnace hours.

In Bhilai out of ten furnaces only two were operating. Coke pushings were reduced from an average of 500 to 180 to 200.

By May 14 itself, coal stock position in Rourkela had reached a dangerous level and coal meant for Bhilai had to be diverted.

Thus the effect of the rail strike on economic, commercial and industrial situation was gathering a huge momentum when the leadership unilaterally decided to withdraw it and deprive the workers of a well negotiated settlement.

How did this costly mistake, this error of judgement arise? It must be realized that except for a few leaders of the NCCRS, others were totally underestimating the depth of the workers' discontent and the sweep of the strike. Very few among them gave the strike more than a week to continue. They missed the new situation, the crisis, the sufferings the workers had gone through and the militant resistance they were prepared to offer. A section of the leadership regarded it as one of the ordinary strikes and was thoroughly unprepared for the semi-fascist repression against the workers. They thought that under this terror the strike would crumble any time. Hence the negotiations on the morrow of the strike, the useless discussions round the three-point formula all of which not only diverted attention from the main task of strengthening the struggle and linking the leadership directly with the masses. It also raised high hopes in the Government circles that the strike can be easily crushed and defeated.

### **Right C.P.-AITUC Role**

In this atmosphere of spurious negotiations, with attention concentrated more on Ministers and the Prime Minister, the Right C.P.-AITUC leaders came into their elements. The mass

indignation had dragged them into a big strike action against the Congress Government. This went against their collaborationist line and they were eager to get out of this embarrassing position at the cost of the railway workers. Their position, besides, had become extremely ridiculous because while they were supporting the strike in New Delhi, their Ministry in Kerala was arresting strikers and suppressing them. It only required a Rajeshwar Rao to say in defending their Kerala Ministry, that after all, it arrested only a few railway workers. The support to strike could not be maintained in view of the collaborating alliance. Hence followed a spate of formulae from Dange, each more dangerous than the other till it finally culminated in advice of open disruption.

When the Government refused to release the arrested leaders of the NCCRS, Dange suggested that those outside should carry on negotiations. When the Government refused he came out with a formula which gave up the major demands—bonus, wage revision, etc., were to be referred to a committee and negotiations to be resumed.

As the Government increased its pressure for total surrender and finding that there could be no unanimity inside the NCCRS for his proposals, Dange suddenly offered to secure an assurance of no victimisation from the Government provided the strike was unconditionally withdrawn.

When all others queried whether he was carrying on secret negotiations, he withdrew his proposal and joined others in issuing a statement full of scathing attacks on the Government. He joined with others in issuing a call for an Anti-Repression Day. But the very next day, he, without consulting any other party or the NCCRS or the central trade unions, issued a Press statement proposing that decision regarding withdrawal of strike should be taken zone by zone or group by group, an open proposal for splitting unity and for zonal strike-breaking. This did not prevent him from saying that his organization would carry out the decision of the NCCRS.

While protesting that the AITUC would remain loyal to the NCCRS, the new proposal was a call to AITUC follow-

ers to propagare for withdrawal of strike. In fact, Press reports indicate that such efforts to break the strike had already started. The Correspondent of *Maharashtra Times*, Bombay, in its May 27 issue, said that the Co-ordination Committee for Railway strike in Bombay felt that the Right C.P. followers were working against the strike. Some of them accused the AITUC of directing its followers in Bombay to persuade the workers to go back to work. It is known that in Calcutta also, its followers had started a whispering campaign to go back to work. Loyalty to Congress and Indira regime prevailed over loyalty to the railway workers who were sacrificed by the leaders on the altar of their collaborationist policies. It must be recorded that while the ranks of the Right C.P. and AITUC worked loyally for the strike, the leaders prepared for the betrayal and executed it as the party line.

The Right C.P. leaders describe their line as a line of unity and struggle. It has revealed itself to be a line of unity with the Congress bosses and struggle against the workers.

It is clear that the Right C.P.'s efforts at withdrawal assumed urgency as the effects of the strike began to be felt and the capacity of the Government to hold out against the workers diminished. Every day, every minute counted. And they threw their full weight to bale out the Government.

### **Glorious Struggle Let Down**

Thanks to this, one of the most glorious trade union struggles of our time has been let down and disorganized. The workers and their families will have to pay an incalculable price in privation, suffering and misery. The hard-earned unity of the workers which brought together several organizations has received a terrible blow. The class unity that was forged is again in danger of being splintered into sectional and category-wise divisions. The heroic loco running staff who have gone through three strikes in the recent period and other militant sections stand in danger of vindictive attack of dismissals.

The railway strike revealed the new Indira style of dealing with labour. The Right C.P. leaders have correctly described it as "war against the working class". Yes, henceforth in any big strike, it is to be a total war against the workers. It is an irony of fate that while in Bihar the Right C.P. leaders are saving parliamentary democracy in company with L. N. Mishra, in Delhi they have to say that the same democracy has declared war against the working class for daring to demand a few additions to their wages. No negotiations, withdrawal of strikes, mass arrests and terror through police and Congress squads—this is the new style. The creaking machine of the State, of the economy, cannot permit the luxury of trade union rights in India. They must be suppressed at all costs. Durgapur, Raniganj, Jay Engineering in West Bengal are familiar with this style. Now it is being extended to all India. The monsterface of the police State, of the authoritarian rule is being revealed.

Against this, a new type of total unity, a new consciousness, both on the part of the workers and their organizations is necessary. And it is plain that the mass of workers through sheer class instinct met the new situation bravely and courageously and held out for three long weeks—a world record for railway strike.

In attacking the railway workers, ruthlessly, the Government was attacking the future of the trade union movement and the entire democratic movement. The defeat of the railway workers was to be a prelude to a growing attack on all oppositional democratic movements.

### **Government Has Not Succeeded**

However, the Government has not succeeded in its objective. The militant resistance of the railway workers has provided an inspiring example to other sections and no section will put up with attacks on their liberties without resistance. The battle will be joined again and again, thanks to the courageous resistance of the railwaymen, their women and children.

The Indira Government must be branded by the entire people as the biggest saboteur of our economy. Its anti-labour policy has heaped a loss of not less than Rs. 1500 crores on the nation. To deny the workers' bonus which would have cost Rs. 40 crores a year, it has put the country to a loss of Rs. 1500 crores—a sum which equals 30 years' bonus. This exceeds many times the expenditure required for meeting all the demands of the railway workers including parity of wages. The people will again be made to pay for the Indira policy of war against the working class. There will be shortages of every kind, prices will rise and if the workers and people protest, repression will be unleashed. No previous Government had inflicted on the nation such huge losses as the Indira Government in its quest to contain labour.

The railway workers and their organizations have a hard and arduous battle before them. There is no doubt that with the class links with the democratic movement developed during the strike, with their isolation from the general trade union movement broken through the correct steps taken by their leaders, and supported by Left parties, they will succeed in warding off the vicious designs of mass dismissals and victimisation.

### **Stand by the Railwaymen**

In summing up, one cannot do better than quote the following from the Polit Bureau's statement on the railway strike:

"The Polit Bureau expresses its full admiration for the heroism, courage, spirit of self sacrifice displayed by all sections of railway workers. Such unity of action, solidarity and heroism spread all over the country was never seen before. The women—the wives and daughters of railwaymen—have covered themselves with glory by their resistance to police brutalities. Their courage and sacrifices certainly deserved a better outcome.

"However, the P.B. calls upon all railway workers to hold fast to the banner of unity and maintain their high level of consciousness and discipline. We are not vanquished and



defeated soldiers; we go back at the call of our organization and not at the dictates of the Indira Government. Our differences are an internal matter and we will have to settle them. Against our oppressors, the workers must maintain their unity and solidarity.

“The Polit Bureau calls upon the entire trade union and democratic movements to rally behind the railway workers. The Government intends to victimise large numbers and imprison hundreds charging them with ‘violence’. Against this, the voice of the united movement must rise in protest and warn the Government. The railway workers stand in need of solidarity from all sections. The workers following all central organizations including the AITUC and INTUC must rally in their defence and see that justice is done to them.”

All must demand the immediate release of all the arrested persons, withdrawal of all dismissal orders and of all prosecutions.

## **CPI(M) Warns the Government of India, Condemns Unparalleled Victimisation of Railway Workers\***

**Statement issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta on June 2, 1974**

*The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in Calcutta on June 2, 1974 :*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) severely condemns the unparalleled victimisation resorted to by the Government of India on the railway workers who conducted a glorious strike struggle.

Reports show that summary dismissal and suspension orders have been served on nearly a lakh workers and employees, and the break in service of lakhs of workers has been ordered, over 50,000 have been arrested. The Home Ministry has issued a circular to the States that the people who have been jailed should be screened by the Divisional Managers before releasing them. In addition more than a thousand employees in the P. & T., Audit, Income-Tax and other services have been either dismissed, suspended or served with notices for going on solidarity strike and for their demands.

Such savage victimisation is unheard of in the case of any civilised Government in the world.

The Polit Bureau warns the Government that the bitterness created by this massive victimisation on top of the Government's unheard of brutalities on the striking workers and their families during the strike will not lead to smooth working of the railway system and the Government alone will be responsible for it.

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Immediately after the withdrawal of the strike, the Railway Minister, Sri L. N. Mishra, welcoming the decision, stated : "The railway employees would be treated as members of one family and the Government would treat them as parents treat their misguided children. I welcome all the railway employees back to our fold."

President Giri who had earlier advised the workers to withdraw the strike, stated that the withdrawal of the strike would greatly help to create a better climate and better understanding. And Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated that there should be no bitterness or ill-will as the aftermath of the strike.

This savage victimisation completely exposes the hypocrisy of the Government leaders.

Having brought the economy of the country to an ever-deepening crisis, and heaping ever increasing burdens on the people by increasing the prices of foodgrains and all articles of mass consumption, in order to whet the appetite of the foreign and Indian monopolists, landlords, wholesalers and speculators, the Government faces an embittered and indignant people. Their indignation burst out in innumerable mass actions whose tempo is daily rising. The organised working class by its determined strike struggles gives inspiration and encouragement to those actions. The Government has resorted to this victimisation in order to strike terror and suppress the trade union movement not only in the railways and civil services, but in the entire country and hopes that it would be able to stem the rising tide of mass struggles of the suffering people against its policies.

The fight against this victimisation of the railway workers and Central Government employees is therefore the common struggle of the entire working class and of the entire people.

The Polit Bureau, therefore, appeals to all trade unions and other mass and democratic organisations to carry on a sustained campaign against victimisation.

It calls upon all its units to take the initiative in mobilising

the entire people against this victimisation as the most urgent task before them and carry on a continuous campaign. This task brooks no delay and all Party units should plunge into it with all their strength.

## **Organise Relief, Legal Aid to Railwaymen\***

### **CPI(M)'s Call to All Party Units**

The large-scale arrests, the thousands of dismissals, the screening procedure and many other penal measures which the authorities are undertaking face our Party with a serious task and imposes upon us the responsibility of defending the interests of the railway workers and keeping their unity together.

In this connection, our first task is to see that effective relief, economic relief, is organised locally with the help of the railway workers at their jobs and other workers and members of the public to relieve distress of those on whom dismissal orders have been served and also of those temporary workers whose services have been terminated at short notice. We should call upon employed workers to contribute certain fixed amount or percentage of their pay to give relief to the dismissed workers.

#### **Legal Aid Committees**

Secondly, our task is to immediately form Legal Aid Committees to fight against the dismissal, suspension and others on thousands of workers and ensure that justice is done to them. It has been found that hundreds of these orders are totally illegal and cannot stand in any court of law. In consultation with competent legal opinion, cases can be filed in appropriate courts and victory won even in a few cases will bolster the morale of hundreds. These Legal Aid Commit-

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tees with the help of local lawyers should be immediately formed and all cases of victimisation where legal points are involved should be tackled through them so that the workers are assured of continuous aid. We should try to give a broad-based form to these committees and as far as possible organise them in co-operation with the railway unions.

The most important thing, however, is to keep the issue continuously before the public and not allow the Government to treat it as a dead issue. All penal measures against the railway workers must be continuously exposed before the public in various ways as vindictive attitude on the part of the Government, as an indication of its new policy to crush unionism and labour at all costs, a policy which is the beginning of crushing democratic rights of all sections of people. It is necessary to keep this issue alive by organising public meetings of our own and conventions of all parties and democratic elements and through these conventions again protest to the Government against its vindictive measures. These conventions of different sections like lawyers, doctors, intellectuals, peasants, students, women, should serve to focus public opinion on the issues.

What is to be remembered is that the workers are still full of fighting spirit and are boiling over with indignation. In many places they have already gone in for sit-down strikes against victimisation. Their protest and their indignation cannot be effective unless it is backed by public agitation all over the country and unless our Party units and Party members working in mass organizations take initiative and lead.

### **Collections by Trade Unions**

A special responsibility rests on all those who are working in the trade unions. Though the trade unions have lent their support to the strike of the railway workers, they have not yet been called upon to make handsome monetary contribution to the cause of the railway workers. In each mass organization, our immediate effort should be first to make a substantial grant from union funds for the relief of the rail-

way workers and then make mass collections before factory gates, under the leadership of the union. The collection of funds must become a tremendous mass mobilising effort for the cause of the railway workers who must feel that they have every support from all quarters, especially from the working class. Relief efforts are also to be made in villages, even if they tend to be of a token character. With peasants coming in with some kind of help in kind and visiting railway colonies and railway quarters, it will be regarded as a good solidarity demonstration of the peasant masses with the railway workers. Above all, it is necessary that all that we do should be given wide publicity in the local Press and full reports are sent to our entire Party Press. Leaflets on these solidarity and support actions should be extensively distributed among railway workers. The Party Press is being instructed to publish these reports so that the workers and the public know that an agitation is being worked out in defence of the railway workers.

For our comrades working in the various railway unions, we will soon work out a detailed line of work taking into consideration the present situation.

### **Struggle to Defend Unity**

Immediately after the precipitous withdrawal of the strike and the huge victimisation drive, there will be fissiparous tendencies again and a pull for sectional and categorywise appeals, threatening the fabric of unity that has been built during the course of the last three years. All the old suspicions about the AIRF leadership will come again. The Government also is now threatening to deal only with the AIRF declining to have talks with the NCCRS which represent all railway organizations. Certain opportunist leaders might utilise this to advance their own claims and leave the organizations in the lurch. This will be a big blow to the unity of the railway workers and will be a calamitous finale to the heroic strike carried on by them. We will have to carry on a determined struggle against these disintegrating tendencies.

While explaining our position, defending the unity and explaining the weaknesses displayed by a section of the AIRF leaders, we should concentrate our criticism on the betrayal by the AITUC leadership and explain it as the logical conclusion of their collaborationist line. In criticising the AITUC leadership, we must do it on the basis of the railway workers interests, the harm that has been done to them by the policy of these leaders and present ourselves as speaking on behalf of the entire railway workers and should not reduce our criticism to a slanging match between the Right C.P. and CPI(M).

### **Central Government Employees**

Our Party comrades must also remember that several hundred Central Government employees are being victimised by the Government. They belong to the P & T, Accounts, Income Tax, Audit, etc. departments. The same procedure of serving dismissal orders on permanent employees summarily terminating the services of the temporary staff is being followed. After the withdrawal of the railway strike, further vindictive measures have been taken.

This attack also has to be fought and our Party comrades and units have to organise relief, and rouse the people in defence of the Central employees. Legal and economic aid, solidarity actions and public conventions to expose the injustice done to them have to be organised.

Finally, our units must remember that leaders of railway workers and Central employees are still in jail. Thousands are being held under the DIR; some have been sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for more than a year, all for the crime of going on strike. Our voice must be raised to demand the unconditional release of all those in jail, withdrawal of all prosecutions and remission of all sentences passed in connection with the strike.



## **This Coalition in Kerala Must Go\***

**Resolution of the Kerala State Committee of the CPI(M)**

*The following is the text of the resolution adopted by the Kerala State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) at its meeting in Trivandrum on June 28-30, 1974:*

The technical majority which the ruling front enjoys in the Kerala Assembly today does not only not reflect the aspirations of the people but is totally contradictory to it. A substantial section of the same people who voted for the ruling front in September 1970 has lost the confidence it then had in the Government and is straining to remove it from office—so bankrupt have been the policies and practices pursued by this Government in the last three and three-quarter years.

### **Economic Collapse**

That the State Government was moving towards a total economic collapse has for quite some time been clear to the discerning. The Government itself had publicly admitted this through the budget speech of the Finance Minister in the State Assembly in March 1973. Fifteen months have gone by since then. And today that crisis continues with unprecedented intensity. The Government, without even consulting the Legislature, has decided to substantially cut down the 1974-75 Plan which itself had been characterized as inadequate by ruling front MLAs themselves.

The shameful bouncing of this Government's cheques no

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different from the case of bankrupt companies and individuals has already taken place. And to prevent its recurrence the Government has descended to the farcical level of "organizing music concerts and cultural programmes" to collect money.

### **Scarcity, Price-Rise**

As for the people of the State, they have reached the end of their tether burdened as they are with the daily worsening food crisis, price rises, tax-increases, industrial stagnation and unemployment. In the officially fixed foodgrains ration of 12 ounces, the six-ounce wheat portion has not been seen for the last one and a half years. As for the six-ounce rice portion for over a year it has remained only in the speeches of Ministers, the people have not been receiving the full quantum. The Ministers lie when they say six-ounce rice is distributed regularly because what the people get is four and a half ounces and less of rice. As a result of this, the price of rice in the open market has shot up as never before. The prices of other daily essentials are also sky-rocketing.

The prime responsibility for this state of affairs must rest with the Central Congress Government and the Congress party which rules at the Centre. The Congress Legislature Party in Kerala and the KPCC which is part of that Central Congress has to answer first for it.

Other parties of the ruling front have also to answer for it—parties which joined hands with the Congress after breaking the 1967-69 united front which had inflicted a crushing defeat on the Congress in Kerala as part of the countrywide struggle against the ruling party, formed a non-Congress Government and utilized the office thus secured in the State against the policies of the Central Congress Government.

### **History Proves them False**

History has already proved false all the reasons put forward by the non-Congress parties of the present ruling front to subvert the non-Congress Government five years ago and

join hands with the Congress. They had then declared that their Government would fight the reactionary vested interests with progressive policies. But now it is incontrovertibly proved that what this Government does is to propitiate the entire vested interests.

The Right Communist Party, recognizing this, has in other States either already abandoned the alliance with the Congress or is moving towards such a position. There is only one reason for their clinging on to office in Kerala: they are not prepared to give up the benefits they have by being a partner in the Coalition.

### **Claims that have been Exposed**

The claim that this Government is a Government which on the basis of a "time-bound programme" will find solutions to the immediate problems of the workers, peasants and the common people has been totally exposed.

Two years after the surplus land struggle had pointed out that there are at least 175,000 acres of surplus land in the State, the surplus land taken over by the Government is only 18,000 acres. They have not hesitated to give back even a part of that to the big landlords. The rest of the land also is not being distributed to the landless and land-poor peasants, but they have declared that this land will be given only to co-operative societies (constituted with only those whom they choose). At the same time cruel evictions of tens of thousands of peasant families continue unabated.

As for the industrial sector, lakhs of families have been deprived of their living because of the virtual collapse of the State's traditional industries; the modern industrial units are facing continuous paralysis as a result of the wrong approach of the Government to industrial problems. As a result of all this, as also the inadequate industrialization of the State and introduction of machines in agriculture, unemployment in the rural and urban areas alike is growing.

The despair of the young generation moving toward the point of an explosion is a reflection of this. The wrong approach

of the Central and State Governments to the handling of educational problems has also created a deep crisis in the educational sphere. In short, the student-youth sections are simmering with discontent.

As a consequence, struggles are growing and becoming widespread. As in the Congress-led States, the Kerala Government under the leadership of a Right Communist Chief Minister also is seeking to suppress these struggles with police repression and organized goonda attacks. This is a Government which outdid the DMK Government of Tamil Nadu and the Congress Government of Karnataka in suppressing with brutal police repression the struggle of the railway workers in leading which the Chief Minister's party played an active role. The Right Communist Chief Minister justifies all this without any hesitation.

In short, this ruling front and Government, unable to find solution to a single problem of the people are pursuing policies which only further intensify all the problems.

### **All-Pervading Corruption**

Five years ago when they were getting ready to topple the non-Congress Government, the main slogan which the ruling front leaders had raised was the struggle against corruption. But the experience of the people in the last four and a half years has shown them that this Government is a den of corruption more shocking than any in the history of Kerala. The shocking stories of corruption of the Ministers, other leaders of the ruling front, their relations and friends are the subject-matter of talk everywhere. The entire administrative machinery is being engaged to whitewash them.

The leadership of the ruling front which got the Speaker of the Assembly to own the responsibility for suppressing the relevant portions of what should be considered the sacred Public Accounts Committee's report in order to cover up the corruption involved in the work of the Mukundara bridge, is now trying to crucify an employee of the Legislature Secretariat connected with the PAC's functioning. It

was also recently that the police was used to hush up a forged currency note case. The people know of hundreds of such cases involving individual Ministers and the Ministry as a whole.

To technically escape these charges, they depend on courts and the entire administrative machinery is being used in this effort. The State Committee of the CPI(M) warns the rulers generally, and the concerned Ministers particularly, that they cannot escape with such technical ruses. Let them not forget that even if they can destroy all the records which could be produced in courts, the people have all the evidence about their corruption. They cannot wipe out of existence the properties that have been acquired in the last four years by each one of them in their own names or in the names of their friends and relatives, and the heinous methods used to acquire them. Hence, there need not be any doubt that the people of Kerala will use the first opportunity to throw them out of office.

### **Internal Crisis**

The rulers themselves know this reality. That is why the various ruling front parties are organizedly making efforts to make changes, each in its own favour, in the present administrative set-up. This attempt of theirs has created further dissensions and quarrels between the parties constituting the front and between the various groups within each party.

This has very often led the Government to the brink of a collapse. Though the awareness of the consequences of a fall of the Government has enabled them to make temporary patch-ups, that only leads them to another crisis and to the brink again.

The State Committee considers that the only way the people can be rescued from the daily intensifying economic crisis, the burning problems like food scarcity, etc. the all-prevailing corruption and the crisis engulfing the ruling front is to seek the verdict of the people through a mid-term election. Only a new democratic front which will seek to solve

the economic crisis and in this process fight the bourgeois-landlord policies of the Central Congress Government can find solutions to our burning problems.

The ruling front leaders whose only concern is to cling on to office even if it is only for one more day to further their selfish interests have shown in practice that they are not prepared to face this.

The State Committee, therefore, believes that all the democratic forces in the State have to jointly exert efforts to oust this Government through all means including civil disobedience. The Party will strive to seek the co-operation in this of all other democratic Opposition parties, organizations and individuals. The Committee is confident of the active and effective participation of Party units at all levels and of all friends of the Party.

## **Dissolve the Bihar Assembly\***

### **Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPI(M)**

*[The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in Calcutta from June 12 to 19, 1974 when the resolution on Bihar was adopted.]*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) notes with resentment and condemns the shooting by Indira Brigade on the peaceful demonstration led by Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan on June 5 at Patna, demanding dissolution of the Assembly, as a result of which over a dozen people were injured.

This incident only goes to show that the Congress Government which has virtually turned the entire State into a police camp for the last three months, deploying more than 50 thousand B.S.F. and CRP jawans, clamping Sec. 144 in the entire State, resorting to firing and killing over two hundred innocent students in various parts, arresting and keeping several thousand behind bars, have now chosen to open terrorist methods through the organizations patronized by them to gag the legitimate struggle of the people for cheap food, restoration of civil liberties, eradication of corruption and jobs for the unemployed and for the dissolution of the Assembly.

It must be stressed that the movement started with the slogan against high prices, non-availability of food and other essentials of life. The people's anger was also roused so much against the reeking corruption at all levels from the

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Ministers downwards, which flowed from the alliance of the ruling party with the landlords and speculators and hoarders, that the slogan that the corrupt Ministry should go came to the forefront. The Government sought to suppress the movement with brutal repression. Then the demand for the dissolution of the Assembly came to the forefront.

It is distressing to note that the Right Communist Party instead of joining hands with the Left and democratic forces for the realization of the aforesaid demands has openly and shamelessly come forward in support of the misdeeds of the Government and has organized a counter-demonstration on June 3 demanding the continuation of the Assembly and the present corrupt Congress Ministry whose hands are tainted with the blood of the thousands of innocent people.

It is amazing that the Right Communists, who had no hesitation in supporting the demand for dissolution of the Assembly in Gujarat in similar conditions, are now dubbing the popular demand for dissolution of Assembly in Bihar as anti-democratic.

The Central Committee is of the firm opinion that if a Government goes back on all the promises made during the elections and wants to stick to power only by lathis and bullets betraying the people's mandate, it has no moral right to exist and the people are fully justified in demanding its dissolution, specially when the Constitution does not provide the electorate the right of recall.

At a time when the entire State is seething with discontent, the corrupt Congress legislators are busy in inner squabbles and group fighting for ministerial posts.

The C.C. does not agree with the many slogans of Jaya Prakash Narayan and particularly notes the fact that he has not put forward a democratic alternative programme and does not warn the people against the reactionary parties like the Jana Sangh seeking to take advantage of the movement. That is why our Party is not in the movement with these forces and is independently mobilizing the people.

The Central Committee, however, is of the opinion that



the demands that the Assembly should be dissolved and fresh elections be held so that the people could get a chance to re-elect their representatives on the basis of committed policies in their favour is just and democratic.

The C.C. calls upon the people of Bihar to strengthen their agitation and continue it till their demands including the dissolution of Assembly and fresh elections are conceded.

The C.C. wants to impress on the people of Bihar that dissolution of the Assembly alone will not solve their problems. What is necessary is to urgently forge a viable Left and democratic alternative and prevent reactionary forces from taking advantage of the justified popular anger against the pro-landlord, pro-monopolist corrupt regime.

The C.C. asks the people to be alert and vigilant so that their rightful discontent and anger is not misdirected by the right reactionary forces.

## **Central Committee Condolence Resolution on Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad\***

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, our Kaka Babu, one of the founders of the Communist movement in the Indian subcontinent, in the early twenties, has passed away on December 18, 1973 at the age of 85, after a prolonged illness. He dedicated all his life energies, over five decades, a life of service and sacrifice, for the cause of the toiling masses. He strove to build a powerful Communist Party loyal to Marxism-Leninism, as the powerful weapon to destroy British imperialism, and the bourgeois-landlord rule in India and establish a People's Democratic State to build Socialism and Communist society in our country.

We recall his tireless efforts in the twenties and thirties to link up the scattered Communist groups and individuals from all over India to develop a disciplined centralised Communist Party as a section of the Communist International. His hard life in Calcutta in those days, his jail life during Kanpur and Meerut trials and convictions, his contempt of the British authorities and the way he upheld the self-respect and prestige of a Communist revolutionary will ever be a glorious example to be emulated by younger generations to come.

Political freedom of the country did not bring the opening to Socialism which Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad and other

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Communists had visualized. Under the bourgeois-landlord classes, watch took over power, Communists continued to be targets of attack. Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad whose contribution to the struggle for freedom is inestimable was imprisoned thrice in free India—in 1948, in 1962 and in 1964. The Communist that he was with his firm allegiance to Marxism-Leninism he understood the character of the new Indian State and the struggle that had to go on for Socialism.

We see his strict adherence to proletarian internationalism and Marxism-Leninism during those days when fascist forces were hurling themselves against the Soviet Union and the working class and the toiling masses of the whole world were mobilizing all their energies to see the Soviet Union crush the fascist menace. We see it in him during those days when he stood firm advocating friendly negotiations with Socialist China to settle the border conflict and opposed chauvinistic trends.

That was why, when the split occurred in the world Communist movement in the sixties, he steadfastly inspired the Communist ranks in our country to stand up against international revisionism and international sectarianism and helped our Party to loyally apply Marxist-Leninist principles to the concrete conditions in our country.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad was very particular in looking after the needs of every Party cadre. His meticulous care and attention has made him the Kaka Babu for everyone of us. But he never tolerated any sign of personal looseness or slightest indisciplined behaviour and by the way he admonished such dereliction, he upheld before us all, the very high standards of Communist life and discipline.

We are proud that stalwarts like Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad were in the forefront and were leading our Party.

Our Kaka Babu is no more but the movement to build which he devoted his entire life will continue and triumph and we who are left behind take the pledge to carry this task forward.

We dip the Party's Red Banner in homage to Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad and bow our heads in reverence.

## Repression in Andhra : Reminiscent of 1948-51\*

*The Andhra Pradesh State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has decided to organize an anti-repression campaign in the State from June 28 to 30 to mobilize the people against the terror unleashed by the State Government against the democratic movement and the common people.*

The resolution of the committee calling for the campaign says—

“While the State of Andhra Pradesh is kept as one of the worst backward States in the country under Congress rule, the Vengal Rao Ministry which has been incapable of solving any single problem the State is facing has turned it into a full-fledged police raj.

“Economically the lot of the toiling masses of our country is at its worst. Successive Congress Ministries in the State, in the absence of a strong Opposition failed even to make use of the existing possibilities of development of the State. On the other hand, the ruling Congress party itself became corrupt and has been ridden with all sorts of groupism, casteism and regionalism. It was the Congress that was thus responsible for the growth of regional passions in an integrated State. As a result of these developments, and despite all tall talk about five-year plans and election promises, the State continues to be one of the most backward States in the country”.

After narrating in some detail how Congress policies have kept the State backward, the resolution continues: “The

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\*Report published in ‘PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY’, Calcutta, June 23, 1974.

Congress Ministries always were lagging behind in developing the State, but not in tax collection. The total tax collection in the State has gone up from Rs. 28 crores in 1956-57 to Rs. 192 crores in 1970-71."

Prices are spiralling, but the Government gives no protection to the people, while adopting measures which enable the millers and landlords mint money. Minimum Wages Acts are there in name for workers and agricultural workers but there is no real protection in practice. Students have been frequently compelled to agitate and go on strikes by the defective policies of the Government in the field of education.

While all the slogans like "garibi hatao", land reforms and Socialism have been proved bogus in practice, the Government of Indira Gandhi has made it a point to brutally suppress all the mass struggles which inevitably take place.

In Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister Vengal Rao is a fitting agent of Smt. Gandhi to carry out such policies. The Vengal Rao Ministry has turned the State apparatus today into a direct instrument of the bourgeoisie, landlords and his group. It has become a tyrant against the people.

Corruption, nepotism, groupism and terror rule the roast today and only those wretched officers who oblige the Chief Minister in such acts are favoured, while honest elements among them are victimized in various ways. Ordinary policemen who suffer along with the people because of the rising prices are used as pawns by officers who are made petty dictators to beat down the people and suppress popular movements.

If one of the Government Secretariat staff in Hyderabad could be subjected to brutal torture by the police, one can imagine the plight of the common people at the hands of the police. Torture is a daily occurrence in any police station in the State.

The atrocities committed by the landlord elements under the protection of the Vengal Rao Ministry against Harijans, Girijans and the poorer sections of the people have become innumerable. On all such occasions the Vengal Rao Ministry directly intervenes against the people and instructs the officials to shield the culprits. Taking advantage of the free hand they are given,

police officials harass the people for bribes. Taking people into unlawful custody and torturing them in lock-ups has become a routine feature. It is the victims of landlord goondaism who are arrested and persecuted in security cases. Hoarders and black-marketeers are left scot-free while dehoarders are implicated in false cases. Agricultural labourers and poor peasants who fight against landlords for better wages and for Government waste land are everywhere sought to be suppressed.

The resolution cites the following as illustrative :

On April 21 last, in Apparadpet village of Bhimavaram taluk of West Godavari, a landlord, Medavarapu Bhaskararao, murdered the wife of his farm servant on the plea that she refused to work for him. The corpse was burnt and the ashes thrown into a canal to conceal the crime. After a lot of agitation, a police official came to the village and made some investigations. The truth came out. But none has been arrested so far or prosecuted.

On May 22 last, Tadi Satyaanarayana, an agricultural worker, was tied to a pillar, beaten and thrown into the street in Panditha Villuru, Narsapuram taluk of West Godavari, for the "crime" of demanding proper payment of his wages. The people took him to a hospital and reported the matter to the police. The Head Constable who was on duty registered the case and sent the FIR to the Magistrate. Meanwhile, the landlords approached the S.P. and at their instance, he suspended the Head Constable for registering the case without his permission.

In Akiveedu village, Bhimavaram taluk, the police lathi-charged ricemill workers on strike and arrested 300. Thirty persons including women were injured. A criminal case is now pending against them.

In Pasara village of Mulugu taluk, Warangal district, the police at the instance of the contractors, severely assaulted women labourers who were on strike for higher wages for beedi leaves collection.

These atrocities are being resisted by the CPI(M) and that is why the Vengal Rao Ministry is bitterly attacking the Party. Under the illusion that he will have no opposition if the Party is suppressed, he is using every pretext and utilizing every

occasion to hurl the police against Party workers and sympathisers and is encouraging the landlords and their goonda forces openly and deliberately.

The day before the Vengal Rao Ministry was inducted into office, his followers murdered in broad daylight, in the presence of the police, Comrade Gandra Veera Bhadra Reddy in Gandhasiri, Khammam taluk. In the one month of March 1974, landlord goondas murdered five of our comrades. In Mangalapalli village, the President of the Panchayat Samiti, Bachupalli Krishna Rao, personally participated in the murder of Comrade Kurra Mallayya. But till today, neither he nor any one of his goondas have been arrested.

The Army was deployed to suppress the railway strike. In Andhra Pradesh, the Vengal Rao Ministry arrested about 1000 persons. Thousands were put in police lock-ups and tortured. About a hundred of the CPI(M) leaders and workers in the State, though most of them were in no way connected with the railway unions, were arrested under the MISA and DIR and put behind the bars. In Khammam district, particularly from where the Chief Minister hails, 36 Party workers and sympathisers including leading doctors and lawyers were thus arrested and sent to jail.

Today it has become a technique to arrest persons in the street through which the Chief Minister is scheduled to go by car, on the pretext that they were about to attack him. Twentyfive people who were participating in a demonstration in Wyrā, Khammam district, in support of the railmen on strike were arrested and put in police lock-up for three days on the pretext of giving protection to the Chief Minister who was passing that way. The Circle Inspector chased away the students and Government employees who went there to meet the Sub-Inspector.

This Circle Inspector, Madhavarao, a notorious anti-Communist, was recently transferred from Madhira to another place. But the Chief Minister brought him back to the same place within a week for the purpose of suppressing the Marxists.

Deva village of Narsapuram taluk, West Godavari, is

notorious for landlord oppression. The people organized themselves under the leadership of the CPI(M) and began enjoying civil and democratic rights. A CPI(M) member was elected Sarpanch of the Panchayat Board. As a reprisal, the landlords with their goondas raided Communist houses and there was a clash. The police prosecuted only the Marxists and their followers leaving free those who started the attack. A security case has been launched. Seven such cases are now pending against CPI(M) members in that village.

In Huzurnagar, a severe lathi-charge was made on the people who prevented the smuggling of fertilizers out of the town. Some were arrested and charge sheeted.

In the very presence of the Chief Minister, one Congress MLA boasted in a public meeting in Gattu Vuppula that he would crush the people who dared to oppose the landlord forces in the area.

In Gannavaram, the Chief Minister's vengeance and the demoniac dance of the police reached their climax. The only reason for this is that Gannavaram is in the forefront in all popular movements.

In this area, due to the movements led by the CPI(M), rice was sold at Re. one per kg., agricultural workers' wages were increased, fertilizers were sold to the peasants at controlled prices, etc. Even this programme became an eyesore to the Chief Minister and his landlord followers.

At a time when prices have gone up beyond the reach of the common people and they were groaning under several hardships, Indira Gandhi visited Andhra Pradesh. The people who have realized that the Indira Gandhi Government which made many promises during the 1971 and 1972 elections, was itself responsible for their distress, wanted to register their protest. About seven-eight thousand men and women went to Gannavaram aerodrome on April 7, in the hot sun to represent their grievances to Indira Gandhi who was coming there that day.

Instead of listening to their tale of woe and responding, the Chief Minister became angry and in the public meeting held at Ibrahimpatnam that day, he burst out that he would



drown in the River Krishna the CPI(M) and other forces that oppose the Congress.

Soon followed by-elections to the Assembly and out of eight seats, the Congress was defeated only in Vuyyur. Even so the Chief Minister thought that his prestige had gone down by the success of the Independent candidate, supported by the CPI(M). He became particularly intolerant of the people voting against the Congress, in spite of his personal canvassing in support of the Congress candidate and exhorting the people to chase away the Marxists. On April 29, he came in a car to Gannavaram and by that time, the counting of votes was over and the people were celebrating the victory of the Independent candidate. Seeing him the people raised slogans against his policies. Taking this as the pretext, the Chief Minister unleashed the CRP on the people.

The CRP began indiscriminate lathi-charge against people belonging to all political views who had assembled there to know the result. Hundreds of people were injured; houses were entered into and people inside beaten. Koka Subharao, the Circle Inspector of Police, on instruction from the Chief Minister, severely beat the cadres of the CPI(M) in the police lock-up even on the next day. They were abused, insulted and some had broken legs and hands. All the CPI(M) workers in all the taluks have been listed out, many arrested and 112 implicated in a false case on the charge of attempted murder of the Chief Minister.

On the pretext of arresting others, the CRP and the Reserve Police daily raid villages and belabour people and instil terror. All these atrocities are being done under the directives of the Chief Minister. To be brief, the Chief Minister, failing to gracefully accept the defeat in Gannavaram, lost his head and let loose a reign of terror in Krishna district, reminiscent of the 1948-51 period.

The Vengal Rao Government, failing to solve any of the problems facing the people and to develop the State to any extent, is trying to root out popular movements and democratic forces with this view, has trampled underfoot civil liberties and democratic rights. It started this offensive with a drive against

the CPI(M) which is standing in the forefront and resisting the anti-people policies of the Government. It is already known to all that it was Vengal Rao, who, as Home Minister in the previous Ministry, got Naxalites and several innocent persons shot down without any charge or trial after they were captured. It is also well known that even Socialist Party leaders are being arrested illegally for the crime of participating in popular movements. It is also known that a conspiracy case is being foisted on some writers and poets, arrested recently and imprisoned.

The Committee appeals to all democratic forces to unite and hold anti-repression demonstrations and rallies and to all forces who cherish civil liberties and democratic rights to come together. The Committee considers that such a movement should be broadbased.

The Committee appeals to all co-operate with the Party to carry out such a programme. It directs all Party members to organize an anti-repression movement from June 22 to 30 and hold rallies and demonstrations during that period. It calls upon them to carry on a campaign from now on to make this movement a success.

## **CPI(M) Central Committee Statement\***

### **Left & Democratic Parties have to fulfil A Special Historic Responsibility**

*The following is the text of the statement on economic and current situation adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) at its meeting in Calcutta on June 12-19, 1974 :*

Since the last meeting of the Central Committee, one disaster after another has overtaken the economy dominated by the monopolists, capitalists and the landlords. Never before in the past did the conflict between the exploiting classes and the people as a whole assume such sharp contrast as it did in these months.

Never before did the Congress Governments at the Centre and in the States come out so blatantly in defence of the selfish interests of these classes using their full coercive power against the people.

The last few months have seen an intense accentuation of distress among all sections of the common people. Government-manipulated inflation, excruciating prices, rapid erosion of real wages and incomes, shortages of necessities of life accompanied by blackmarket and speculation, breakdown of power production, bringing industries to a halt and laying off lakhs of people have demonstrated the utterly untenable character of the economy.

Massive unemployment in cities and villages alike with the rural areas turned into one vast ocean of starvation, des-

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, June 30, 1974.

titution and misery are further shaking the very basis of the system.

These are no ordinary developments; they are shaking the economy to its foundations.

### **Sufferings of The People**

The common people have emerged the worst sufferers. They have to bear the burden of the international oil crisis, of the utter failure of the Government to develop our oil resources. They have to bear the burden of power shortage with lay-offs, retrenchment and wage-cuts.

And above all, they are the main victims of Government-imposed inflation which has sent prices of all necessities of life to sky-high heights. During the last year alone, the official index of wholesale prices rose by more than 27 per cent and during the last two years it has exceeded 42 per cent. The retail prices have exceeded these bounds and the retail prices of necessities of life have increased between 50 and 70 per cent and in a few cases exceeded 100 per cent. Recent increases in foodgrains prices have further increased the burden. Added to this is the increase of nearly 25 to 30 per cent during the last fortnight alone recorded by the Consumer Council of India. The price control and official fixation of prices have lost all meaning and the common man is face to face with the robbery of his income at every step.

What chance has he of making both ends meet when edible oil sells at more than Rs. ten per kg., when cloth prices have been increased by more than 40-60 per cent and cereals have to be purchased whenever they are available at Rs. three to four per kg., when the blackmarket price of sugar exceeds Rs. four per kilogramme?

Still worse is the plight of the rural masses who have been reduced to a mass of refugee destitutes with neither work nor purchasing power nor any wherewithal to purchase the daily necessities of life. Even the farcical minimum wage legislation for the agricultural workers has remained on paper.

## **Working Class Fights**

Against this economic deterioration, the working class in the cities, in the modern industries, in transport has been waging heroic battles despite police repression and prolonged lock-outs to starve it into submission. For the last few years more than a million industrial workers every year rose in defence of their interests trying to halt this process of distress, waging a determined battle against the monopolists and the Government.

So all-pervading, however, has been the economic attack and distress that the working class was soon joined by almost all other sections who were compelled to defend their standard of living against the attacks of the Government and the exploiters. Students, teachers, doctors, engineers, middle class employees, employed women—all at one stage or the other had to come out in the open to defend their interests and face the wrath of the employers and the Government. The new reality was quite clear. The Government, the big capitalists and the landlords were refusing to make any concession to the people and the latter were refusing to accept without resistance further sacrifice of their own interests.

## **The Railway Strike**

The high watermark of this gathering resistance was reached in the strike of nearly two million railway workers which affected the entire economy and which gathered round it vast sections of people, working class and middle classes, in a common solidarity struggle of sympathy and support. This unique action which enabled one and a half million workers to stand together as a rock against waves of terroristic repression was symptomatic of the present times when people who were only immobile yesterday turn next day into a huge fighting force impelled by the economic distress.

## **Mass Struggles for Food**

The railway strike with its powerful impact on the economy was preceded by huge popular movements once more un-

precedented in recent times. The same force of starvation and distress drove the unorganized people of Gujarat to enter the arena of struggle and demand effective measures against hoarders and equitable distribution of food. The struggle for this immediate demand developed virtually into a total opposition of the people to the Congress regime and ended with the demand for the dissolution of the Congress dominated Assembly. It highlighted, perhaps for the first time in a huge popular struggle, the demand for removal of corruption, for corruption was now so all-pervading that it affected the common man at every step. The struggle for the demand for food led to the slaughter of more than a hundred people, continuous imposition of curfews over a number of towns and handing over the civil administration virtually to military and para-military forces. A tremendous elemental discontent without a clear well-formulated sense of direction brought the people into a clash with the regime with tremendous militancy on the part of the masses and unheard of brutalities on the part of the administration. If on the morrow of the end of the struggle everything appears to be calm, it is but an illusion. The bitterness among the people has entered the soul and they will soon be ready to take another challenge of the administration.

### **The Bihar Struggle**

The same type of outburst is seen in Bihar where the movement started with the slogan against high prices, non-availability of food and other essentials of life. The people's anger was also roused against the reeking corruption which flowed from the alliance of the ruling party with the landlords, speculators and hoarders. The slogan that the corrupt Ministry should go easily came to the forefront as the popular slogan. Once again, the Congress Government sought to suppress the movement with brutal repression and with the aid of military and paramilitary forces. Non-official reports indicate that more than 200 people have been killed in the fight for people's food against blackmarketees and

hoarders. With this massacre came from the people the demand for the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly.

The starvation of the people under the Congress regime is thus leading to total participation of the masses in the struggle against hunger and is leading to mass massacres. Inevitably the people from their own experiences are connecting their starvation with the rule of the Congress, with its supremacy of political power, and are directing the anger against institutions and organs which according to them represent this power.

### **Danger of Police State**

This is thus a battle between the Government determined to shift the burdens of India's economic crisis on to the people and the equal determination of the people from all sections of life to resist them as they have become unbearable. If the people and the working class give expression to their discontent by means of innumerable strikes, bandhs, protest demonstrations and huge popular movements as in Gujarat and Bihar, the Government on its part is using every device of repression to crush the movement.

The use of DIR, detention without trial under the MISA, criminal prosecutions, arrests of the leading elements, complete scuttling of the fundamental rights of freedom of association and speech are accompanied by a virtual reign of illegal terror against the mass of the people, a terror for which the military and paramilitary forces lent by the Central Government are used in every State. The raiding of railway workers' colonies during the railway strike, the torture of their women and children, the beating in police lock-ups during strikes, the rapes, the looting of the houses of striking workers— these weapons which were in use in West Bengal alone have now come to be increasingly used in all States. They bare before the people the monstrous face of the authoritarian police State which recognizes no right of the common man and which depends only on its own armed strength to establish its supremacy over the people. Time

and again, our Party has called attention of all democratic and political parties to this growing phenomenon and now during the last few months, it has appeared in a blatant form. However it appears that this official terror is not enough to cow down the people. Therefore, it is supplemented by the organization of anti-social elements into Congress squads or youth battalions or resistance groups who are given the licence to physically attack the people and torture them.

### **The Two Paths**

These political and economic developments in the country are to be seen in the background of the national economic situation. The fiasco of the Fifth Five-Year Plan even before it has started being implemented—closely following as it does the notorious Plan holiday between the Third and Fourth Five Year Plans—shows that the crisis of planning in India has reached a stage where either of the two paths has to be taken by the nation—either the path of more and more reliance on imperialism, abandonment of all pretence to democratic planning and struggle against poverty and all anti-monopoly postures and an open and ruthless attack on all civil and democratic liberties of the people or the path of making a break with imperialism, landlordism and monopoly capitalism expanding the civil and democratic liberties of the mass of the common people, finding democratic solutions to the vital problems of national development and integration.

In reality, the Government is determined to pursue the present path and is getting ready to rely more on Western imperialist help to bale itself out of the existing situation. The substantial help which the Consortium countries and the World Bank have promised to the tottering Indian economy shows that they also are confident that India will growingly rely on them. They hold out the promise of more than 10,000 million dollars, i.e., Rs. seven to eight thousands crores, help during the five years of the Fifth Five-Year Plan. The recent utterance of the Government of India regarding better



relationship with the U.S. also indicate the same danger.

At home, the increase in prices of foodgrains recently sanctioned for the benefit of the big landlords, the abolition of subsidies—all these show that the Government is now blatantly relying on these classes to maintain its hold over the country and is giving up all pretence of controlling them. The same assurance is being given to the industrial capitalist and monopolists with the promise of a new national wage legislation and a new legislation of industrial relations. The suppression of the railway workers strike for daring to demand bonus is a clear assurance to the employing class that henceforth the Government will not show any 'weakness' or 'indulgence' towards the working class.

The suppression of the workers' demands, high food prices officially sanctioned, the crushing of the railway workers strike accompanied by recent tax concessions to the big capitalists and the complete paralysis of the Monopoly and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission and the procedure for new licences—all these are clear indications that the Government intends to continue with vigour on the present path and is ready to enter into growing collisions with the people in defence of the landlords and big capitalists.

### **Battles Ahead**

Since every mass and political struggle is being waged against this background, the perspective before the mass democratic movement is one of furious resistance by the ruling classes to every demand made by the fighting people. Our Party had in the Political Resolution adopted at the Ninth Congress noted that rapid intensification of the crisis is leading the ruling classes to a situation in which there will be lesser and lesser room for concessions. This has been amply demonstrated by the manner in which the strike in the Indian Airlines and subsequently the railway strike were dealt with. The latter has, in fact, shown that the terror which was first unleashed in West Bengal is now being extended to big mass and political struggles launched by the common people in

other parts. Unscrupulous use of all sections of the armed forces at the disposal of the regime will be made in a larger and larger measure in order to suppress the growing struggles of the common people. The illusions of "smooth advances" through "democratic methods" are thus being shattered. The people are being taught that they have to defend themselves through greater unity and more determined resistance to the use of the armed forces by the ruling classes. The camp of the people is preparing itself in as determined a manner as the enemy camp in facing the situation of growing confrontation between the two forces. This in fact is the crux of the developing political situation.

### **Defeat the Basic Policies**

The democratic masses of our country can neither defend their immediate interests nor expand their rights and liberties unless these basic policies of the Government are defeated. In their anger and elemental upsurge they are fighting against the consequences of these policies but except in a few cases, have not yet rallied round the banner of alternative policies which by imposing defeat on their oppressors will enable them, to get the required relief and demands. It is because of this that the Right reactionary forces, belonging to the same oppressing and exploiting classes who rule today, seek to exploit the just and righteous indignation of the people for their narrow purposes, for directing the people's movement into harmful and dangerous channels. The Jana Sangh, Congress(O), the BKD and many other organizations often support the movement for food and other demands, but cleverly sidetrack attention from the classes who are responsible for people's starvation and exploit people's struggles to secure electoral and parliamentary advantages for themselves. Some of these parties, dominated by extreme anti-Communism, are completely anti-democratic in their outlook and do not conceal their admirations and adoration for the Western imperialists. They try to get a dangerous grip over the masses in the interests of their extreme

reactionary policies which only help again the landlords, the speculators and the monopolists. To fight this cheating of the masses, it is absolutely necessary to strive to give a proper orientation to the genuine discontent of the people in the thick of the battle and isolate the grip of these reactionaries with their demagogic slogans.

The C.C. notes with concern another big weakness in the situation. While the cities and urban areas have become storm centres of resistance against the Congress Government and its disastrous anti-people economic policies, the vast masses of our rural people, who are undergoing more misery and destitution, are not being drawn into organized struggles. It is the duty of the Left and democratic parties to see that these huge peasant and rural masses are immediately organized and brought into the area of struggle, giving it an effective all-India character to fight for alternative democratic policies, defeating the anti-people policies of the Government.

### **Responsibility of Left & Democratic Parties**

The C. C. is of the view that unless the Left and democratic parties play their constructive role and channelize the rising people's discontent into united movements and struggles for democratic advance and alternate policies, these spontaneous upsurges are likely to be taken advantage of by Right reactionary, communal and disruptive elements including rival factions within the ruling party itself.

The last few months themselves have shown the efficacy and importance of the unity of Left and democratic forces coming before the people as a guiding force. The call for nationwide protest on May 3, the call given jointly by several Left and democratic parties, constitutes an important event in the struggle of the people against the Congress regime and machinations of the reactionary parties. The response to that call showed that the working masses of cities and urban areas are very ready to give a proper response to the call from all Left parties and will be able to play their

role in the emerging struggles against the Congress regime. Far more important even was the successful organization of the mighty railway workers' strike, the historic trade union action unprecedented in the annals of the trade union history of this country, its continuation for three weeks despite raging terror all over India in the railway colonies and the profound loyalty and confidence displayed by the mass of railway workers towards their organizations—this also was possible because it was the united support of *all* the Left parties that could inspire such all-in trade union unity on such a vast scale. Following this came the call from all the Left parties for May 15 in support of the railway workers struggle and that call again was heartily responded to by lakhs of workers in all the major industrial towns and cities. This power and strength of the unity of Left and democratic forces to galvanize the entire advanced forces in the cities and urban areas in the common struggle—this is the new reality that has emerged in the last few months, an outcome for which our Party has been working for the last few years. None can deny today that the unity in action of all Left and democratic forces constitutes the demand of the advanced fighting forces and offers the only guarantee to checkmate the reactionary forces while fighting the Congress regime. It is this unity that enabled the people to brave the terror and challenge the rulers continuously through a fight.

It is, therefore, absolutely necessary if we have to take a further step ahead, to evolve some kind of understanding on the question of alternative policies so that the unity in action of the Left and democratic forces also becomes a banner for the concrete demands of fight which alone will take the movement out of its elemental and spontaneous stage in many places and give it a programme to fight for.

### **Right C.P. Policies**

The C.C. holds that in this vital struggle for the development of Left and democratic unity, the class-collaborationist policies pursued by the leadership of the Right Communist

Party constitute a source of disruption and a dangerous stumbling block.

The basic line of class collaboration pursued by the Right C.P. leadership hinders it from joining the struggle and leads it to betray the masses as happened in connection with the railway strike. It is an open secret that the railway strike was betrayed by the Right C.P. leaders when they succumbed to the pressure of their alliance with the Congress.

It is not surprising that while under the hammer-blows of the people and their struggle, the unholy PDA alliance has been broken in West Bengal, still assurances about co-operation with the Congress continue to pour out as before. This double-faced policy is doing great harm to the cause of the democratic movement, a cause which we know is genuinely championed by the masses including those who today choose to follow the Right C.P. leaders.

The compromise of the Congress Government with the monopolists, landlords, etc., is so blatant, the attacks against the people are so notorious that even the Right C.P. leaders can no longer support the Congress Government at the Centre as in the past and have to come out with strong criticism. This has led to a crisis in their policy which is developing greater and greater inconsistencies and violent oscillations. Already the mass movement had compelled the Right C.P. leaders and their trade union organizations to join in a number of big united strikes. They were also compelled by events to support the railway strike and declare the Government's repression as a war against the working class. Not only do they accuse the Congress Government of backsliding from the progressive policies but they are also forced to champion united actions against official policies. But the Right C.P. still continues to be in the Kerala Government which used repression against the railway strike in the same way as the Congress Governments did elsewhere. Railway and Central Government employees in Kerala were subjected to the same repressive measures as elsewhere, their leaders being arrested under DIR and MISA, the cases against them still

continuing though it is over three weeks since the railway strike was withdrawn.

In U.P. and Orissa, they continue to give support to the Congress Governments without which the Congress Ministries cannot function. Even in West Bengal, where they have formally broken with the PDA, it has been made clear that they would not adopt a policy of firm resistance to the policies of the Congress Government along with the Left and democratic parties.

The leaders of the Right C.P. are deliberately shielding the deceitful propaganda of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that the Congress Government is fighting the forces of Right reaction while in reality it is the Government and its policies of support to the vested interests that are mainly responsible for the immense strengthening of the Right reactionary forces.

The C.C. therefore desires to make it clear that while it would welcome every opportunity to have the Right C.P. in the ranks of those who fight against the anti-people policies of the Government, it cannot but warn the people against the Right C.P.'s basic policy of collaboration with the Congress regime.

The C.C. notes with satisfaction that the united front of Left parties in West Bengal is getting stronger and more consolidated, with greater mutual understanding and co-operation. It notes that both in West Bengal and Kerala, there is better understanding and trust between us and our allies.

In both these States, the common action unleashed under a united call has played a major role in centralising and unifying the resistance of the masses.

The C.C. notes with satisfaction that the relations of co-operation and joint struggle that were developing between the CPI(M) and the Socialist Party are getting stronger and consolidated. The understanding between the two parties has been an important factor in taking the firm step towards bringing together all the Left and democratic parties in the country for common action. It helped the coming together

of the Left and democratic parties in their two day Delhi meeting on April 4 and 5 which led to the observance of the All-India Protest Day on May 3 followed by united action of all parties and mass organizations in support of the railway strike.

The Central Committee considers that in view of these sweeping mass struggles and the tremendous urge for unity and the brutal repression resorted to by the ruling party, a special historic responsibility rests on all the Left and democratic parties to come together and shoulder the burden of further struggle to decide whether democracy will prevail or authoritarian and police rule will triumph in this country. It is a struggle which is raising basic policy issues on which the masses have to be rallied and no political party worth its salt can shirk its duty. While the C.C. calls on all Left and democratic parties to come together for waging a common battle for alternate policies, it also requests them to take up the immediate questions emerging out of the recent battles. All mass organizations and Left and democratic parties must wage a united struggle for withdrawal of dismissal orders against the railway workers and Central employees, for release of those arrested, for withdrawal of all penal measures against the railway workers and Central employees who went on strike. This is an important democratic task which must be discharged to assure the railway workers and Central employees that the popular support behind them still continues and they will not be let down by the democratic movement. Similarly, the wide campaign in defence of civil liberties and democratic rights highlighting the threat of one-party rule must be carried forward by the democratic forces.

Dominating all these is the question of people's livelihood, high prices, erosion of real wages and incomes, questions of assured food supply, lowering the prices of necessities of life, assurance of a reliable public distribution system. Together with these is the question of the massive unemployment that is a curse in towns and villages alike.

The Central Committee appeals to all Left and democratic parties and forces to unite their strength to protect the people and lead the battle for better livelihood and living conditions, for democratic rights. It is through these struggles that the people are directing their hammer blows against the present iniquitous social order. Only the Left and democratic parties and forces can give the necessary direction and orientation to the developing mass battles. The Central Committee therefore once more urges on all parties to do everything to consolidate the unity already achieved and develop it further to do justice to the aspirations and sacrifices of the masses.



## **Attacks on Minorities in Tamil Nadu and Kerala**

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the  
CPI(M) in its Calcutta session on June 12-19, 1974**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemns the attack on Malayalees in Madras City last month by a group of persons led by a leading Congress(O) supporter and a DMK leader. Hotels and shops were looted and property damaged. The police were present but gave no protection. This had its repercussions in Kerala where Tamilian shops and hotels were raided in Trivandrum.

Now comes again news of an attack on Malayalees at Avadi near Madras on June 10 and 11 by a group of persons calling themselves the Tamilian Protection Force. Here, too, shops have been raided and property damaged. This cannot be too strongly condemned. These blatant attacks on Malayalees in Tamil Nadu have set at naught all respect for minorities in the State and has created insecurity of life and property for them in Tamil Nadu. News of intimidations of Malayalees have also been reported from near Tuticorin and near Coimbatore.

The Central Committee warns the DMK Government of Tamil Nadu that its failure to afford protection to the Malayalee minority in the State of Tamil Nadu and encouragement to these chauvinist elements is bound to have its repercussions and embitter relations between the two States. The Kerala Government should also see that protection is afforded to Tamilians against any possible attacks on them.

The Central Committee is of the opinion that such attacks

as have been reported disrupt the unity of the working class and the democratic movements and can gladden only the exploiting classes.

The Central Committee, therefore, appeals to all democratic forces, parties and organizations in Tamil Nadu and Kerala to come forward unitedly and condemn these attacks and raise their voices powerfully against those who are out to provoke this fratricidal strife between Tamilians and Malayalees.

## Whom the Cap Fits

Editorial of 'People's Democracy', July 21, 1974

The Congress Working Committee was talking with the proverbial "tongue in the cheek" when it denounced all the mass movements and struggles against the Government as fascist.

The "fascist" cap, in fact, fits the leadership of the ruling party and the Government.

The resolution denounces the struggles calculated to bring the elected Governments down. Who does not know that the Congress party and its Central and State Governments have scant respect for elected Governments and elections if they do not perpetuate the Congress in power?

From the notorious "liberation struggle" against the Kerala Government in 1959 to the universally denounced rigging of elections in West Bengal in 1972, every violation of parliamentary democracy has been directly organized by the Congress party. The former was sponsored by the present Prime Minister in her capacity as the then Congress President, while it was under her personal supervision as the Prime Minister of the country that the Operation Rigging was done in West Bengal.

In between these two nakedly "fascist" attacks on democracy, the same Congress party and its Government resorted to the most disreputable methods of defection to bring down every one of the non-Congress Governments formed after the Fourth General Elections. The manner in which this was done in State after State in those two years and the

tactics adopted subsequently in other States like Orissa, Pondicherry, Manipur and so on show unmistakably that Smt. Gandhi and her colleagues have no other "principle" to go upon than the supreme need to perpetuate themselves in power by hook or crook.

The Working Committee's show of hostility to Right reaction and Left extremism is truly amazing.

Was it not the present Prime Minister herself in her capacity as Congress President who initiated the move *for uniting* the Christian Churches, the Nair Service Society and the Muslim League under the Congress flag to pull the elected Government of Kerala down?

Was it not again she in her capacity as the Prime Minister that gave full opportunity to the "Naxalite" gangs in West Bengal to finish off the finest representatives of the militant working class and general democratic movements in that State?

Sreemati. Gandhi and her colleagues used to denounce the Congress(O) as the embodiment of reaction. They, however, had no hesitation to gang up with the very same Congress(O) in West Bengal to keep the CPI(M) out of power after the 1971 election, in Tamil Nadu during the recent Pondicherry and Coimbatore elections, and so on.

At the very time when the Prime Minister and her colleagues were co-operating with the Congress(O) in the Pondicherry and Coimbatore elections, they were denouncing Patnaik and Mahtab as embodiments of reaction in Orissa. Today, however, the General Secretary of the ruling Congress goes to Bhubaneswar and woos these very same Patnaik and Mahtab not only for their support in the Presidential election but also to strengthen the Nandini Satpathy Government in Orissa.

The regime that is maintained through such unscrupulous shifts in political alliances has no use for any of the principles of parliamentary democracy.

The country's Constitution is said to be based on the principle of supremacy of the law to which the Executive is

subordinated. But the most crucial provisions of that Constitution have been in abeyance since the National Emergency was first proclaimed in 1962 (except for a short period between 1969 and 1971).

The 1962 Emergency was declared in the name of the short-lived conflict with China. Within a month of the beginning of hostilities, however, the Chinese withdrew. But the Emergency continued till the electoral defeat of the Congress party in 1967 resulting in mounting pressure of non-Congress Governments for the lifting of the Emergency.

Again in 1971, the Emergency was declared in the name of the Indo-Pakistan war. That war, too, was over in 16 days. Yet as in the case of the earlier Emergency, this is still continuing.

Both in 1962 and in 1971, assurances were given that the Emergency will not be used either against the fighting mass organizations or against the democratic Opposition parties. These assurances, however, are not worth the paper on which they were printed.

Beginning with the factory or village level struggles of the workers and peasants and right up to all-India strikes like those of the railway workers and Central Government employees recently, every strike, every peasant struggle, every student action, every struggle for civil and democratic liberties is sought to be suppressed through the use of the DIR. Leaders and cadres of Left and democratic parties are put behind the bars for long periods.

Together with the perfecting and use of legislative weapons like the DIR, MISA and so on, executive weapons were also sharpened. Such repressive arms of the State machinery as the CRP, Industrial Security Force, Border Security Force and so on have been strengthened with the express intention of suppressing all democratic people's movements.

The legislative and executive weapons perfected by the Congress rulers are helpless against blackmarketeers, hoarders, big landlords, the operators of the parallel economy and other enemies of the people. But they are very powerful against the working people and their fighting organizations.

Having used these weapons to suppress the fighting people as they did in the case of the railway strike, the Prime Minister and her colleagues are now launching still fiercer attacks on the masses, as is shown by the recent wages-freeze Ordinance and the proposed measures like putting heavier tax burdens and raising the prices of essential commodities.

The working people will naturally resist these attacks. It is this resistance of the people that is denounced as "Left-sectarian movements" paving the way for the rise of "fascism".

It is for the fighting organizations of the common people, together with the Left and democratic parties, groups and individuals in the country, to give a firm rebuff to the ruling party and its allies.

## **Resist the 10-Point Attack**

**Editorial of 'People's Democracy', July 28, 1974**

The ten-point programme originally enunciated by the Prime Minister and now endorsed by the AICC, which has been reduced to a rubber-stamp of the Central Cabinet, as the basis on which a "war on inflation" is being launched is, in fact, a war on the living standards of all sections of the toiling people.

Its first victims are the wage and salary-earning workers and middle class employees. Their democratic demand for increase in wage and salary-scales and for neutralization of the rise in cost of living in the form of D.A. has been denied through the Ordinance which is a measure of imposing cuts in wages and salaries.

This attack on wages is sought to be defended on the ground that the supply of money with the public should be reduced if inflation is to be checked. Industrialists, landlords, well-to-do capitalist farmers, wholesale dealers and so on, however, are allowed to have more money passed into their pockets, to be used as they please.

The price of every commodity, from foodgrains and other essential consumer goods to raw materials and manufactured goods, are allowed to go up. The Government itself sanctions higher prices in their case on the ground that their cost of production has gone up. But when it comes to compensating the workers and middle class employees for the cost of their living, the Government applies a different standard.

Higher prices of consumption goods, however, are only

one form of attack against the entire working people. Equally serious are the heavy burdens of taxation to be borne by all sections of the poor and middle classes. The heavy taxes imposed in the February Budget are now to be followed by another dose to be imposed by the new Finance Bill, to be introduced in Parliament on July 31, 1974.

The people at large are to suffer also from the much-talked-of measures of "fiscal discipline", proposed to be enforced under the "anti-inflationary" measures. The cuts in expenditure, to be made both at the Centre and in the States will fall, firstly and above all, on the social welfare and other developmental activities. The people, therefore, are to pay more and more for less and less of developmental and welfare activities.

The ten-point programme makes much of "making those who have benefited from developmental activities of the Centre and States to pay for it". Special mention is made in this connection of the well-to-do sections in the rural areas, who have borne a disproportionately small share of the burden of development.

Under the cover of "making the rural sector pay", however, the poor and middle classes in the rural sector are being attacked.

The big landlords, the well-to-do capitalist farmers and other sections of the rich are already being rewarded with the repeated increases in the prices of their products and the abandonment of even such inadequate curbs on them as the State takeover of foodgrains trade. Furthermore, these are the very classes which can in innumerable ways evade all the new measures that are ostensibly directed against them.

The poor and middle classes, on the other hand, cannot escape the rigours of every measure which is allegedly taken to "mop up the surplus from the rural areas".

It is, therefore, inevitable that the implementation of the ten-point programme would rouse the mass of working people—the poor and the middle classes in both urban and rural areas against the Government and its policies. The leaders



of the ruling party are fully aware of this. Hence the fury with which everybody from the Congress President and Prime Minister down to the rank and file AICC member who spoke at the session, denounced the opposition that is building up against the anti-people policies of the Central and State Governments.

The apparently “democratic” and “progressive” stand of “resistance to Right reactionaries and Left-adventurists” is the cover behind which anybody who opposes the Government’s anti-people policies are denounced and sought to be suppressed. The venom with which Jaya Prakash Narayan was denounced by speaker after speaker arises out of the fear that the movement launched by him may become broader by embracing the mass of toilers.

We of the Left and democratic movement are critical of the movement headed by Jaya Prakash Narayan because it fights the Government not on the basis of a programme of the democratic demands of the working people. We are of the view that the struggle for the dissolution of the Legislature in Bihar—a legitimate demand by itself—cannot become a genuine people’s struggle unless it is linked up with the demands of the toiling millions directed against the landlords, wholesalers, monopolists and other enemies of the people.

While thus criticising the struggle being waged under Jaya Prakash leadership for its inadequacies, we dissociate ourselves from, and firmly oppose the politically motivated campaign of vilification against Jaya Prakash launched by the Congress leadership and participated in by the Right Communists. We would, in fact, strive our utmost to develop a broad-based movement of the common people on the basis of a programme of struggle against the classes that are rallied behind the Congress regime.

This in our view would be the proper response to the attacks being launched by the ruling party through its ten-point programme.

## Kashmir : CPI(M) Stand\*

Harkishan Singh Surjeet

The talks which have started between Sheikh Abdulla and Indira Gandhi from the beginning of May 1972 for the solution of the Kashmir problem have reached a crucial stage. Perhaps the talks at the level of G. Parthasarathy, representative of the Prime Minister, and Mirza Afzal Beg, representative of Sheikh Abdulla, are almost over in Delhi, and points of agreement are being formulated and they await final clinching by the Prime Minister and Sheikh Abdulla. Though there seems to be some serious difficulties on both sides, there is optimism about settlement and both sides are talking about the beginning of a new chapter in the relations between India and Kashmir.

So far as Kashmir is concerned, all attention is on the solution of this problem. Whether you go to some shop, restaurant or office or school, the question of the future of Kashmir is being debated. There is a feeling of impending change in the political set-up, and not only are the political parties preparing themselves for such a change, but the administration also is adjusting itself to such a change.

On July 9, a reception was held in the Broadway Hotel, Srinagar, where Union Minister of State for Information Inder Gujral presented a copy of the *Sher-e-Kashmir* number of a Jammu newspaper to Sheikh Abdulla. Gujral was all praise of the leadership of the Sheikh and this function was also attended by the Kashmir Chief Minister, Syed Mir Qasim, and many other Ministers.

\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, July 28, 1974.

What is the background to these developments?

### **Background to Developments**

With the emergence of Bangladesh and the setback which U.S. imperialism suffered in its manoeuvres in the Indian sub-continent, a process of rethinking started both among the leaders of the Kashmiri people and the Government of India. Whereas the leaders of the Kashmiri people realised that the solution has to be found outside the slogan of the Plebiscite Front (P.F.) taking into consideration the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, the Government of India also felt that the people of Kashmir could not be won over through repression even after the military defeat of Pakistan and a solution to the Kashmir problem had to be found.

It was in this situation that Mirza Afzal Beg, President of the P. F. issued a statement on February 5, 1972, saying that taking into consideration the national and international situation, the P.F. was prepared to establish a new relationship with India on the basis of Section 370 of the Indian Constitution. Immediately after this statement, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi invited Sheikh Abdulla, who was under treatment in the Indian Medical Institute in Delhi at that time, for talks. In these talks she expressed the desire to open a new chapter in their relationship. She also expressed the feeling that earlier steps instead of solving the Kashmir problem had further complicated it. She appointed Parthasarathi to have talks with the representative of Sheikh Abdulla who on his behalf appointed Mirza Afzal Beg for the said purpose. These talks were conducted on the quantum of autonomy, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the Election Commission, the question of State subjects, the fundamental rights and the laws made applicable to Kashmir after 1953.

The talks got prolonged, but Sheikh Abdulla committed himself about Kashmir's accession to India. In fact, he made a tour of the country in the course of which he made categorical statements on the question of accession as well as his opposition to the two-nation theory.

### **Urgency for Solution**

The prolonging of the negotiations was used on the one hand by the communal reactionary forces in the State as well as in the country as a whole and on the other by Pakistan's Prime Minister Bhutto, who in order to divert the attention of the people of Pakistan from internal problems, again began using the Kashmir question. The growing discontent in "Azad" Kashmir area was also a factor for him.

This situation underlined the urgency of clinching the problem this year and in the month of June, Foreign Minister Swaran Singh visited Srinagar to have personal talks with Sheikh Abdulla. After these talks, both issued statements that they have better appreciation of the situation and are nearer a solution.

### **Plebiscite Front Conference**

I visited Kashmir in the beginning of July when the P. F., the main organization of Kashmiris led by Sheikh Abdulla, was holding its conference after a period of ten years. Fifteen hundred delegates had gathered from all parts of Kashmir including the Muslim-dominated areas of Jammu, and the main question to be debated in the conference was the future of Jammu and Kashmir. Five delegates had also come from the U.K. who originally belonged to the "Azad" Kashmir area, to participate in this conference.

It was not an easy task for the leaders to unify the P.F. organization behind the new policy of negotiated settlement with India. Sheikh Abdulla had already set the tone through his statements denouncing Pakistan and expressing adherence to ideas of secularism, democracy and Socialism. Even then, perhaps, the conference would not have come to a successful conclusion if the P.F. President, Mirza Afzal Beg, had not forcefully argued, using his powers of oratory, to explain to the delegates the new stance of their policy. In his presidential address he reviewed the struggle conducted by the organization for 19 years since its inception, denounced the repressive measures taken by the Central and State Governments, praised

the tremendous sacrifices made by the workers of the P.F. and highlighted the principles for which they have been fighting and then posed the question that today the people of Jammu and Kashmir are facing untold hardships and miseries. The question, he said is "whether to keep ourselves confined to one method and go on exposing the non-fulfilment of the promises made and allow the accentuation of exploitation of the people and witness the increasing unemployment, misery and starvation of our people, especially the youth or we should find some other effective way to ascertain the opinion of the people instead of sticking to the slogan of plebiscite." He stated that plebiscite was a method and in the present circumstances to stick to one method alone was not correct. "If we find insoluble difficulties to tread a path, we have to find another path to reach the destination." Referring to the talks with the Central Government, he said, "an atmosphere of relaxation has set in and a desire for an honourable formula is manifest. Sheikh Saheb will in due time place before the people any concrete proposal that might emerge and seek your endorsement." The leadership was able, by and large, to carry the delegates and the rank and file with it in the direction of the new stance. A very small minority did show some dissidence and resistance but it got isolated and yielded. The conference was followed by a massive rally on July 7 which was addressed by Shiekh Abdulla and Mirza Afzal Beg.

On July 8, the Chief Minister, Mir Qasim, welcomed the decision of the P.F. and extended his full support to a settlement. This was followed by the meeting of the State Executive Committee of the ruling Congress party which adopted a resolution welcoming the efforts to settle the Kashmir problem with Sheikh Abdulla. Chief Minister Mir Qasim told the Committee that he was prepared to step down at any time in the interest of Kashmir and India.

### **Opposition to Settlement**

There are two forces which are panicky over the negotiations. One is the Action Committee led by Mirwaiz Maulana

Farooq in the Valley and the Jana Sangh in the Jammu area. The Mirwaiz has a religious following which is limited to certain areas. He describes Sheikh Abdulla's move as a "sell-out" and an "ignominious surrender". He has the support of a section of students also. During the past few days, he has also instigated clashes. The Jana Sangh is rousing communal passions in the Jammu area.

When I met Sheikh Abdulla in the evening of July 8, he seemed to be very optimistic about the outcome of talks. He showed concern about the democratic movement in the State as well as in the country. He took pride in referring to the programme of "New Kashmir" which was evolved by the National Conference during the struggle against Princely rule and also against the British regime. He was feeling that he should be able to do something for the people of Kashmir and democratic movement of India on the basis of the said programme. He expressed his concern about the people living in the "Azad" Kashmir area and thought that the solution of the Kashmir problem would help also in solving some of the human problems concerning those people. He talked about his secular past, his dedication to the ideas of democracy, Socialism and declared that religion does not play any part in the destiny of nationalities or nations. That is why, he said, from the beginning he had demarcated himself from the two nation theory of Jinnah. When asked about his stand on the talks, he said that he would like the position of 1953 to be restored, because this position emerged as a result of agreement between the National Conference and the Government of India and this position was incorporated in Section 370 of the Indian Constitution and was unanimously accepted by the Constituent Assembly of India. Pointing out to the evolution of the special status of J. & K., he said that it was the strength of the democratic movement which was able, on the one hand, to fight against the Pakistani aggressors and on the other, acquire a special status for J. & K. in India. He said the crux of the matter was whether the Government of India restored the same position

and thus strengthened the integration of the Kashmiri people with the rest of the country on that basis. He was hopeful that a solution would be found based on this. He emphasised that he would be able to play an important role in bringing the new relationship provided he was able to carry the people of Kashmir along with him.

### **The Position in 1953**

Article 370 of the Indian Constitution had laid down :

(i) A special status to Jammu and Kashmir State, the only State which was given the power to have a Constituent Assembly and frame its own Constitution. By virtue of this Article, the Legislature of the State had the same power of legislation and competence for the State of Jammu and Kashmir as Parliament had for the rest of India.

(ii) No Indian law could be applied to the State without the specific request and resolution of the State Legislature and the endorsement of the same by Parliament.

(iii) The State framed its own Constitution. It had an elected head of State, the *Sadar-i-Riyasat*, instead of a Governor appointed by the Government of India. The State had a Prime Minister, the nomenclatures regarding the head of State and the head of Government were symbolic and substantive features of the special status.

(iv) Article 356, 357 and 358 of the Indian Constitution relating to the intervention of the President of India on the recommendation of the Governor in a situation of "emergency" and the President's power to dissolve the Legislative Assembly and promulgate President's rule did not apply to Kashmir.

(v) On the basis of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, the State of Jammu and Kashmir was given full autonomy except in the matter of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications.

Much of this has changed since then. Articles 356, 357 and 358 have been made applicable to the State, many central laws have been extended to the State, the jurisdiction of the

Supreme Court has been made applicable as also the jurisdiction of the Election Commission, Comptroller General, etc. May be some of these laws are not questioned, but the main point of discussion is the power of the President of India to intervene and the quantum of autonomy which has been enjoyed earlier. The Government of India, on the other hand, while recognising the necessity of a settlement is feeling hesitant on the question of the extent of J. & K.'s autonomy and its effect in the rest of the country.

### **Our Party's Stand**

The stand of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on this question has been consistent from the beginning. During the Indo-Pak War of 1965, when the Government of India and the Right Communist Party were stating that there was no problem like Kashmir, the CPI(M) had taken the stand that there was a Kashmir problem and it must be settled in consultation with the representatives of the Kashmiri people. We had also said at that time that Pakistan had no *locus standi* in this question. The Central Committee of the Party reiterated this stand in 1966 when it met at Tenali after the release from detention of the leaders of the Party.

Secondly, our Party opposed the continued detention of Sheikh Abdulla and had stated that repression was no solution to the problem, in fact it would only intensify the problem further.

Thirdly, we opposed the continuous erosion of Section 370 of the Constitution of India and our Party's stand on autonomy is that the unity of India can be strengthened only on the basis of substantial autonomy for the States, which we have explained in our various resolutions.

### **Need for Speedy Settlement**

Hence when we welcome the negotiations that are being conducted between Sheikh Abdulla and the Central Government, it is a continuation of the policy which we have all along pursued in regard to the Kashmir problem. And while



welcoming the negotiations, what we stress today is that the negotiations should be concluded expeditiously and a settlement reached on the basis of special status for Jammu and Kashmir as provided for under the Constitution so that the communalists in Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of the country as also Bhutto and company in Pakistan are deprived of one of their main weapons to whip up chauvinistic hysteria.

We welcome the negotiations and hope for a speedy settlement of the problem also because it will help ease the situation in the sub-continent. The removal of this problem will enable the democratic forces in both Pakistan and India to defeat the attempts of the reactionaries to rally the people on chauvinistic lines and concentrate their fire on the imperialists and their conspiracies in the sub-continent and their own ruling classes.

The communal and reactionary forces know this and have intensified their activities all the more to sabotage the negotiations. Any delay in arriving at a settlement will be only to their advantage. This should not be allowed. The Left and democratic forces in the country have to assert themselves and demand that the Government of India arrive at an immediate settlement of the problem on the basis of the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Left and democratic forces have no illusion that solving the problem on this basis alone will solve all the problems which the people of Jammu and Kashmir are facing. Like the people in the rest of the country, they are also victims of the anti-people policies of the Congress rulers. The struggle for democratic rights and civil liberties, the struggle against erosion of their living standards, the struggle against exploitation, all will come into the forefront once such a settlement of the problem is reached.

And in that struggle the people of the whole of the country will stand together with the common objective of defeating the anti-people policies of the Congress rulers.

## **Unitedly Meet the New Offensive\***

**Press Communique issued by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in Calcutta.**

*The following is the text of the Press Communique issued by the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) after it met in Calcutta from July 20 to 25, 1974:*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly protests against the new Ordinances which attack and freeze the earnings and cost of living compensation of the workers and employees. Today when every paisa is required to make both ends meet, the Government has attacked the wages and salaries of the workers and employees.

These sections like the rest of the people have been the victims of the high prices and their real earnings have been going down. Now their wages are regarded as being responsible for the inflationary spiral and they are again fleeced.

The spokesmen of the Government and the Congress are eloquent when money is going into the hands of the workers and middle class employees. They, however, plead completely helpless when it is a question of restraining the money that goes into the hands of the capitalists and the landlords, traders and speculators. Only a few months prior to the new Ordinances, the Government had no compunction in sanctioning inordinate increases in the prices of foodgrains, sugar, vanaspati, cloth and other necessities of life. Prices of these commodities have risen by 50 to 100 per cent in the last year. Having ensured fabulous returns for the exploiting classes, the Government has now struck against the common people.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, August 4, 1974.

This is the wages and incomes policy which the Government has been advertising all these months. It amounts to a forcible reduction of consumption of the common people and a forcible redistribution of national income in favour of the exploiting classes. The total effect of these so-called anti-inflationary measures is to help capital accumulation in the hands of the tycoons and force the people to economise on daily necessities.

### **Hollow Claim**

The claim to hit at the inflationary spiral through immobilization of the money resources by these measures is hollow. With more than Rs. 10,000 crores circulating in the parallel blackmarket economy, these proposed measures will have little impact on the quantity of money in circulation. The changes in the bank rate and lending rates cannot, under the circumstances, control the speculative activity in the blackmarket. The proposed measures of additional taxation of Rs. 150 crores, if their burden mainly falls on the common man, will give an upward push to the prices.

The Government does not want to spell out the real causes of inflation which directly arise from its own anti-people policies. These have created fertile ground for manipulation of prices.

Prices are manipulated by a narrow clique of landlords, monopoly capitalists, wholesale dealers into whose hands the bulk of the stocks go from the places of production. Their ability to manipulate prices is all the greater in the conditions created by the budgetary and financial measures adopted by the Government. They exploit the shortage inevitable under Government's failure to release productive forces and failure to organize equitable distribution of the existing stocks.

### **Steady Rise in Prices**

The steady increase in indirect taxes of all essential commodities of people's consumption; the deliberate policy of resorting to deficit financing as a way of finding resources

for the successive Five-Year Plans; the liberal financial accommodation which the banks are permitted to give the stockholders of the agricultural and industrial products have been leading to higher and higher prices. Since the same thing is happening to industrial raw materials, cost of production in that sector too goes higher and higher. It is under these circumstances that—except for short periods and that too, for a very few commodities—prices have, during the last two decades, steadily gone up.

The continuous deficit financing and speculation have created a parallel economy which holds the country to ransom. Inflation has been further intensified because of our country's close economic links and dependence on the inflation-ridden economies of imperialist countries. The huge imports purchased at high cost which enter into the cost of production constitute an active element along with high export prices realised.

Added to this is the large-scale evasion of taxes—not only income-tax but of all taxes—that goes on a grand scale under the Congress regime. This evasion of huge sums is done at the top of society but the Government and the Congress leaders have started denouncing the doctors and lawyers as its main source. Once again the smaller fry is to be sacrificed.

The landlords constitute a big section which escapes taxation of its rich earnings. The Government has repeatedly talked about taxing these incomes but neither the State Governments nor the Central Government dare to do it, because they represent the bourgeois landlord alliance. On the other hand, they do not hesitate to attack the pauperised rural masses in the name of mopping up the surplus purchasing power in the rural areas. Similarly, they do not hesitate to levy additional tax burdens on the middle and small peasants.

### **New Attack On People**

The Polit Bureau denounces the new measures as a feint to cover the new attacks against the people. The mass of people require immediate relief through control and scaling down of

prices of necessities of life and bringing down the general price level. This can be achieved only if the Government is compelled to make a determined attack against the blackmoney economy and destroy its capacity to play havoc with prices. It is futile to talk of holding the price line unless deficit financing is done away with and the Government's heavy indirect taxation which forms a substantial part of the prices of some necessities and articles of common consumption is drastically reduced; unless the Government takes to compulsory procurement of stock of foodgrains from the landlords and traders at reduced prices, and purchase the produce of the mass of peasants by offering attractive bonus scales; unless the control of speculators, monopolists and landlords over raw materials, etc., is smashed, and unless the inordinate profits of the monopolists are drastically reduced. This will place the burden of fighting the inflation crisis on the proper shoulders, bring down prices and give relief to the working class, the rural masses and the people as a whole.

The Polit Bureau calls upon all mass organizations to join in a common fight to defeat the attack on wages and salaries, and the living conditions of the common people and compel the Government to accept the alternative policy of combating inflation.

### **Malicious Campaign**

The Polit Bureau warns the people against the mischievous and maligning propaganda of the Congress which dubs every genuine protest movement of the masses as anti-democratic and fascist.

The Right C.P. leaders who on several occasions join with the Congress in the malicious campaign actually help the forces of reaction and fascism.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the AICC instead of seriously considering the issues facing the people, devoted more time in attacking Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan and the movement led by him in Bihar. Jaya Prakash has touched one of the sorest spot of the Congress party—the rampant

corruption that prevails among its Ministers, legislators and leaders. Hence the counter-offensive, maligning the discontent and their struggle.

Our Party has supported the demand for dissolution of the Bihar Assembly, the struggle against corruption and at the same time expressed its differences with Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan. A movement which does not focus attention on the main demands of the basic masses who form the overwhelming majority of the people, on the source of their distress and exploitation, has every possibility of getting sidetracked and run as a movement of a narrow section. Association with parties like the Jana Sangh who represent the same vested interests that starve the people and are represented in the Congress runs contrary to the claim to organize a new social revolution and creates the danger of the movement being exploited by the Jana Sangh and the like.

Notwithstanding this, the movement of students and others against corruption, for dissolution of the Assembly arises from the woes and sufferings of the people and is a legitimate and democratic movement.

To denounce it as reactionary, fascist, only betrays the panic felt by the ruling circles.

### **Meet This Offensive**

The AICC which endorsed the ruthless repression against the railway workers sounds hypocritical when it speaks of the defence of democracy. Those who repudiate democracy at every step by the use of MISA and DIR, by continuing the Emergency, those who are attempting to turn Parliament into an adjunct of the Executive wing by resorting to Ordinances on the eve of the Parliament session, have no credentials to speak in defence of democracy.

The Polit Bureau appeals to all Left and democratic parties to meet unitedly this offensive of the Congress and defend the freedom and liberty of democratic struggles.

## **Beat Back Offensive on Railwaymen\***

**Resolution adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on July 20-25, 1974**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) lodges its emphatic protest against the continued incarceration of thousands of railway workers, the severe sentences passed against them. It condemns the Railway Ministry and the Government for its refusal to withdraw the dismissal orders and other penal measures against the fighting railway workers. Despite honeyed phrases and promises, the Government continues its vendetta against the railway workers.

The Polit Bureau extends its warm sympathy to the railway workers and calls upon all workers' organizations to evolve effective means to defeat the Government offensive. The task of beating back this offensive is the common duty of the democratic forces and the Left and democratic parties. It should be recalled that by attacking the railway workers the Government is attacking the entire trade union and democratic movements. The P.B. once again calls upon all Party members to help the railway workers in collaboration with other Left and democratic forces.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, August 4, 1974.

## **Growing Atrocities on Harijans\***

**Resolution adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on July 20-25, 1974**

The Polit Bureau denounces the growing atrocities on the untouchables in village in different States. It is the same story everywhere with the houses of untouchables set on fire, their women molested and tortured; their men wounded or killed with impunity with the connivance of the police of the Congress Governments. There are instances where the police themselves loot and burn the property of the untouchables and rape their women. In places they are denied drinking water and assaulted for daring to use the common village well.

What is hidden from the public eye is the fact that in most of the cases it is the local landlords or rich rural gentry who organize these barbarities because the untouchable labourers refuse to work on starvation wages, or occupy land they are legally entitled to or change their place of work to escape the serfdom imposed by the landlords. Narainpur in U.P., Ramanapalli in Andhra, several villages in Maharashtra and Gujarat reveal the same tale of atrocities because of the untouchable's refusal to accept low wages or assert his title to land or repudiate his status of a slave.

Caste prejudice is exploited to wage this war of the landlords and the police and officials act as the ready instruments of the notorious exploiters in the villages. The Congress Government which is a Government of capitalists and

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landlords can never guarantee protection to the untouchables. It is the task of the common peasant movement, the trade union movement in the cities and the democratic movement led by the Left and democratic parties to organize resistance and defeat this medieval barbarism.

## **Resolution on Kashmir\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on July 20-25, 1974**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) welcomes the negotiations initiated between the Central Government and Sheikh Abdulla to arrive at a settlement on the question of Kashmir. Our Party has consistently taken the stand that the Kashmir problem should be solved in consultation with the representatives of the Kashmiri people and that the continued repression will bring no solution to the problem. Our Party opposed the use of draconian laws and the continued detention of Sheikh Abdulla and his colleagues. Our Party has also opposed the erosion of Article 370 at every stage and has been demanding the settlement of the issue on the basis of the Special Status provided under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

The rabid communal elements, both Hindu and Muslim, in the country are perturbed over the negotiations and are rousing communal passions. The Awami Action Committee led by Mirwaiz Moulvi Farooq has started organizing clashes in Kashmir and the Jana Sangh is threatening a big agitation in Jammu. These forces are utilizing vacillations and hesitations of the Government of India in bringing the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

The Polit Bureau is of the opinion that any prolongation of negotiations and further delay in reaching the settlement is very harmful. The Government of India should settle the question in the framework of the special status provided to

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the State at the time of adoption of the Indian Constitution and enable the people of Kashmir to organize their social, economic and political life according to their own choice, through their democratically elected Assembly and elected *Sadar-e-Riyasat*. The President of India should have no right to dissolve these institutions. It appeals to all the Left and democratic parties to support the demand for full autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir State and urges upon the Government of India the urgency of the solution.

The Polit Bureau is aware that this alone will not solve the problem of the Kashmiri people who are groaning under landlord-capitalist exploitation like the rest of India. They will have to continue their struggle for a better socio-economic life as an integral part of the struggle of the Indian people to end poverty. It is also necessary that the democratic rights of people in different regions of Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir Valley are ensured. But the solution of the Kashmir problem will no doubt weaken the communal reactionary forces and will help in fighting the imperialist conspiracies in the sub-continent.

## **Resolution on Sikkim\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on July 20-25, 1974**

Recent developments have once more focussed the attention of the people on Sikkim. The Chogyal encouraged by U.S. support sought to stem the tide of democratic movement and continues his autocratic rule. He has been forced to retreat in his conspiracies before the joint pressure of the Government of India and the people of Sikkim. The P.B. is of the opinion that had the Government of India taken a firm stand, this nest of autocracy and U.S. conspiracy could have been liquidated long ago. But despite several upheavals the Chogyal was allowed to continue to the detriment of the interests of Sikkim and the Indian people. In the last conflict also he could have been completely vanquished but once again there was a compromise. But the Chogyal's mischief-making capacity has been curbed to a great extent.

However, this curbing of the power of this princely autocrat has not meant a corresponding increase in the power of the people and a genuine assertion of Sikkim's autonomy. Utilising popular discontent and exploiting the provision for its responsibility for good administration in the 1950 Treaty, the Government of India imposed a dictatorial undemocratic Constitution on Sikkim. Under it the Chief Executive Officer nominated by the Government of India presides over the elected Assembly and has powers to veto legislation covering Finance, Home and Minority departments.

Further, a provision is also there that Sikkim Assembly

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, August 4, 1974.

can seek representation in political institutions of India and for Supreme court's supervision over its Judiciary and its Planning is undertaken as part of the planning process in India by the Indian Planning Commission.

The Polit Bureau warns that this denial of democracy and full autonomy for the Sikkim people and any effort to restrict the right of the Sikkim people to frame their own political and economic institutions would only lead to bitterness among the people of Sikkim and would harm the interests of the people both in India and Sikkim.

The Polit Bureau demands a complete end to the rule of Chogyal. It demands immediate abolition of the post of the Chief Executive Officer with his powers of veto, and allow the people of Sikkim to manage their affairs through their elected representatives. The Polit Bureau calls upon the Government of India to render all assistance necessary to overcome Sikkim's economic backwardness to strengthen mutual relations.

## **Resolution on Cyprus\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on July 20-25, 1974**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) denounces the coup organised by the Greek military junta, ousting Archbishop Makarios' elected Government in Cyprus, and later to annex Cyprus to Greece. It is the U.S. imperialists who instigated this coup, hoping that once the non-aligned Makarios Government is overthrown and Cyprus annexed to Greece, it could establish military bases there and strengthen its domination over West Asia. The Turkish Government which is also another NATO alliance partner intervened with its armed forces on a massive scale, as one of the guarantors of the 1960 Cyprus Independence Treaty in the name of protecting the Turkish minority. But the Turkish Government's aim is made clear by its Prime Minister that Cyprus must be partitioned, the Greek majority area going to Greece and the Turkish majority area to Turkey. This also means not only dismemberment of Cyprus but it being automatically converted into a NATO military base.

Though a cease fire is being enforced by the U.N. Security Council decision and tripartite negotiations have started in Geneva between Greece, Turkey and Britain as guarantors of the 1960 Treaty, democratic forces should not slacken their vigilance. Faced with the bitter war between two of its NATO allies in the south-eastern end of Europe and in the strategic area of West Asia, and fearing that it may develop into a major conflagration, the U.S. imperialists are trying

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to salvage as much as possible from this debacle. The military junta was replaced in Greece by a civilian Government and the coup leader in Cyprus was also replaced. The Greek civilian Government has declared that it recognises Makarios as the constitutionally elected President of Cyprus.

The democratic forces should continue to demand that the independence, territorial integrity and unity of Cyprus be preserved; all foreign forces be withdrawn and foreign military bases dismantled; the old elected Government be restored; the people of Cyprus, both Greek and Turkish speaking, be assured of equality and democracy and the status of Cyprus as a sovereign neutral State, be all guaranteed by the U.N.

## **Resolution on Bihar\***

**Adopted by the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) in its meeting held in Calcutta on July 20-25, 1974**

The Central Committee for the CPI(M) had condemned the Bihar Government for resorting to firing and killing over two hundred innocent persons, arresting several thousands and letting loose terror against people who are agitating against high prices, non-availability of food and other essential articles of life. The Central Committee extended its support to the Bihar people's movement for the dismissal of the Bihar Congress Ministry which, with its alliance with the landlords, speculators and hoarders, is reeking with corruption, and for the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly and for a new and fair election.

Instead of acceding to these just demands of the people, the Congress leadership and the Congress Government of India have intensified their repression and terror against the people. They have also intensified their slander campaign against Jaya Prakash Narayan, questioning his personal integrity. The Right Communists, true to their colour, have joined the chorus with the ruling Congress, denouncing the struggle as aiming at the destruction of democracy and for the establishment of fascism.

Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan has now called on the students to forego their studies for one year. He is calling on the people of Bihar to take to non-co-operation and to refuse to pay taxes to the Government and intensify the movement. The students in large numbers have started boycotting their

\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, August 4, 1974.



examinations and colleges, and the Government is trying to keep the educational institutions open with the CRP and already in some places, shootings and clashes have occurred. The Polit Bureau strongly condemns these actions of the police. It is evident that students will not be cowed to join the colleges which are guarded by the CRP and other armed minions of the Government.

But the Polit Bureau is of the firm opinion that mere boycotting of colleges and schools by students and on this basis trying to develop a movement to topple the present corrupt Government and to establish a popular democratic regime, will not in itself lead to success. It is only when the masses of workers and peasants and other toiling sections participate *en masse* and make these movements their own, the students would be able to contribute their due share for achieving the desired goal.

The Polit Bureau regrets that Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan has not heeded to our appeal that he should place before the people of Bihar an alternative programme, and rally all the Left and democratic parties, to mobilise and lead the masses into immediate action on concrete demands to get them enforced, with the immediate political objective of throwing out the corrupt Bihar Ministry and the dissolution of the discredited Assembly. Divorced from such immediate concrete economic and political demands of the masses, any struggle with the mere slogan for the dissolution of the Assembly and for the removal of the corrupt Bihar Ministry, will not enable the people to gain their objectives. Reactionary parties like the Jana Sangh, Anand Margis, etc. would penetrate and divert the mass discontent into wrong channels to serve their own selfish reactionary ends. The Polit Bureau has to warn the people that these reactionary forces are increasing their hold over the movement. The Polit Bureau regrets to note that Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan and the leadership of the S.P. and SSP are not realising the disastrous effect of their joining hands with the Jana Sangh and other reactionary forces.

It is the Right Communists who, by continuing their support to the corrupt Bihar Ministry and opposing the dissolution of the discredited Assembly, and who, by their slanderous attacks on Jaya Prakash Narayan have become the greatest obstruction to forging Left and democratic unity in action and give the Bihar movement a correct direction and leadership. The Polit Bureau appeals to the Right Communists to give up their support to the Congress Government and join hands with other Left and democratic parties and forces.

The Left and democratic parties have already placed before the people of India in April 1974, a charter of popular demands for countrywide protest action. Our Party appeals to all the Left and democratic parties in Bihar, and to Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan to concretise these demands for immediate implementation and action. Meanwhile, our Party will continue to develop independently the movement on these peoples' issues and strive to forge such a Left and democratic front.

## **CPI(M) M.P.s Boycotted Inauguration of President Pursuant to Resolution Adopted by the Polit Bureau\***

*The following is the text of the Polit Bureau resolution adopted on August 23, 1974, in New Delhi :*

The Government of India is continuing its war against the working class by continuing the victimisation of tens of thousands of railway workers. It has gone to the extent of refusing to heed the advice of President Giri. The two Ordinances which amount to a wage-freeze; its refusal to take any effective measures to control the price-rise; the two mini-budgets—General and Railways—which impose heavy burdens on the common people leading to further spiralling of prices, all these are part of the attack on the common people in the interests of the exploiters. The rising tide of popular protest against these policies is being sought to be suppressed by unprecedented repression, terror and goonda attacks, by detention without trial under the DIR and MISA.

In these conditions, the M.P.s belonging to the CPI(M) will not attend the inauguration of the new President on August 24, 1974, as a mark of protest against these anti-people policies of the Government.

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\*Report published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, September 1, 1974.

## **The P.M. and The Probe**

**Editorial of 'People's Democracy', September 8, 1974, on the "Pondicherry licence affair" of 1974**

The Prime Minister's opposition to the proposal for a parliamentary probe into what has come to be known as "the Pondicherry licence affair" can be explained on no other ground than that she wants to suppress facts concerning the scandalous state of affairs prevailing in the administration headed by her.

It is worth noting that MPs belonging to the Opposition as well as to the ruling party unanimously demanded such a probe. Congress MPs, in fact, had tabled a Motion in the Lok Sabha proposing the setting up of a Committee of Parliament. This was not pressed by them only because the Prime Minister insisted at a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party that it should be withdrawn.

Despite this formal withdrawal of the Motion, however, the fact remains that all sections of the House are unanimous in holding that nothing less than a full enquiry by a Committee of the House would bring out the facts concerning the scandalous affair. The very Congress MPs who have been named in the case did join the rest in making the demand.

Here is a case in which 21 members of Parliament are known to have submitted a Memorandum in favour of a few firms with which they should ordinarily have nothing to do. The firms are operating in the distant Southern State of Pondicherry, while the M.P. signatories are from the Northern States, particularly from Bihar from where the then Minister of Commerce, L. N. Mishra, hails.

Out of the 21 MPs, who are alleged to have signed the Memorandum, 19 have openly charged that their signatures have been forged by somebody. The MPs are, therefore, rightly concerned that the cloud of suspicion raised around them should be cleared. Hence their demand for an enquiry.

The 19 MPs who have charged that their signatures have been forged should not assume an air of injured innocence, if the people do not take their protestations at face value. After all, the fact of such a forgery has been known for several months. They have been interviewed by the CBI investigators. If they were as righteously indignant at the forgeries as they make themselves appear now, they would have demanded an enquiry much earlier. That they waited till the present Commerce Minister mentioned their names in an answer to interpellations in the House as having been signatories to the Memorandum for making the demand does not speak highly of their anxiety to bring those guilty of the alleged forgery to book now.

Added to this is the fact that the Congress party (to which all the signatories belong, whether their signatures have been forged, or is genuine as it has been admitted to be at least in one case) took a decision to ask its members to withdraw a Motion demanding a parliamentary enquiry. Impartial people cannot but draw the conclusion that the Congress party as well as its individual members want to suppress the truth regarding the scandalous affair.

That the CBI has started but not concluded an enquiry into the affair is no convincing argument against the proposed Parliamentary probe. After all, the CBI is a limb of the Government over which the Prime Minister presides. It cannot be expected to adopt a really impartial attitude in a case involving the conduct of the Prime Minister's parley.

People have seen how several other cases including the notorious Nagarwala case were dealt with by the administrative machinery and how they were effectively suppressed. People, therefore, cannot trust the CBI to conduct an impar-

tial enquiry into the case which involves the honour of no less than 21 Congress members of Parliament as well as the former and present Ministers of the Commerce Ministry—a case which gives room for doubt that some, if not all, of the 21 members have been parties in a conspiracy to commit several offences including forgery.

The Prime Minister and her party would lose heavily in prestige if any of the 21 MPs and any of the Ministers handling the particular Ministry were found on enquiry to be even remotely connected with the conspiracy. Hence their opposition to the probe.

A Committee of Parliament, it will be admitted, is the proper authority for conducting the enquiry not only because two dozen MPs including some Ministers are involved in the affair. Only a Committee of Parliament would be considered impartial by the public since it will have members from the Opposition as much as from the ruling party.

Parliament is also concerned with the case because it concerns the working of a particular Ministry over which Parliament is the watchdog. The question arises why, even if all signatories (except the one who has admitted his signature to be genuine) are forgeries, the interested person or persons resorted to the methods of forging signatures of MPs? Does it not give room for the inference that granting licences on the basis of MPs' recommendations belonging to the ruling party has become a normal practice in the Ministry? Why is it the Congress MPs (and they alone) from distant Bihar and U.P. should be considered the proper persons to 'recommend' that licences should be granted to firms in Pondicherry? The 'influence' and 'pressure' exercised by the ruling MPs in the granting of licences is undoubtedly a question with which Parliament is primarily concerned.

This, however, is precisely why the Prime Minister bars a Parliamentary probe, like the devil fears the holy water. She is afraid that all that she has suppressed for so long will be brought to light if the probe is entrusted to a Committee

which includes members from the Opposition. Particularly after the Watergate affair in the United States, India's Prime Minister is afraid of any parliamentary probe.

For the democratic movement in the country, however this is all the more reason that the demand for the Parliamentary probe should be pressed with greater vigour.

## **Joint Communique of the CPI(M) and SP\***

**Following Joint Meeting held in New Delhi on  
August 22-23, 1974**

*Following is the joint communique issued by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Socialist Party at the conclusion of their two-day bilateral discussions on August 22 and 23 in New Delhi :*

Representatives of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Socialist Party met in Delhi on August 22 and 23, 1974, and resumed their bilateral discussions on the current problems.

The Joint Communique issued after the discussions in September last year called upon the people to rally behind the demands and programmes outlined in the document adopted at that time. The Communique also appealed to all radical parties, mass organizations and individuals to join in the effort to give a radical alternative to the Congress which alone, the parties held, could lay the basis for the building up of a genuine Socialist society.

The meeting reviewed the progress made in the last 11 months in the implementation of this Communique and the co-operation achieved in developing the mass struggles of which the National Protest Day of May 3, the Railway Strike and the All-India General Strike of May 15 were outstanding examples.

With a view to strengthening this co-operation in mass action, the two parties exchanged views on the recent

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Refer Document under Item No. 27 of this Volume.



developments in Bihar and on the movement led by Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan. While the position of the two parties in respect of this movement is well known, this exchange in depth helped clarify many issues. It was decided that this discussion would be resumed at an appropriate time.

The meeting also discussed the growing economic crisis in the country. The meeting strongly condemned the wage-freeze ordinances promulgated by the Government on the eve of the monsoon session of Parliament as anti-democratic and anti-working class. The meeting rejected the Government's contention that these measures were aimed at curbing inflation. When the Government refused to unearth the huge amounts of black money and to take over the wholesale trade in foodgrains and organise equitable distribution of essential commodities, this claim is a hoax. The meeting also condemned the new budgetary imposts imposed by the Central and State Governments running into hundreds of crores of rupees. These budgetary imposts, the Ordinances and the continuous rise in prices are all calculated to bring about a drastic reduction in the already low standard of the living of the people. The effect of the Government policies is to encourage the monopolists, the big landholders, the hoarders, the profiteers and the smugglers. These Ordinances, the two parties felt, will only aggravate the economic crisis.

The two parties welcomed the initiative taken up by the central trade union organizations in organising a National Convention to formulate the perspective and programme of action of the working people, their trade unions and many other organizations.

The meeting regretted the negative attitude of the AITUC and the Right Communist Party towards the developing mass movements. It hoped that the CPI and the AITUC would break their alliance with the ruling party and co-operate in the formulation and implementation of the action programme.

The meeting also discussed the question of large-scale victimisation of the militant cadres on the railways. It was decided that the two parties would take steps to mobilise

support for railwaymen at the political level. They would also back all initiatives taken by the NCCRS and the central trade union organizations in this regard. It appealed to all other Left and democratic parties and organizations to support the cause of the railwaymen.

In these discussions, the CPI(M) was represented by Comrades P. Sundarayya, B.T. Ranadive, Promod Das Gupta, M. Basavapunniah, Harkisan Singh Surjeet and P. Ramamurti. The Socialist Party was represented by Comrades George Fernandes, Surendra Mohan, H. V. Kamath, N. G. Goray, Ramanand Tiwari, Samar Guha, Madhu Dandavate, Madhu Limaye and Brij Mohan Toofan.

## **Review of Present Situation in Gujarat\***

**Report on CPI(M)'s Gujarat State Committee meeting held on August 17-20, 1974**

The Gujarat State Committee of the CPI(M) met from August 17 to 20, 1974, to discuss the famine and scarcity conditions in the State and the political situation in Gujarat after the dissolution of the State Assembly.

### **Famine Conditions**

Drought has hit the State for the third successive year when the rural poor are at starvation's doorstep having already sold their meagre belongings including cattle. There is no employment although the acute misery demands at least widespread relief works. In fact, even where these are in existence, the workers do not get even three rupees, sometimes corrupt contractors and officials pocket the wages, this at a time when prices are skyrocketing and ration shops are empty. There are reports of the tribal people living on roots and leaves.

Other sections of the peasantry are hard-pressed and in many cases middle peasants also have been forced to sell their cattle. Many who have wells have been unable to pay electricity bills with the result that the power connection has been cut off and the wells lie idle. Corruption is rampant. Even for objective assessment of the crops, the revenue officers take bribes through so-called village leaders on behalf of the whole village.

**Famine conditions exist in eight districts from Ahmedabad**

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to Kutch, but the Government refuses to accept this reality and take the necessary measures.

In fact, the administration under President's rule is no better than the corrupt Ministry which was forced to quit. The statement made by the Minister of State for Agriculture that the Centre will not help Gujarat has made people more indignant against the Centre.

The Gujarat State Committee has demanded immediate relief to the rural poor through opening of relief works on a large-scale and guaranteed supply of foodgrains, moratorium on instalments of the credit societies etc., and has called upon the Party units to throw themselves into the agitation in defence of the rural poor.

### **Political Situation**

Reviewing the present political situation in the State, in the wake of the popular agitation which succeeded in throwing out the Government and getting the Assembly dissolved, the State Committee felt that it was a reflection of the growing discontent of the people which had manifested itself in various agitations within two months of the formation of the Congress Ministry in 1972.

Our Party was the first to demand the dissolution of the Assembly and our Party had played an important role in co-ordinating the agitation of the students and of the 14 August Action Committee representing wide sections of the working people. Our Party units as also the mass organisations like CITU, SFI were active throughout the agitation. Eight of our comrades had been detained under MISA.

However, although the agitation was unprecedented, it was mainly confined to the middle classes in the urban areas and the taluk towns. The working class in the cities and the people in the villages have sympathy for the struggle but had not participated in an organized class manner. The Leftist forces in general and our Party in particular are weak and were unable to bring the masses into action in an organised class manner.

The ruling Congress is completely shaken. While the agonies of the people grow, the party is only concerned about factional squabbles and rivalries, but although its image has been shattered in the cities, in the rural areas, especially in the tribal belt, it still has some hold.

The Jana Sangh is particularly vocal after the agitation but its influence is limited.

As far as the Congress(O) is concerned, it still has a base and an organisational apparatus with some leaders of long standing. Although it has retained its control on co-operatives and panchayat samitis, its hopes to emerge as the alternative to the Congress have been dealt a severe blow with the formation of the Kisan Majdoor Lok Party (KMLP) by the former Chief Minister Chimanbhai Patel. This new party has been able to rally behind it substantial section of the ruling Congress. The Congress(O) following among the rural rich are also likely to join this party. It is a party mainly of the big landlords as well as a section of the industrialists.

Both the Congresses are afraid of the potential challenge of the KMLP. The Congress High Command is worried that it has no leader of any status in Gujarat. Under the circumstances, the Congress High Command as well as a section of the Congress(O) leadership like Hitendra Desai, Babubhai Patel, etc., desire a merger of the two Congresses.

### **Of the Same Feathers**

Each of these parties representing essentially the same class interests are vying with each other and making political calculations with an eye on the coming elections. Although as far as election prospects go, the Left parties are, by and large, an insignificant factor, there are tremendous possibilities to take the consciousness of the people forward through popular agitations on the most burning issues. The objectives of the agitation known as the Nav Nirman agitation remain unfulfilled. Prices are rising and corruption is rampant. All sections of the people are badly affected and the

people are angry. The situation in the State is such that a popular struggle may burst out at any moment.

Taking note of the situation, the Gujarat State Committee of the CPI(M) has decided to make a concerted move for forging unity of all the Left and democratic forces, political parties, mass organisations to chalk out a concrete programme for future struggles against the bankrupt pro-landlord, pro-monopolist policies of the Central Government and the Congress party.

The State Committee discussed the political character of the Nav Nirman agitation.

The State Committee paid revolutionary tributes to the late beloved Comrade Harekrishna Konar.

## **CPI(M)'s Call for Struggle for Food, Against High Prices and New Burdens\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its session held in New Delhi on September 3-9, 1974**

*The following is the text of the resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) at its meeting in New Delhi from September 3 to 9, 1974:*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its deep concern over the menacing food situation which has already placed vast masses of the people in large parts of the country on the verge of starvation. The rationing system, where it exists, is on the verge of collapse. The ration quantum has already been cut to starvation levels. In the major part of the country no public distribution system exists.

### **New Burdens**

The Central Committee further condemns the Wage-Freeze Act passed by Parliament and the recent taxation measures of the Supplementary Budget involving more than Rs. 230 crores. The Central Committee also condemns the proposal of steep increase in the railway fares and freights which is another burden on the common man. The Central Government has given directives to the State Government to raise resources by new taxation on the common people. The Central Committee rejects the plea of the Government that these are anti-inflationary measures and emphatically declares that they constitute an integral part of the attempt of the Government to transfer the burdens of the crisis on to the

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common people. They bespeak of the depths of the economic crisis which has engulfed the economy under the policies pursued by the Government.

The Government attacks the incomes of the lower sections but promises no respite in price-rise. On the other hand, prices are allowed to continue to rise abnormally. These official policies presume that the process will continue to rise and in reality they are deliberately designed to reduce the consumption of the starving millions.

The Central Committee welcomes the unanimous protest launched by the trade union organizations and their solidarity exhibited in the recent Convention of Working People against Wage-Freeze on August, 28, 1974, where workers and employees representing large number of organizations rallied in a massive demonstration of their unity and determination to resist and demand the withdrawal of the Act. The Central Committee greets the workers in many factories and establishments who have started the resistance.

### **Robbery**

The Central Committee warns that the issues extend far beyond the Act and are directly linked with the anti-people and pro-monopolist and pro-landlord policies of the Government and its effort to make the people the scapegoat of the crisis which is of its own making. While large sections of the people over the entire country are affected by floods and drought and the Government denies them relief, there hangs the shadow of outright starvation even after a day's hard labour. The skyrocketing prices of all necessities of life have made a farce of all existing wages, salaries, dearness allowances, all price-schedule and price-control. Edible oils are selling at more than Rs. ten per kilogram; cloth prices have increased by 60 per cent, sugar prices have shot up to more than Rs. six per kg and cereals to Rs. three to six per kg whenever available; coal prices have shot up to Rs. 25 per quintal; medicines for the common people are simply not available. The process of erosion and robbery is now visible to the naked eye.



High prices, shortages of all necessities of life and famine conditions, speculation and blackmarketing do not end the tale of the woes of the people. Breakdown of production bringing industries to a halt due to shortages and mismanagement, shortage of power, etc., leading to lay-off of lakhs of workers and widespread unemployment in cities and villages alike show that the economy is being shaken to its foundations.

The State Governments are declaring their bankruptcy and incapacity to meet any problem. Teachers' wages are not paid in some States; Corporation workers of Calcutta do not get their monthly salaries; cheques of several States are dishonoured by the Reserve Bank and are bounced. They all look to the Central Government's deficit financing to bale them out.

### **All-Embracing**

Never since Independence was the crisis so all-embracing, affecting every sector of the economy. Corruption at all levels has now become an integral part of the economy like the parallel blackmarket.

A callous Government is denying starvation deaths which are taking place in several States— Assam, West Bengal, U.P., Kerala, Bihar, Tripura, etc. The fact is that the breakdown of the system of public distribution, the refusal of the Government to move against the landlords and big traders has thrown the people at the mercy of those sharks. The police are secretly instructed to see that these robbers are not disturbed since the Government relies on them for purpose of distribution.

The Central Committee condemns the Government for succumbing to the landlords and imposing famine conditions on the people. The landlord lobby so powerful in the Congress, the landlords as partners in the State, have seen to it that no measures of taxation or control affect them and have secured freedom to loot the people in collaboration with the blackmarketeers.

The Central Committee rejects the plea that the present high prices and shortages are due to the fall in food productions. The marginal shortage has been turned into famine by the speculators and landlords with the connivance of the Government. There are enough stocks in the country to go round with procurement of all stocks of landlords and strict rationing at reasonable prices.

Instead of doing this, the Central Government gives free rein to the looting by the landlords and at the same time, proposes to import huge quantities from abroad which will increase the country's dependence.

### **Immediate Question**

The immediate dominating question for all sections, urban and rural masses alike, is food and necessities of life. It is also clear that the Government will not move against the landlords, speculators, hoarders and monopolists. The organised strength of the working class, employees, agricultural labourers and kisans must unite against these robbers of people's food and necessities, force them to sell foodgrains and other necessities at cheaper prices, and force the Government to reverse its policies.

The working class occupies a key position in the economic life of the country. Workers in vital industries producing necessities of life like cotton textiles, sugar, vanaspati, edible oils, etc., and the transport workers, if their consciousness is heightened, can exercise vigilance and prevent the diversion of foodgrains and necessities of life to the blackmarket and ensure that they are moved only for the purpose of fair distribution —under the control of People's Committees.

The Central Committee greets the actions of the people in some localities in dehoarding stocks of blackmarketees and forcing their distribution to the people at reduced rates.

The Central Committee condemns the arrests of hundreds of people who have discharged their duty to the people by such dehoarding operations and launching of cases against them on charges of dacoity, etc. It is noteworthy that the

Government, despite the enormous powers it has armed itself with under the DIR, MISA, etc., has not touched the real dacoits and looters of the people's food.

The Central Committee calls upon the working class in general and the organised trade union movement in particular, to intensify these movements, rally the entire people and lead the fight for People's Food, undaunted by the repressive measures of the Government.

It calls upon them to undertake all forms of struggle to force the Government to supply foodgrains and other necessities of life at reduced prices for the people. It can also enter into struggles to compel the managements to supply foodgrains and other essentials wherever necessary.

### **In Rural Areas**

It calls upon all Party members in the rural areas, and Kisan Sabha workers to unite with all democratic elements and mobilise the agricultural labourers and poor peasants to force the landlords to sell their surplus grains to the local people at reduced prices and to keep sufficient stocks to meet the needs of the local people.

There is no other way to save the people unless the people move themselves. The callous Central and State Governments will not move an inch to attack the landlords. On the contrary, when the people move, they will use all their powers and force in the name of law and order.

The working class and its organised trade unions while demanding the withdrawal of the Wage-Freeze Act should warn the Government that it is no longer possible for them to give the usual norms of production on a starvation ration.

The Government, however, is determined to proceed in an opposite direction and suppress the people. A new wage policy to reduce the wages is being prepared. Several State Governments and the Central Government have banned strikes in several trades and industries.

The use of DIR, detention without trial under the MISA, criminal prosecutions, arrests of the leading elements,

complete scuttling of the fundamental rights of freedom of association and speech are accompanied by a virtual reign of terror against the mass of the people, a terror for which the military and para-military forces lent by the Central Government are used in every State. Beating of workers in police lock-ups during strikes, the rapes, the looting of the houses of striking workers— these weapons which were in use in West Bengal alone have now come to be increasingly used in all States against the democratic movements. They bare before the people the monstrous face of the authoritarian police State which recognises no right of the common man and which depends only on its own armed strength to establish its supremacy over the people. Time and again, our Party has called attention of all democratic and political parties to this growing phenomenon and now during the last few months it has appeared in a blatant form. However, it appears that the official terror is not enough to cow down the people. Therefore, it is supplemented by the organisation of anti-social elements into Congress squads or youth battalions or resistance groups who are given the licence to physically attack the people and torture them.

In the rural areas, the repression takes the hope of mass hunt of untouchables who dare defy the landlords, and agricultural labourers and other rural poor who stand up for their rights. But there is no doubt that the people will succeed if they unite and fight together.

### **Fight against Crisis**

The Central Committee once again emphasises that the fight for people's food is an integral part of people's fight against inflation and the economic crisis. The Government's way is to make the people pay for the crisis and save the big capitalist and landlord classes. The Central Committee suggests a way which will throw the burdens on the foreign monopolists and big capitalists and landlords of India while giving relief to the common man.

The people want to fight inflation. The working class and

the employees, the poor peasant and the agricultural worker, all demand an end to rising prices by placing the burden on those who have been profiting from this inflationary spiral. The mass of people require immediate relief through control and scaling down of prices of the necessities of life and bringing down the general price level. This can be achieved only if the Government is compelled to make a determined attack against the black-money economy and destroy its capacity to play havoc with prices. It is futile to talk of holding the price-line unless deficit financing is done away with and the Government's heavy indirect taxation which forms a substantial part of the prices of some necessities and articles of common consumption is drastically reduced; unless the Government takes to compulsory procurement of stocks of foodgrains from the landlords and traders at reduced prices, and purchases the produce of the mass of peasants by offering attractive bonus rates; unless the control of speculators, monopolists and landlords over raw materials, etc., is smashed, and the inordinate profits of the monopolists are drastically reduced.

Further, firm measures for arresting credit to the monopolists, landlords and speculators must be taken. Only in the context of such steps, measures like demonetization of notes of larger denomination and freezing the deposits of the elements to be curbed can be successful.

The fight against inflation, however, cannot be won without decisively attacking the positions of the monopolists, landlords, speculators and foreign monopolists. To be able to achieve it, the working class and the people must demand the smashing of the land monopoly of the landlords by taking over all their land and distributing it to the agricultural workers and landless peasants, nationalisation of monopoly concerns, moratorium on all foreign payments till the crisis is got rid of and higher and decent wages for all urban and rural workers. The fight for these demands will enable the working class to concentrate all popular forces against the oppressing classes and Government which supports them.

## **Grave Dangers**

The situation is fraught with grave dangers for the country. The reactionary parties whose policies in no way attack these vested interests, the real culprits, are seeking to take advantage of the mounting discontent of the people. In the absence of a massive movement of the people with the direction indicated above, people are likely to be misled into the clutches of these reactionary parties.

The Central Committee appeals to the Right Communist Party to realise that their policy of verbally assailing these anti-people policies of the Government but in actual practice allying itself with the Congress party and supporting the Government whose policies are heaping indescribable miseries on the people will actually strengthen the reactionary parties whom they profess to fight. The support to the railway strike by the Right Communist Party and its condemnation of the Wage-Freeze Act are accompanied by repression on the railway workers and those who fight against the wage-freeze by the Achutha Menon Ministry. Its food policy has been no different from that of the Congress Governments. All these create resentment among the people and disrupt the unity of the fighting people when unity of all Left and democratic forces is the most urgent need. The Central Committee, therefore, calls upon the leaders of the Right Communist Party to remove this dichotomy between their profession and practice, and take their place in unison with the fighting people.

The Central Committee appeals to all Left and democratic parties and mass organizations to join in a common fight to defeat the attack on the wages and salaries and the living conditions of the common people, above all, on their food, and compel the Government to accept the above-stated policies of combating inflation and to save the country from ruination.

## **Homage to Comrade Harekrishna Konar\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of  
the CPI(M) in its session held in New Delhi on  
September 3-9, 1974**

Our beloved Comrade Harekrishna Konar is no more with us. Born on August 5, 1915, he passed away on July 23, 1974, of cancer, at the early age of 59. This revolutionary fighter for freedom, who became convinced that individual terrorism was futile, and Marxism-Leninism alone is the beacon lighting the path of emancipation of the downtrodden throughout the world, has left us.

His was a life of total dedication—dedication to the cause of freedom, democracy and Socialism.

At a very young age, in 1930, he was convicted for participation in the civil disobedience movement and later in 1932, convicted for revolutionary activities to overthrow the British Government and sent to the Cellular Jail in the Andamans.

It was during those days in the Andamans Jail that Comrade Harekrishna Konar came to accept Communism and became a member of the Communist Consolidation in the jail.

Released in 1938, when a mighty countrywide agitation forced the Government to release all those imprisoned in the Andamans, Comrade Harekrishna Konar plunged into the building of the revolutionary movement, the Communist Party and Kisan Sabha.

For years, he has been the General Secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha. His strident voice upholding the cause of

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the peasants and agricultural labourers and powerfully exposing the venomous character of the exploitation of the landlords had been heard within the portals of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly and throughout the country.

During the short span of a few months when he was the Land and Land Revenue Minister in the United Front Government in 1967 and again in 1969, he showed the only way by which even limited land reforms could be implemented, —namely, by the peasants and agricultural labourers organising themselves and implementing the reforms and not by depending on the bureaucracy.

As a member of the Central Executive Committee of the united Communist Party, he was among those who fought to the bitter end the revisionist leadership. In the years 1959-62, he was among the foremost who fought the crassest chauvinism of the dominant leadership on the Sino-Indian dispute. When events made it impossible to continue in that party, he had no hesitation in leaving that party and was one of the founders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). He had continued to be a member of the Central Committee. He fought the Left-sectarian trend in the Party when it raised the banner of revolt, defended the Marxist-Leninist line of the Party, and preserved the unity and strength of the Party.

Everyone who came in contact with him would be struck by his remarkable versatility. He was an able speaker, keeping his audience spellbound, writer, Party organiser and leader of the masses. In 1948, when the Party was declared illegal, he evaded arrest and till 1952 organised the Party and mass activities from the underground. His contribution in the Central Committee meetings was great.

During his whole life, he passionately worked for developing the agrarian revolutionary movement. It is to this task our Party has to especially devote its energies during the present state of the revolution.

He had been incarcerated in jail for long years, both by the British and by the Congress Governments. Long years of jail and underground life had undermined his health. And



yet he carried on normal Party activities with a zeal which younger men might envy.

The Central Committee dips the Red Banner of the Party in honour of this great revolutionary. The Central Committee conveys its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

## **CPI(M) Central Committee on Sikkim\***

**Statement issued in New Delhi on September 4, 1974 during the session of the Central Committee on September 3-9, 1974**

*The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), meeting in New Delhi from September 3 to 9, 1974, has issued the following statement to the Press on September 4, 1974 :*

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) opposes the present move of the Government of India and its Constitution Amendment Bill which it has introduced in Parliament. The Government justifies this Constitution Amendment Bill as nothing but giving effect to the wishes of the people of Sikkim for strengthening Indo-Sikkim co-operation and inter-relationship. It pleads that this Constitution Amendment Bill is intended to carry out the wishes expressed unanimously by the resolution of the Sikkim Assembly of 32 elected members voting for it, particularly for providing for representation for the people of Sikkim in the Indian Parliament.

Our Party is opposed to this Constitution Amendment Bill as it will only lead to bitterness among the people of Sikkim and would harm the interests of people of both Sikkim and India. This move will be taken by the whole world as nothing but that the Government of India is absorbing Sikkim as a part of India. It would not only lead to the lowering of India's international prestige and status but would lead to worsening of its relations with other countries, especially our neighbours. The plea that India is acceding only to the

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unanimous verdict of the elected representatives of the Sikkim people will not deceive anybody.

As our Party has earlier stated, the Chogyal, encouraged by American support, sought to stem the tide of democratic movement and continue his autocratic rule. If the Government of India had taken a firm stand, this nest of autocracy could have been liquidated long ago, but despite several upheavals, the Chogyal was allowed to continue to the detriment of the interests of the people of Sikkim and India. Even in the last conflict in 1973, he could have been completely vanquished but though his powers have been curbed, he is allowed to continue as the head of the State and allowed to continue his mischief. But even this extent of curbing of the power of the princely autocrat has not meant corresponding increase in the power of the Sikkim people.

By the 1950 Treaty, the Government of India, apart from taking over defence and external affairs, deprived the Sikkim people of every democratic right to manage their internal affairs. When the popular discontent burst out into an upsurge against the Chogyal, instead of revising this unequal treaty in favour of the Sikkim people, the Government of India imposed a dictatorial anti-democratic Constitution, by the Sikkim Government Act of 1974.

Under this Act, the Chief Executive Officer nominated by the Government of India presides over the elected Assembly and has powers to veto legislation covering finance, home, minorities and relations between the Chogyal and the Sikkim Government. It is also laid down that when there is a conflict between Chogyal and the nominated Indian Chief Executive Officer, then the Government of India's decision is final.

Apart from this, there is a provision that the Sikkim Assembly and Government can seek representation in political institutions in India and its planning to be undertaken as part of the planning process in India.

The Sikkim Congress has already passed a resolution

demanding the abolition of these powers of the Executive Officer and allowing the elected Sikkim Assembly and Cabinet to function untrammelled without the Government of India's officer's veto. There is a provision in the Sikkim Act of 1974 that this Constitution in connection with these powers of the Executive Officer and the right of the Government of India as the protector of the rights of the Chogyal cannot be changed without the consent of the Government of India itself. Thus the Constitution which has been framed under the Government of India's pressure cannot be changed without its consent even later.

Now the Government of India, instead of doing away with these reactionary provisions, wants to perpetuate it by its new Constitution Amendment Bill. The Government of India is not satisfied with the facilities given to it for defence and external affairs of Sikkim which was conceded to it in the 1950 Treaty. Now it wants to perpetuate this anti-democratic Sikkim Act, 1974.

Our Party warns that this is nothing but total denial of democracy and the right of the Sikkim people to manage their own affairs. It demands the abolition of the Chogyal. It demands the immediate abolition of the post of the Indian Chief Executive Officer, with its powers of veto over the elected Assembly and Ministry. Our Party demands that no effort should be made even to restrict the right of the Sikkim people to frame their own political and economic institutions to manage their own internal affairs.

This is the best and the only way to foster democracy and welfare of the Sikkim people. It is the only basis that would strengthen the friendly relations between the people of Sikkim and India. The Government of India should render all assistance necessary to overcome Sikkim's economic backwardness. This would help to further strengthen mutual friendly relations. But the present move of the Government of India to absorb Sikkim as part of India in the name of giving representation in Parliament and exercising the powers vested or sought to be vested in the Government of India would

lead to serious complications and would be harmful to the people of Sikkim as well as of India.

Our Party calls upon the Government of India to desist from its effort and withdraw the Constitution Amendment Bill. It appeals to all democratic parties to defeat this move of the Government of India.

## **Solidarity with Chile\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its session held in New Delhi on September 3-9, 1974**

On September 11, 1973, the fascist military junta assassinated Allende, the popular President of Chile and seized power. Since that day it has killed thousands of workers, peasants and intellectuals, put still more thousands of fighting people of Chile in concentration camps, and has been inflicting torture reminiscent of Hitler's camps in the occupied countries.

In response to the call of Chilean trade unions, many trade union centres of India have given a call to the working class of India to cease work at 11 a.m. for 10 to 30 minutes on September 11, 1974.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) calls upon all the workers to cease work at 11 a. m. for 10 to 30 minutes in memory of the martyrs who had laid down their lives in the struggle against fascism and in solidarity with the fighting people of Chile.

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## **On Repression in Nagaland and Mizoram\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M)**

*Text of the resolution on repression in Nagaland and Mizoram adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) at its meeting in New Delhi on September 3-9, 1974 :*

The Central Committee notes with great concern that the Government of India is using the Army against the underground Nagas and Mizos and the 'Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act' has again been extended in Nagaland for another two years.

After the recent elections, a Government of the UDF has come into existence in Nagaland. This Government headed by Vizol, has repeatedly stated that they are in favour of starting a dialogue with the underground Nagas in order to come to a political settlement. The Chief Minister of Nagaland further stated that the repressive policy of the Government of India was largely responsible for the sporadic terroristic outbursts of rebel activities in that region.

Similarly, the Government of Mizoram, it has been reported, has also asked the Government of India to start negotiations with the 'rebel' Mizos so that peace may be restored in that eastern territory. Reports of unprecedented repression are pouring in everyday from Mizoram, and the whole territory has been declared a 'disturbed area'.

The Central Committee, while condemning this long-drawn and brutal repressive policy of the Central Government,

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**demands that the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act be withdrawn immediately, repression be stopped and a climate for opening a dialogue with the so-called 'rebels' may be created and, through such dialogue, a political settlement be arrived at for restoration of peace in the eastern border area of the country.**



## **Resolution on Repression\***

**Adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its session held in New Delhi on September 3-9, 1974**

Lathis and bullets have become the order of the day with the Governments at the Centre and in the States leaning more and more heavily on police repression to suppress the working people who are moving into struggle everywhere to defend their living from the ferocious daily onslaughts being made on it by the Congress rulers. The police, the CRP, BSF and even the Army are being used as never before to beat down the people. There is not a single day when the Press does not report one or another atrocity by the police in one part or another of the country.

In West Bengal, in the last week of August, the CRP opened fire on students and teachers protesting against their high-handedness and killed a teacher. While protesting against this CRP atrocity, Comrade Rebatiraman Bhattacharjee was hacked to death and Comrade Dinesh Dakua injured by Congress goondas in Mathabhanga. Arrests under the MISA of cadres and activists of the Left and democratic movement are taking place everyday.

In Bihar, repression has been going on unabated on the people's movement for the last six months. Over 200 persons have been killed, hundreds of others injured and over 10,000 arrested. The CRP and Bihar Special Police have resorted to lathi-charges at several places injuring a large number of students and youth. On September 5 last, the CRP opened fire on a demonstration demanding food at Kurtha

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in Gaya district and killed Sri Jagdeo Prasad, founder-leader of the Soshit Dal and a former Minister of Bihar. Colleges and other educational institutions have been converted into police barracks. In fact, almost the entire State has been turned into a police camp with the deployment of 50,000 CRP and BSP men.

Almost the whole of Uttar Pradesh is under Section 144.

In Rajasthan, the workers of the Birla-owned CIMCO factory in Bharatpur were fired on by the police and officers of the company on August 11, 1974, in which three workers belonging to the CITU union—Ganpat Singh, Vijaya Singh and Kishanlal Verma—were killed and 12 others injured.

In Kerala, during the march to FCI godowns on July 10, the police made a brutal lathi-charge in Palghat and injured a number of people among whom were CPI(M) and Socialist Party MLAs.

In Niruvambram in Cannanore district, the offices of the CPI(M) and SP were attacked by Congress goondas with the connivance of the police who later arrested CPI(M) workers and beat them while in custody.

During the recent struggle of agricultural workers for surplus land, 25,000 of the one lakh volunteers who participated were arrested and remanded to custody or sentenced to imprisonment, and during the struggle of the peasantry, 2000 of the 30,000 who participated were arrested and remanded to custody or convicted. Every student agitation in the State has been met with lathi-charges and arrests. And this police repression reached its climax during the agitation organized by the Kerala Socialist Youth Federation against the rise in bus fares. There were lathi-charges in a number of places and firing in Cannanore. In Cannanore, the police dragged and beat acknowledged leaders of the people including the State President of the CITU, Comrade C. Kannan, and Cannanore District Secretary of the CPI(M) Comrade M. V. Raghavan. Over 300 had to be hospitalized after the lathi-charge. The CRP entered the CITU office and beat up the comrades there and then extended their rampage by entering

houses and beating up people. In the Wynad area, 64 huts of Adivasis were burnt down by forest officers with the help of the Youth Congress. Big struggles are taking place in the State and the Coalition Government to meet this rising tide has converted Kerala into a virtual police State.

In Andhra Pradesh, 60 comrades in Khammam district were arrested on August 10, and 13 of them including the State Communist leaders Comrade Ch. Lakshmi Narasayya, Chairman of Khammam Municipality for over a decade and a half, and M. Ramakrishna Rao with nearly four decades of political and public activities were kept in wrongful confinement for about 11 days. They were handcuffed and made to walk to the court from the lock-up. All this was done even before the District Committee of the Party had chalked out a concrete programme for the agitation against scarcities and price-rises portending what is to come when the actual agitation starts.

In Vijayawada, the police made a brutal lathi-charge on men and women demonstrating for food and other essentials at cheaper prices and against the wage-freeze Ordinance. Women were manhandled and their sarees were torn. Three hundred of the demonstrators were arrested and remanded to custody.

The police opened fire on the workers of the Nellimarla Jute Mills in Visakhapatnam district on July 11, while they were agitating for payment of their wages, killing four workers on the spot.

In Maharashtra, since June-July, 1974, the Government has launched intense repression against the Adivasis of Sakri, Navapur, Shahade and Nandurbar talukas of Dhulia district. These landless Adivasis, without any other means of livelihood, had brought under cultivation forest lands and had been in possession of these lands from five to 15 years and they had been paying nominal fines for "encroachment on forest lands." This year, the Government began forcible eviction of the Adivasis using the Special Reserve Police. The special police units destroyed the seedlings and arrested and beat up hundreds of Adivasis including women and children.

There have also been cases of Adivasi women being raped. The terror that has been unleashed has forced hundreds of Adivasis to flee the area and their hutments have been destroyed by the police.

The Left and democratic parties in Maharashtra have protested against this brutal repression and demanded the withdrawal of the SRP from these areas as also allotment of the lands to the Adivasis who have brought them under cultivation.

In village Sutrakar, district Thana, 200 Adivasis marched to the land which had been forcibly taken away from them by a local landlord. The landlord's agent who was driving a tractor to destroy the seedlings planted by the Adivasis, got frightened and asked the police posted there to help the landlord to open fire. In the firing Rishya Shanwat, a member of the CPI(M), was killed and Bhadya Patkats was seriously injured.

In Tamil Nadu workers, students and women who surrounded big hoarders and forced them to sell foodgrains at cheap prices have been arrested in large numbers and are being prosecuted on the charge of looting.

In Tripura, the police and CRP have attacked activists of the SFI and DYF at Pecharthal and Bilthai in Dharmanagar sub-division, at Kanchanbari in Kailasahar sub-division, in Hrisyamukh in Belonia subdivision. Arrests of SFI and DYF activists along with CPI(M) leaders have taken place in Manickbhandar, Kamalpur and in Sonamura sub-division. Students and youth activists in Agartala were arrested for organizing a successful bandh in support of transport workers while three of the arrested transport workers are being detained under the MISA.

In Anandnagar in Sadar sub-division, the ruling Congress hired armed goondas to attack peasants because they had fought the corrupt dealer of a ration shop. In the whole of the State, every corrupt ration dealer keeps a private goonda gang to beat up democratic youth. Such attacks have been made in many places in Sadar sub-division.

The State Government engaged the CRP and declared as Protected Area under the West Bengal Security Act in force in Tripura the whole of the Hydel Project Area of Raima Sarma in Amarapur sub-division to forcibly evict 5000 tribal families from there.

The CRP and BSF who are manning the entire Tripura-Bangladesh and Tripura-Mizoram borders, are terrorising the people, arresting them as and when they like on the plea of prevention of Mizo raids, etc.

In Assam, the police entered the hostel in the Gauhati University campus and inhumanly beat up students inside their rooms and outside on June 29, 1974.

Ten days earlier, the police had killed two teen-aged school students in Nowgong district and broke the heads and limbs of dozens of others in order to suppress the student movement for cheap food and inexpensive education. The Government of Assam is holding in detention a wholtimer of the CPI(M), along with an RCPI leader, under the MISA on the ground of their alleged connection with some case of 1969.

The police opened fire in Banihal, Jammu and Kashmir, when hungry people stopped trucks carrying foodgrains; on striking workers of a spinning mill in Ludhiana on July 12, and on people protesting against police atrocities in Barnala, Haryana, on July 10.

Apart from these attacks on the working people, there have been many instances recently showing that the Congress rulers are out to suppress all criticism. *The Times of India* correspondent in Banda was arrested and framed in a case, the editor of a fortnightly was hounded out of the same Banda, two papers in Jullundur were deprived of electricity, a Patna daily was not only denied advertisements but refused payment for those published in the past, a dramatic performance in Calcutta was attacked and stopped by Congress goondas—all because in each case the victims had criticised some aspect or other of Congress policies. The strong-arm methods of Chief Minister Bansilal who uses the police to settle even his personal scores, have become notorious.

This constant resort to the police to suppress the people and fascistic police methods to suppress all criticism portend the greatest danger to democracy, already eroded to a very great extent by the policies of the Congress rulers.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) calls on all Left and democratic parties, organizations and individuals to resist with all their strength the imposition by the Congress rulers of an authoritarian police State.

## **Resolution on Martyrs\***

**Adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its session held in New Delhi on September 3-9, 1974**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) pays its homage to the martyrs who have made the supreme sacrifice in the cause of the working people in the period since its last meeting.

Comrade Hrishikesh Chakravarty, Party activist of Haltu, West Bengal, kidnapped on June 11 and killed by Congress goondas.

Comrade Rebatiraman Bhattacharya, member of the Cooch Behar District Committee of the CPI(M), murdered by Congress goondas at a public meeting in Mathabhanga on August 27, held to protest against CRP atrocities.

Comrade Thaukachan Thodupuzha, Kerala, killed by "Unity Centre" goondas on August 28, for resigning from their union and joining CITU. Comrade Ayyappan Kunhu, 20-year-old agricultural worker and organizer, Kumbalanga, Ernakulam district, killed on August 31, 1974, by Youth Congress goondas.

Ganpat Singh, Vijay Singh and Kishanlal Verma killed in the firing on CIMCO workers in Bharatpur, Rajasthan.

Rishya Shanwat, Adivasi leader of Thana district, Maharashtra, killed in police firing at landlords' behest.

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## **Our Talks with Jaya Prakash Narayan\***

**P. Sundarayya**

The Joint Statement signed by the representatives of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Socialist Party and Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan is being published in this issue. The Congress (O), Jana Sangh and BLD leaders are perturbed over the Joint Statement especially where it states, "We are convinced that if the peaceful movement in Bihar is to take deeper roots and achieve its objective, vital socio-economic problems of workers, peasants and weaker sections must find adequate reflection in the movement" and "to radicalise and intensify it". The objective is, of course, the immediate "dissolution of the unrepresentative Bihar Assembly and Ministry and emergence of a truly democratic alternative on the basis of free and fair elections".

When the Central Committee of the Party deputed us to meet Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan along with the leaders of the Socialist Party, it was based on the following understanding:

"Our Party strongly denounces the slanderous campaign let loose by the ruling Congress leaders and their Right Communist friends that the popular movement in Bihar is anti-democratic; that it aims at destruction of democracy and the establishment of fascism in our country, that it is inspired and guided by anti-national and foreign forces, and that Sri Jaya Prakash is the mouthpiece of such inimical forces, etc.

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“The CPI(M), despite its numerous differences with Sri J.P. Narayan regarding the conduct of the present struggle in Bihar, stands four-square in demanding the resignation of the Bihar Congress Ministry, the dissolution of the present Legislative Assembly, the ending of high prices for food and other essential commodities, the elimination of corruption in public life, the holding of free and fair elections, etc.

“It does so mainly in the interests of developing a powerful democratic and revolutionary movement, embracing the workers, peasants, and other progressive sections of the people—a movement that can throw up a radical and viable alternative to the Congress.

“The CPI(M) is of the view that without developing such a powerful mass revolutionary movement, around a radical democratic programme, on an all-India scale as well as in different States, no useful and lasting results would accrue to any popular struggles.”

Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan himself declared as early as in the first week of April 1974 that he was not interested merely in this or that Ministry being replaced or the Assembly being dissolved. “It will be like replacing Tweedledum with Tweedledee. I have decided to fight corruption and misgovernment and blackmarketing, profiteering and hoarding to fight for the overhaul of the educational system and for a real people’s democracy.”

But to carry on this movement, the Jana Sangharsh Samities and Chhatra Sangharsh Samities were formed. Advisory bodies of four political parties, the Jana Sangh, Congress(O), Socialist Party and SSP have been constituted.

“Our Party is opposed to have any united front with parties like the Jana Sangh, Congress (O) and Swatantra, either directly or indirectly. These parties through their programmes, activities and class affinities, over years, have come to be looked upon by the politically awakened public as parties of extreme Right reaction; the Jana Sangh with its RSS wing is avowedly communal, and it represents the majority communalism against the Muslim minority.”

So, faced with such a situation our Central Committee felt that we could not join the four-party consultative committees. We have to find out how to mobilise the people independently on a programme of mass demands and slogans of action in co-operation with Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan and the Socialist Party and other Left and democratic forces, and to synchronise it with the present Bihar people's movement to achieve its objective.

### **Our Talks with Jaya Prakash**

In the course of our talks, we explained our point of view as outlined above. We also explained, how even peaceful campaigns on any elementary demands by our Party, in regard to any issue—food, prices, taxes, against wage-freeze and for fair wages—are being brutally and cruelly suppressed, unspeakable atrocities being committed not only in Bengal and Kerala, where our Party is a major force, but in every area and State. The struggle would be a prolonged and bitter one and we want the working class and agricultural labourers and the toiling peasants and urban middle classes, to join in this struggle in their millions. We want the co-operation and united action of all democratic parties and forces to develop such a movement, on the basis of the urgent economic and political demands of the people.

Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan explained to us the present situation in Bihar and how he hoped to develop the Bihar movement even after achieving the immediate objective of getting rid of the Ministry and the Assembly which has abdicated even its legislative functions and allows the Ministry to run the State by Ordinances (over 100 Ordinances have been promulgated). He explained to us how he was trying to give the student and youth cadre and other participants proper direction and orientation and not fritter away their enthusiasm and energy in outbursts and actions that would enable the Government an easy excuse to disrupt it. He would have liked us to join the consultative committees of the political parties but he appreciated our position and

agreed that "we shall have frequent consultations among ourselves to radicalise and intensify the movement in Bihar while adhering to our respective ideological stances."

As for the alternative democratic programme and of the primary importance of participation of the working class and peasantry, Sri Jaya Prakash has expressed to us, that he is in general agreement with the draft statement we placed before him on behalf of our Party and that he is in agreement with all the demands we have raised in it.

I am giving below the relevant portion :

"One of the most effective means of achieve this objective to get this Ministry and Assembly dissolved, and force fair and free elections so that the people can give their verdict for a real democratic alternative to the present Congress Ministry, is to draw in the rural toiling peasantry and the working class and the middle classes along with the students and youth on their own urgent economic and political demands.

"We consider united actions of the workers along with the urban poor and middle classes to fight against the wage-freeze Ordinance, for full neutralisation of increase in cost of living and for need-based minimum wage or fair wages, is one such action. We consider that this fight should be built up with the immediate demand that fair-price shops should be established in large numbers, where foodgrains and all other essential commodities are to be sold to the people in adequate quantities at far cheaper and controlled prices within the reach of people. All sections of the people, mass organisations must immediately start dehoarding the big stockists and big blackmarketeers in the cities, and get the goods found there sold to the people at considerably reduced prices under the supervision of people's committees.

"Similarly, in rural areas, the agricultural labourers and the toiling peasantry are to be drawn into actions, to force big landholders to pay fair wages in grain and cash, to sell grain to the agricultural labourers and rural poor at cheap

prices, to give certain amount of grain (say one kg. per family per day) free or as loan without interest to landless unemployed labour; to stop evictions, to enforce fair rent of one fourth of the gross produce or at least what the present laws permit, and wherever possible, the surplus land as per existing laws, are to be taken away from the *benami* holders and distributed to the landless agricultural labourers. This can be done only with all the democratic sections in the rural areas joining together and forcing the landlords to implement them.

“We are acutely conscious of the brutal repression, lathi-charges and firings to which even peaceful agitations and mobilisation of the people for their elementary demands are subjected. We will have to mobilise all sections of the people to fight against this total denial of all civil liberties.”

Madhu Dandavate of the Socialist Party who joined our talks a little later, fully agreed with our note, and said that a joint statement on those lines on behalf of two parties and Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan would help not only the movement in Bihar but throughout the country to develop a radical alternative to the Congress.

It is true that merely a joint statement and indication of our desire and common directions alone are not enough. It is the actual practice and development of the movement that matters. In Bihar with whatever strength our Party has, we will be striving our best to work with Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan, the Socialist Party and other Left and democratic forces to develop these struggles, for emergence of a truly democratic alternative. This will be a long-drawn-out and a difficult process. But only while working and co-operating together in developing the Bihar people's movement, further common understanding and closer actions not only there but on an all-India scale, too, will become possible.

## The Joint Statement\*

**Jointly signed by Jaya Prakash Narayan and CPI(M) leaders P. Sundarayya and Promode Das Gupta and Socialist Party leader Madhu Dandavate, dated September 18, 1974**

*The following is the text of the joint statement signed by Jaya Prakash Narayan, P. Sundarayya and Promode Das Gupta (CPI-M) and Madhu Dandavate (Socialist Party) and issued in Patna on September 18, 1974.*

We discussed the political situation in Bihar created by rampant corruption, ruthless repression, abdication by the Legislature of its legislative powers with total reliance on Ordinances, galloping inflation, unemployment and frustration among the youth due to the prevalent educational system, unresponsive to their urges and aspirations.

“In this background we felt that the demand for the dissolution of the unrepresentative Bihar Assembly and Ministry and emergence of a truly democratic alternative on the basis of free and fair elections must receive priority.

“However, we are convinced that if the peaceful movement in Bihar is to take deeper roots and achieve its objective, vital socio-economic problems of workers, peasants and weaker sections must find adequate reflection in the movement.

“In this context we feel that the struggle of the working class against wage-freeze and spiralling of prices and for a need-based minimum wage must be strengthened. Similarly, the agricultural labours’ and peasants’ fight against evictions and for fair wage and share as also for distribution of surplus and wastelands must be intensified.

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“The efforts to combat hoarding and blackmarketing and ensure distribution of essential commodities at cheaper prices must be taken up with earnestness.

“We agreed that we shall have frequent consultations among ourselves to radicalise and intensify the movement in Bihar while adhering to our respective ideological stances.”

## **CPI(M) Greets People's Republic of China on its 25th Anniversary\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee in its Session held in New Delhi on September 3-9, 1974**

On the occasion of the Twentyfifth Anniversary of the Great Chinese Revolution, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its warm and fraternal greetings to the working class and the people of China and to the Communist Party of China.

The People's Democratic Revolution in China led by the working class and its vanguard party struck a devastating blow at the world imperialist-capitalist system. The liberation of China and the foundation of the People's Republic was the most outstanding victory of the world working class following the November 7 Revolution, and the defeat of fascist forces at the hands of the Red Army. It was one of the peak points of advance of the revolutionary wave unleashed by the triumphant November 7 Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin. This success of the Chinese, the most populous country, gave tremendous inspiration and strength to national liberation struggles throughout the world.

During the last quarter of the century, the Chinese Revolution has weathered many a storm. The working class and the people were confronted with the problems of transforming a backward and medieval economy with its poverty and destitution, of raising the living standards of the people and putting them on the high road to Socialism.

The war against poverty and unemployment had to be

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waged in the midst of U.S. conspiracies against the people's rule and systematic attempt to cordon off China from the world.

In meeting these challenges, People's China was initially helped by the Soviet Union and other Socialist States. The working class and the democratic people of all countries showed their solidarity with the people of China and blunted the edge of imperialist conspiracies—a solidarity which they are continuing, wishing the Chinese people greater and greater successes.

In the quarter of a century of struggle against these conditions, the working class and people of China passing through periods of stress and strains have achieved marvels of successes in many directions, which assert the complete superiority of the Socialist system and its principles over the capitalist system.

Socialist China today stands in strong contrast with other countries liberated a quarter of century ago and pursuing the capitalist path. Today when the entire capitalist world is being rocked with inflationary crises, stagflation and mounting unemployment, when a newly liberated country like India is threatened with famine, huge unemployment and economic backwardness, People's China proclaims ever-rising production of foodgrains, raw materials and industrial goods, higher living standards for its people and employment and work for all its able-bodied citizens. The prices of all essential commodities are kept at the same level during the last two decades; education and medical services are available for all people.

China's foodgrains production has reached 260 million tons, steel 27 million tons, fertilisers 25 million tons, cement 20 million tons, coal 400 million tons, crude oil 50 million tons and electricity 100 billion kWh.

Socialisation of the means of production has ensured real equality among citizens—equality in relation to the means of production, and enabled People's China to infuse the millions with unprecedented labour enthusiasm which has achieved tremendous victories in production.



The amazing progress in agriculture and industry is accompanied by an equally breath-taking advance in all spheres—including the spheres of science. The mastery of nuclear weaponry and the successful rebuffing of U.S. nuclear blackmail constitute an outstanding evidence in this direction.

Thanks to this, its internal strength and the support it enjoyed from the world proletarian and democratic forces, People's China was able to break through the imperialist blockade and emerge in the international arena. It got its lawful place in the U.N., the puppet Chiang Kai-shek regime was expelled by the world organization and the Chinese Revolution at last got its recognition.

Had it not been for the division and conflicts in the Socialist world and the international Communist movement, these achievements of China, as well as of all other Socialist countries and world revolutionary forces as a whole, would have been far greater. The Central Committee ardently hopes the present divisions and conflicts would soon be overcome and unity would be achieved.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) hails the advance of People's China as the advance of the world Socialist Camp, as part of the advance of the world working class. It wishes the working class and people of China further successes along the Socialist road. It is confident that these victories of the working class of China will lead to great proletarian solidarity and strengthening of the forces of world Socialism.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) stands for closest friendship and solidarity between the peoples of China and India. It works for removing the present barriers and is confident that soon the two peoples will be able to resume the former warmth in their relations.

## **Anti-People Coalition Must Go Demanded by the Polit Bureau of CPI(M)\***

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met the Kerala State Committee of the Party from October 12 to 14 in Neyyar Dam and heard detailed reports from the members of the State Committee about the conditions of the people and political developments in every district and the State as a whole. During the last five years of the Coalition Ministry headed by Sri Achutha Menon of the Right Communist Party, the people of Kerala had to suffer as never before. Prices of all commodities rose to dizzy heights. Price of rice rose more than in any other State. Statutory rationing has been drastically reduced by six oz. per head and even this ration is simply not available. The statutory rationing system has virtually collapsed, leaving the people at the mercy of the hoarders and speculators.

The coir, cashew, handloom and many other traditional industries of Kerala have collapsed, making lakhs of workers dependent on them, unemployed.

A callous Central Government, which had committed itself to supply the requirements of the statutory rationing system in the State, refused to fulfil its commitments.

Every section of the people—workers, agricultural labourers, peasants, students, teachers, NGOs—are resisting these policies of the Central and State Governments.

The P.B. heard reports of how the Party Comrades, by their sustained and indefatigable work succeeded in organiz-

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ing united struggles of mass organizations, often including the unions belonging to the AITUC and the INTUC.

The Congress-Right Communist Party Government, unable to solve any problem and acting as the agent of the Central Government, and faced with this rising tide of mass struggles and isolation from the people, has no answer except resorting to heavy repression. It unleashed the police, the CRP and even the police from other States on the fighting people. Arrests, lathi-charges, torture of hundreds of workers, agricultural workers, peasants, youth, students and women in police lock-ups have become the order of the day. Even rape of women in police lock-ups has gone on unpunished.

Seeing that this bestial repression failed to check the resistance of the people, the Government is resorting to the use of goonda gangs of anti-social elements with police support to terrorize whole villages. More than a hundred and thirty Comrades have been killed by these goondas of the Congress party.

Under instructions of the Ministers, the police officials have insulted, openly beaten up and paraded in the streets hundreds of respected leaders of the people, including the elected representatives of the people—MLAs and an M.P. belonging to Opposition parties. Their only crime was that they performed their normal function as elected representatives of the people of rushing to police stations and tried to intervene against the atrocities committed by the police against the people.

The simple demand that these cases of assault on the MLAs and an M.P. should be enquired into by a Committee of the Assembly—a Committee in which the ruling Coalition will naturally have a majority—is rejected by the Government. The stubborn refusal to have an enquiry on these atrocities by the police not only shows that the Government is afraid of the truth coming out of such an enquiry, but also exposes the depths to which the Government has sunk in setting at nought all norms of democracy and in suppressing civil liberties and democratic rights.

These attacks are not confined to the Opposition alone. A newspaper, which had supported the Coalition partners in the last elections, exposed with documentary proof, the corruption indulged in by the Forest Minister. Instead of conducting an enquiry, the newspaper is being drawn into protracted and costly litigation. This is a naked attempt to attack the freedom of the Press, strike terror and prevent it from exposing the rampant corruption which is stinking more and more.

A lawyer was beaten up by a police official in Badagara for no other crime than that he gave advice to a client which was not palatable to the Sub-Inspector. The demand of the Bar for a judicial enquiry has been summarily rejected.

The Government, finding itself in growing isolation from the people, and bent upon perpetuating its rule, is seeking to terrorize the people and convert Kerala into a police State.

The leaders of the Right Communist Party who talk loudly about 'democratic rights' and 'parliamentary democracy' are shameless partners with the ruling Congress party in these semi-fascist attacks on the people, and suppression of all democratic norms. They are partners in making the Assembly a farce where five Bills are passed in the matter of five minutes!

The P.B. would ask the rank and file of the Right Communist Party : do they think that democratic rights can be safeguarded by the Coalition with the Congress party? Are they not also being meted with the same repression when AITUC unions launch struggles against the attacks on living standards by the employers? Whom are the leaders of the Right Communist Party serving by such repression on the fighting masses?

The P.B. got detailed reports of how the unity of the Left parties—CPI(M), Socialist Party, KTP and KSP—which continued even after the treachery committed by the Right Communist Party and the Kerala RSP in 1969, has of late been effective in organizing several mass struggles, such as the food and anti-price-rise struggles, the great land struggle of 1972-73, etc.

This unity of the Left parties has, during the last year and a half, extended itself further and brought into its fold the Kerala Congress which, as is known, has serious ideological differences with the Left parties, but whose leaders found it necessary to join hands with the Left parties in organizing and leading several mass actions on questions like food, famine, prices, taxation and police repression. They also extended their support to the State and Central Government employees, teachers and others who have been fighting for need-based minimum wage, D.A., bonus and against wage-freeze.

The P.B. welcomes the fact that these joint actions on specific issues have now led to joint political actions inside and outside the Assembly against police atrocities, against corruption and against the anti-people policies of the ruling Coalition, leading to the demand for the resignation of the State Government, dissolution of the Legislature and re-election.

It is against this background that the ruling Coalition is resorting to the method of singling the CPI(M) out for a concerted political and police offensive. Even while not sparing the MLAs and other leaders of the Socialist and other Opposition parties, the most bestial police attacks and the most well-planned propaganda attacks are directed against the leaders and active cadres of the CPI(M).

The P. B. notes, however, that neither the people at large nor the other Opposition parties are taken in by this clever trick resorted to by the leaders of the ruling Coalition. That is why the demand for enquiry into the police attacks on the elected representatives of the people, with the officers responsible for these attacks being kept under suspension, has become a general demand of the entire people.

The P. B. notes further that resorting to these bestial methods of attacking and trying to terrorize the Opposition parties, the Government is trampling underfoot all institutions of parliamentary democracy. Not only are the proceedings of the Assembly being reduced to a farce but panchayat

elections have been continuously and indefinitely postponed. It is obvious that the discredited leaders of the ruling Coalition do not dare face the prospect of facing the electorate either at the level of the panchayats or of the State Assembly.

The P.B. is confident that the fighting people of Kerala will not tolerate this state of affairs. The situation calls for a much more firm unity of all the fighting people, embracing all the parties and elements who are interested in safeguarding the democratic rights of the people, in serving the interests of the toiling masses and in fighting against the policies of the Central Government which have inflicted ever-worsening starvation and unemployment on the whole people. It hopes that the four Left parties and the Kerala Congress who have been fighting on the most burning issues of the people will not only continue, broaden and strengthen these mass struggles, but also collectively undertake the job of evolving a minimum programme of political action on the basis of which, even while each of them carries on its independent political action on the basis of its own distinctive ideological-political positions, they can jointly act in order to put an end to the present intolerable situation and replace the present Government by one which would protect the rights of the people and serve as an instrument in their struggle against the anti-people policies of the Central Government.

## **CPI(M) Bihar Committee's Stand on Jaya Prakash Narayan's Movement\***

*The Bihar State Committee of the CPI(M) has issued the following statement on October 31, 1974:*

This meeting of the Bihar State Committee of the CPI(M) while congratulating the people of Bihar for the successful bandh on October 3-5, 1974, which has amply justified the demand for the dissolution of the unrepresentative Bihar Assembly and dismissal of the corrupt Congress Ministry and a fresh poll, feels that it has also exposed the limitations of the movement which has kept the working class, by and large, out of the orbit of the movement and has not been able to draw the peasantry in a big way.

The State Committee strongly feels that it is high time that Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan should have come forward to take up the vital socio-economic problems of the toiling masses linking these with the demand of the dissolution of State Assembly, the dismissal of the Ministry and fresh poll on the basis of committed policies in favour of the people.

The State Committee is of the firm opinion that it is urgently required that the anti-people procurement and distribution policy of foodgrains resulting in starvation deaths should be defeated, the anti-working class wage-freeze Act is forced to be withdrawn, agricultural labourers are guaranteed minimum living wages and all the hidden stocks of foodgrains are unearthed from the godowns of the landlords

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and hoarders, evictions are stopped, and the sharecroppers get their legitimate share.

The State Committee is convinced that in order to take the movement deeper by raising the above-mentioned demands, Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan has to boldly decide to dissociate from reactionary forces like the Jana Sangh and Congress (O) who are nakedly opposed to these measures and help the process of building and strengthening a truly genuine Left democratic front.

Unfortunately, Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan, instead of taking this step is keeping his movement confined within the old narrow shell and as a natural outcome of this, has given the call to gherao of the Ministers and MLAs on November 4 without including the basic demands of the working class and the peasantry even at this stage.

Under the circumstances, the State Committee decides to dissociate itself from the November 4 gherao and continue its efforts to build an independent movement for the realization of the aforesaid demands and giving the movement a Left and democratic turn.

As regards the so-called "Save Democracy" counter demonstrations by the Congressite gangsters and their allies, the renegade Right Communists, the CPI(M) is totally opposed to it, and it warns the people to keep itself away from the trap.



## **West Bengal will stand by Bihar People\***

**Joint Statement dated November 5, 1974 issued by the Left Parties in West Bengal**

*Jyoti Basu (CPI-M), Ashok Ghosh (F.B.), Makhan Paul (RSP), Nihar Mukherjee (SUC), Biman Mitra (S.P.), Hemen Mukherjee (Workers' Party) Bimalananda Mukherjee (RCPI), Suhrid Mallick Choudhury (Forward Bloc Marxist) and Rabi Dutta (Biplabi Bangla Congress) have issued the following statement to the Press on November 5, 1974 :*

We view with grave concern the unprecedented attack with extreme savagery perpetrated on the peaceful marchers led by the revered leader Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan in Patna on November 4.

On this historic day, the brave people of Bihar defying the war-like preparations of the Governmental machinery, marched in tens of thousands, to show the power of the people in support of their movement. The mockery of Indira Gandhi's democracy once again was clearly revealed. Although the people, under the able and direct guidance of Sri Narayan, were peaceful, the Government did not only employ in thousands the police forces, BSF, CRP and other para-military battalions to crush the great march but also employed planes to guide the armed forces as if an armed rebellion was confronting it.

We are shocked to learn that Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan has been wounded by the lathis that were shamelessly and indiscriminately used against the peaceful demonstrators. No word is too strong to condemn this savagery of the ruling

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party's unabashed declaration of war on the people and its use of violent means to stifle the democratic rights of the people.

We congratulate the people of Bihar and we assure them that here in West Bengal, the people will not hesitate to stand by their side at this hour of struggle they are waging for food and other demands and against corruption of the ruling Congress and for dissolution of the Assembly.

We call upon the people of West Bengal to muster strong at the Sahid Minar Maidan on November 6 at 5 p.m. to express solidarity and to expose the dangerous and undemocratic stand of the Congress party and its Government.

## **Call for Left and Democratic Unity given by Bihar State Committee of the CPI(M)\***

The Bihar State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) at its four-day sitting in Patna reviewed the campaign launched by the Party and thanked the people of Bihar for gheraoing over 100 blocks on September 30 and October 1, unearthing hidden stocks and illegally transported foodgrains from October 2 to 6 thereby making available about 2000 quintals of grains to the starving people, and for holding hundreds of mass meetings on October 15 demanding dissolution of the unrepresentative Bihar Assembly and resignation of the corrupt Congress Ministry.

The State Committee noted with satisfaction that various sections of the people were fighting magnificent battles against anti-working class wage-freeze measures, for cheap food, eradication of corruption, against unemployment, for stopping of evictions, realization of legitimate share of the *bataidars* and increased wages for the agricultural labourers.

The Committee, however, felt that an independent platform had urgently become necessary to co-ordinate and properly direct the struggle for these demands and to link them with the demand for the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly and resignation of the Congress Ministry.

The State Committee noted with regret that among the other Left and democratic forces, while the Right Communist Party was collaborating with the main enemy of the people, the ruling Congress, the S.P. and SSP unfortunately

\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, November 17, 1974.

had joined the Jana Sangh and Congress(O) in the co-ordination committee of the movement led by Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan.

It is under these circumstances that the State Committee felt that in order to further intensify the all-round struggle of the people, a platform of the Left and democratic parties and mass organizations like trade unions, kisan sabhas, youth and student organizations and democratic minded individuals had become an urgent necessity.

The State Committee fervently hoped that the Left and democratic parties like the S.P., RSP and SUC would rise to the occasion and would help this process.

The State Committee made an appeal to the Right Communist Party to give up its suicidal policy of collaborating with the ruling party and join hands with the Left and democratic forces.

The State Committee has appealed to the different Left and democratic parties and mass organisations to form a Janwadi Sangram Samiti at all levels from the block to the State and carry the struggle forward.

The State Committee condemned the repression unleashed on the people by the Bihar Government.

In a statement issued on November 5, Comrade S. S. Shrivastava, Secretary of the Bihar State Committee of the CPI(M), has strongly condemned the Government of Bihar "for resorting to indiscriminate teargassing and police lathi-charges on a peaceful procession led by the Sarvodaya leader, Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan, demanding dissolution of the Bihar Assembly and resignation of the Ghafoor Ministry". "It is really disgraceful", says the statement, "that the authorities did not spare even Sri Narayan and injured him in the lathi-charge".

The statement adds, "As reports go, these barbarous attacks and indiscriminate arrests were not confined only to Patna but they took place all over the State where thousands of people have been put behind the bars under the draconian MISA, DIR and various sections of the Cr.PC".

After listing the various repressive measures the Government has taken, the statement concludes with an appeal to all Left and democratic parties and forces to "rise to the occasion and build a united mighty movement to defeat the anti-people and anti-working class policies of the Congress Government".

A report from Muzaffarpur says : Comrade Akhilanand Singh, member of the CPI(M), was arrested at Sahebganj on November 5 under the DIR. Along with him Comrades Jhagaru Das and Babujan Ali (student) were also arrested and sent to jail.

Earlier, Comrade Nandkishore Shukla, member of the Bihar State Committee of the Party, and Kusheshwar Prasad Verma, member of Muzaffarpur Regional Committee, were arrested on October 29 under the MISA. Comrade Verma was released later when he was taken seriously ill.

### **A Canard Exposed**

Comrade Shrivastava in another statement issued in Patna on November 6 exposed the canard published in some local dailies to the effect that one Sri Awadhesh Kumar Yadav, a-so-called CPI(M) leader, had resigned from the Party on his alleged differences with the Party stand on the Bihar movement led by Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan.

Comrade Shrivastava has said that Sri Yadav was in 1971 a candidate member of the Party but was expelled by the Party for contesting an Assembly seat against the decision of the Party and had nothing to do with the Party since then.

## **Fight for Fair Price for Peasant Producers and Cheap Price for Consumers\***

**P. Sundarayya**

The Central Committee of our Party in its resolution on "Certain Agrarian Issues" has laid down that "fair prices should be fixed and guaranteed at the time of harvest itself for the produce of an average peasant so as to assure him a minimum standard of living after meeting his agricultural expenses. But as far as the landlords are concerned, the high prices which by their monopoly of land they are today extracting must be controlled and checked. The retail prices for the mass of consumers of their essential supplies must be within their reach. If subsidies are necessary to be paid by the State it must be done."

The most essential commodities, either agricultural or connected with agricultural produce, are cereals, pulses, edible oils, sugar and cotton cloth.

If on all-India scale, normally, landowners owning over ten acres of good wet land or over 20 acres of good dry land do not physically participate in major agricultural operations and hence are to be considered as landlords, an owner of about five acres wet land can be considered an average peasant. This peasant should be guaranteed prices for his agricultural produce, that would ensure him a minimum standard of living.

### **Enough Food Available**

For a landlord who gets all his land cultivated wholly by

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, November 17, 1974.

hired labour, calculations reveal that the cost of production of a quintal of paddy was not more than Rs. 40 in 1972, and it may now be Rs. 50 with the increased prices of all inputs. Even if he is given a profit of 10 to 20 per cent, a quintal of paddy from these landlords can be procured at Rs. 60. But the Government has fixed Rs 74 per quintal for coarse paddy and about Rs.100 per quintal for fine paddy.

Even at these rates, the Government refuses to procure all the surplus paddy and other foodgrains from the landlords, leaving them three quintals of rice or other foodgrains per year per adult for personal consumption and one quintal per acre for agricultural expenses like seed, wastages or labour-wages in grain. Out of 110 million tonnes of foodgrains—the estimated yield this year, the Government proposes to procure only about ten million tonnes.

Five per cent of rural households hold about 40 per cent of the land and produce about 50 per cent of the foodgrains. These households have a marketable surplus of not less than 45 million tonnes. The Government allows them to sell in the blackmarket at rates of Rs. four per kg. of rice and at Rs. 2.50 to three per kg. of wheat. If the Government procures all these surplus stocks, there would be enough to feed 2.50 million adults at half kg. per day for the whole year, i.e., almost all the urban and rural families who have to purchase their foodgrains.

### **Price for the Peasants**

If the Government is prepared to procure these stocks at Rs. 60 per quintal of paddy, rice can be supplied at one rupee per kg. even in urban areas. It refuses to do this and goes on increasing the procurement prices for the meagre quantity which it plans to purchase. Most of its purchases are from the distress sales of the poor and middle peasantry in the first few weeks after the harvest, while it allows the rich peasants and the landlords to sell their stocks later at even two times the procurement prices which it itself has fixed, i.e., at Rs. 140-150 per quintal of paddy. That is how

the poor and middle peasants are deprived of their legitimate incomes and fleeced and forced into ruin and starvation.

That is why our Party and the All-India Kisan Sabha demand that for the agricultural produce of the poor, middle and even rich peasantry, substantially higher prices should be given than the procurement prices fixed for the surplus stocks of the landlords which should be commandeered. The landlords need not be paid more than the cost of production and certain margin of profit (ten to 20 per cent is more than reasonable profit). No levy should be imposed on the poor, middle and even rich peasants and they should not be made victims of harassment by Government officials in the name of levy collection. The working peasant can be allowed to sell his grain in the open market or induced to sell to the Government agency voluntarily by offering five or ten rupees bonus per quintal.

### **Pulses and Oilseeds**

Similarly, the cost of production of pulses and oilseeds is comparatively far less than cereals. Most of these pulses and oilseeds are grown on comparatively less water and by large numbers of smallholders. The prices of pulses and oilseeds have always been higher than those of cereals. Today the consumers who are paying Rs. 10 and more per kg. of edible oil would be pleased if they can get it at, say, Rs. six to seven.

A hundred kg. of groundnut (in shell) yield 28 kg. of oil, 42 kg. of oilcake and 30 kg. of shell husk. Taking that the price of the husk will meet the manufacturing and distribution expenses at also a reasonable margin of profit, if the consumer is assured one kg. of oil at Rs. seven and oilcake at one-sixth of the price of oil, the peasants can be guaranteed Rs. 250 per quintal.

When the sugar for the consumer is supplied from ration shops at Rs. 2.20 per kg. he would be highly satisfied to get his entire need at this rate instead of purchasing in the black



and open market at Rs. five to six. That is why we demand that the Government should take over all sugar produced and distribute it through ration shops both in the rural and urban areas. With this rate for the consumer and the Government abolishing the excise duty on sugar, the peasant producer of sugarcane can be assured Rs. 15 per quintal of sugarcane, and the manufacturer a reasonable margin of profit as well. It is for this purpose that we demand that the whole sugar industry should be nationalized.

### **Minimum Requirement**

The minimum subsistence level of food for an average working adult is 2700 calories per day. Where a protective and balanced diet in the form of meat, fish, eggs or milk, oils and fats, and fruits and vegetables are not available, the poor and low-income people depend more and more on cereals and pulses. A hundred grammes of cereals or pulses gives about 350 calories. That is why if one is to depend on cereals and pulses, an adult requires three fourths of a kg. It is from this angle that most of the States, except Punjab and Haryana, are deficit, and the need arises for the Government to take the responsibility of feeding the people, ensuring them at least half a kg. of foodgrains which is possible even from the current production in India by commandeering all the surplus stocks of the landlords and distributing them to the urban and rural poor through ration shops. It is because of this supreme need of feeding the people that we cannot allow food prices to soar and allow the landlords to amass huge profits.

### **Cloth and its Price**

Coming to the next essential commodity, cloth, for the mass of the people, we demand that they be supplied ordinary cloth at Rs. two per metre. The Government tries to fool the people saying that it has ordered the cloth manufacturers to produce 80 crore metres of standard cloth, just about one-tenth of the total Indian cotton textile production. Even if the

millowners carry out this request of the Government, it would enable it to give only one and one third metres per head as against the 16 metres per head envisaged in the need-based minimum packet of the Tripartite Conference of 1957.

If the Government nationalizes the whole of the textile industry, it can rationalize the whole production, guarantee the textile worker and the handloom worker reasonable minimum wages while supplying the consumers cloth at Rs. two per metre. At this rate for the consumer, the peasant producer can be paid for one kg. of cotton (ginned) Rs. 20, and for unginced cotton not less than Rs. six (ginned cotton being one third of unginced cotton in weight) i.e., a quintal of unginced cotton at Rs. 600.

### **Other Commercial Crops**

But in the case of jute, rubber, tobacco and other commercial and plantation crops which are not essential mass consumption goods, when these goods are being sold at enormous profits by the manufacturers and the traders both in the internal and international markets and the Government makes huge amounts by imposing excise and customs duties, the producer, whether he be medium or rich or even landlord, need not be deprived his share of these huge profits. That is why the demand for Rs. 100 per maund or Rs. 250 per quintal of jute is a very justified demand.

But this can be enforced only when the peasant masses develop their organization and fight for it along with other democratic forces, especially the rural poor and the working class in the cities and the industries concerned. Workers in these highly profitable sectors, too, cannot win their need-based minimum wages until they join hands with the peasant masses and fight for their legitimate demand of better and remunerative prices.

### **What Has To Be Done**

Today it is not enough to go on propagating these just demands of the consumers and of the peasants or even carry-

ing on agitations, demonstrations and dharnas before Government offices to bring pressure on them to take necessary steps. The Government at times, under this pressure, may take certain palliative measures without taking any real substantive steps to carry out even the minimum that is necessary. The democratic movement, the Kisan Sabha and our Party cannot rest content with this state of affairs.

The people must be mobilized in rural areas to gherao the landlords and make them surrender enough stocks to feed the village poor throughout the year at the rate of half a kg. per adult per day. No grain should be allowed to be taken away from the village unless this is assured. Depending upon the strength and unity of the democratic forces and the mobilization of the people, this can be achieved in various villages or groups of villages—the amount that can be thus stocked and the price that has to be paid to the landlords can be settled. It should be substantially less than what it obtains today in the villages; even the procurement price fixed by the Government—Rs. 80 for the medium variety of paddy or Rs. 120 to 150 per quintal of rice, is less than the blackmarket prices of Rs. 200-300 per quintal. So if the movement in the villages can enforce sale of rice even at Rs. 1.50 per kg., it will be a big achievement. It will give the people good relief and confidence and inspire them to fight for greater achievements and strengthen the democratic movement.

### **Struggle in the Urban Areas**

Similarly, the urban people, and especially the organized working class in factories, mines and transport, and office and middle class employees, must force their employers to guarantee their full ration of half a kg. per adult per day, at least at the prices fixed by the Government.

The organized working class must fight in the first instance for the whole people in rural areas, towns and cities to be brought under statutory rationing; second, that the statutory rationing system should guarantee full rationing of

half a kg. per adult per day; third, where the rationing system already exists, the ration quantum should be increased from the existing 100-200 grammes per adult per day to 500 grammes so that none need go to the blackmarket for purchasing the minimum required food ration.

If they cannot enforce this much, let them force the Government and employers to open full ration shops in the localities, bustees, where they are living, for all the people.

If even that is not possible, let them force their employers to open grain shops in the factories and offices wherefrom additional foodgrains may be supplied to make up the difference between what is supplied through the Government ration shops and the required 500 grammes.

It is this continued all-out fight to get all essential commodities from the landlords, the employers, linked up with constant agitation and fight against the Government itself to force it to take full responsibility of feeding the entire people that would take the masses forward. Win relief, however small, day in and day out, more and more; mobilise larger and larger numbers of people and build greater and greater unity; be ready to face the landlord, the hoarder, the blackmarketeer and their goondas as well as the police and armed forces of the Government. This is the path forward for our people.

## **Massive Calcutta Rally Backs People of Bihar\***

A massive rally at the Sahid Minar Maidan, Calcutta, on November 6, 1974 extended the militant solidarity of the people of West Bengal to the people of Bihar who are courageously fighting for their demands for the resignation of the corrupt Ghafoor Ministry and dissolution of the Assembly. The rally severely condemned the brutal repression let loose on the people of the neighbouring State by the Congress rulers.

The rally was convened at very short notice by nine Left parties of West Bengal.

Calling the rally, Jyoti Basu (CPI-M), Ashok Ghosh (Forward Bloc), Makhan Pal (RSP), Nihar Mukherjee (SUC), Biman Mitra (Socialist Party), Hemen Mukherjee (Workers' Party), Bimalananda Mukherjee (RCPI), Suhrid Mullick Choudhury (Marxist Forward Bloc) and Rabi Dutta (Biplabi Bangla Congress) in a joint statement referred to the decision of the Congress Working Committee for a so-called "counter-offensive" and said :

### **Hypocritical Concern**

"The democratic people will not be misled by this hypocritical concern of the ruling party for democracy and parliamentary institutions. The people have witnessed throughout the years how the limited democratic rights enjoyed by them

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\*Report published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, November 17, 1974.

have been trampled underfoot, movements for a better means of livelihood of workers, peasants, students and other sections have been confronted by lathi-charges, firings, savage repression, detention without trial, mass arrests.

“In elections the people have had the experience of the Congress party using black money on a vast scale and the administrative machinery in its own interest. The people have seen how the Congress has shown scant respect for parliamentary institutions and how its Government has dismissed elected Governments run by Opposition parties with the help of Governors and by Presidential orders; it has prevented Opposition parties from forming Governments even when the Congress party has been turned into a minority; it has disbanded elected legislatures to overcome the ruling party’s difficulties; it has kept legislatures in suspended animation to provide an opportunity to the Congress to regain its majority through intrigues and organizing defections. Its latest concern for democracy has been demonstrated by amending the rules with regard to election expenditure by nullifying the salutary ruling of the Supreme Court which would have prevented unlimited expenditure in elections.

### **Subversion of Democracy**

“Above all, people know through their bitter experience how after three successive defeats of the Congress party in West Bengal and the formation of two United Front Governments, parliamentary democracy was subverted through rigging and gangsterism with the help of the police and the entire State apparatus in 1972. They know that even now the terroristic rule continues and fair election does not exist. In other States also, as the Congress party is being more and more isolated from the people, the right of free and fair election is being greatly restricted.”

Asserting that it is “an inalienable, right of the people to organize movements for the basic necessities of life against all pervading corruption, for free and fair elections, for the recall of legislators who have violated their plighted word

and for the dissolution of an Assembly and resignation of a Government which by their performances have forfeited their right to exist", the statement said, "The Congress has thrown a challenge to this democratic right of the people".

### **The Bihar Struggle**

In Bihar, added the statement, various sections of the people have moved into action with certain urgent demands including the resignation of the Government, dissolution of the Assembly and free and fair elections. The people have been met with terrible repression. In the last few months, said the statement, "hundreds have been killed and thousands arrested, many externed from Bihar where armed forces have taken over".

In such a situation, the statement called upon all democratic sections of the people in West Bengal to "severely condemn the decision of the Congress Working Committee which is meant to stifle democratic movement and suppress the fundamental rights of the people and ensure an authoritarian one party rule. Already as a part of the 'democratic counter-offensive', Section 144 has been clamped on Patna. The military, CRP and Armed State Police have turned it into an armed camp. Leaders are being externed or arrested and the gangster elements are being mobilized as in West Bengal to attack and disrupt the peaceful demonstration on November 4".

The statement called on the Right Communist Party "to desist from joining hands with the Congress which is imposing limitless suffering on the people, destroying democracy in India and taking recourse to massive corruption". Urging the people to muster strong at the mass rally on November 6, the statement concluded, "we must stand shoulder to shoulder with the struggling and brave people of Bihar and raise our voice to protest against the savage repression that is being perpetrated there".

The rally was presided over by Jyoti Bhattacharya of the Workers' Party. All the speakers on behalf of the various

parties sponsoring the rally, severely condemned the unprecedented show of force organized by the Congress Government as also the despicable role of the Right Communist Party in regard to the struggle of the Bihar people.

### **Stand by People of Bihar**

Jyoti Basu while reiterating the CPI(M)'s general support to the demands for which the movement has been launched, said that the movement would have assumed much greater sweep than what is seen now if the immediate demands of the working class and the peasantry had been included as part of the demands of the movement.

The Congress Government, he said, had pounced upon the people of Bihar with all the punitory means at its disposal, a pattern the Congress rulers would surely seek to repeat in other States. As such, we shall have to fight shoulder to shoulder with the people of Bihar for democratic rights.

The Right Communist Party, Comrade Basu said, had characterized the Bihar movement as "reactionary" and extended its full support to the Congress rulers in their punitive expedition against the people. Will the Right C.P. he asked, call the lakhs and lakhs of people who have come forward to participate in the movement as reactionaries, and said, one hates to call these people Communists.

About the Bihar Government, Comrade Basu said, here is a Government which ruled by Ordinances and did not convene the elected Assembly. Yet to go by Smt. Indira Gandhi's brand of democracy, this Assembly would have to be preserved, and the Right C.P. was four square behind this subversion of parliamentary democracy.

Comrade Joyti Basu condemned the beating up of Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan by the police.



## **CPI(M) Proposal for Electoral Reforms\***

**Memorandum submitted to the Committee for Electoral Reform of the Citizens for Democracy**

The following is the text of the memorandum submitted to the Committee for Electoral Reform of the Citizens for Democracy by Comrades E.M.S. Namboodiripad and P. Ramamurti, on behalf of the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in New Delhi, on November 23, 1974:

At the outset we want to emphasize that whatever might be the method of choosing the representatives to the Legislature and Parliament, whatever might be the safeguards for minimizing abuses, elections become meaningless if the ruling party is allowed to rig the elections. Our Party has the bitterest experience in this regard. In West Bengal in 1972 in constituencies in which the ruling party faced certain defeat, election was a farce. Voters in their thousands were prevented from voting. At the point of guns and with the connivance and support of the police, they were driven away from the polling booths. All their ballot papers were stamped by the goondas of the ruling party and put in the ballot box.

Similar rigging, we are reliably informed, had taken place in a few constituencies in the recent elections to the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh.

Even the Right Communist Party which is a supporter of the ruling Congress party has come out protesting against the rigging of the by-election from the Madhubani

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Assembly constituency of Bihar in which the Chief Minister of Bihar, Sri Ghafoor, was a contestant.

We are clear that the ruling party will resort to this kind of rigging wherever it is faced with the prospect of getting defeated in any State and in a number of constituencies.

In order to minimize the prospect of such rigging, we propose that elections should be supervised by a committee representing all parties at all levels. All complaints regarding the conduct of elections by the parties must be decided in consultation with this committee.

If by consensus or majority, the Opposition parties feel that the elections in a particular constituency or in a booth had been rigged, the election relating thereto should be cancelled and fresh voting must take place.

Along with it the all parties' committee must see that during the election propaganda period, all parties have access to the voters without threat from goonda gangs. If the majority of the Opposition parties are of the opinion that such an atmosphere does not prevail in any particular constituency, the election therefrom should be postponed till such conditions are created. This, in our opinion, assumes fundamental importance to the holding of fair elections.

The electoral system in our country suffers under three main defects which have to be removed if it should help the assertion of people's will.

First, the Constitutional provisions with regard to the method of people's representation are such that the people's will is distorted, rather than reflected, in the number of seats received by the political parties in comparison with the votes polled by them.

Second, even within the framework of the system, men of wealth are in a position to so influence the process of voting that very little remains of a genuine expression of the people's will.

Third, over and above the power wielded by the men of wealth is the fact that the ruling party, which is rapidly getting discredited among the people, is making improper

use of the administrative machinery in order to maintain itself in power.

We are not giving examples to substantiate the points mentioned above. We can give them orally or in a subsequent supplementary note, if so desired by the Committee. We are more concerned with the suggestions which, according to us, will help to overcome these defects.

Constitutional amendments providing for proportional representation and for the right of recall are suggested to overcome the first defect. The argument usually advanced against this suggestion is that it will lead to instability. This, according to us, is not a valid criticism, for, what the Constitutional amendments do is only to facilitate the correct reflection of the popular support of each party by guaranteeing that it gets representation in the elected bodies in proportion to its popular support. If this results in instability, the solution for the instability lies elsewhere, not in distorting the popular will. Furthermore, the present system itself has not helped political stability. The 22 years that have elapsed since the first General Election have seen such a political instability all over the country that nobody can claim that the present system will reduce—not to speak of prevent—instability. The present system, therefore, has the double disadvantage of (a) distorting popular will, and (b) being unable to reduce political instability.

Defects two and three are in a way inter-related.

Apart from the all-important suggestion we have made at the beginning of this note, we make the following suggestions to overcome these defects.

1. There should be restrictions not only on the expenses incurred by the candidate and his party, but also on the number of posters issued, vehicles used, other propaganda material distributed, etc. We are not here going concretely into the numbers and amounts to be fixed in each case. What is important is that candidates and parties who can command huge resources should not be permitted to use them to the disadvantage of smaller parties and individual

candidates. We submit that such restrictions on the use of propaganda material is inherent in the restriction on the financial expenditure incorporated in the Constitution.

2. All-India Radio and Television should, for the duration of the election campaign, be under the supervision of the all parties' committee referred to in the point above.

3. All vehicular traffic (other than the normal railway and bus services and vehicle used by the official agencies) should be prohibited for the duration of the period in which election propaganda is prohibited. Even the normal bus services should be prohibited from the midnight preceding the polling till the end of polling. (This is necessary to prevent large-scale transport of voters in vehicles which, though prohibited on paper, is in fact done on a large-scale by candidates and parties with huge resources at their disposal. It will also help the detection and prevention of transport of groups to intimidate voters and to resort to bogus voting.)

4. In view of the prohibition of vehicular traffic on the polling day, polling booths will have to be larger in number and nearer to the voters. Booths should be so located that no voter is obliged to walk more than a mile. Furthermore, mobile polling booths should be organized for the benefit of those who cannot walk at all.

5. The system of taking signatures of voters and marking on the counterfoil, introduced recently, should be cancelled.

6. Counting of votes should be done at the polling booth itself immediately after the polling is over. This will obviate the need for transporting the ballot box from the booth to the counting station which involves possibilities of large-scale tampering. Compared to this advantage, the likelihood of harassment of villagers by the local gentry (who come to know the trend of voting in the area) is, in our opinion, a risk worth taking; a conscious and well-organized people's movement is the only guarantee against repression by such local gentry.

## **The Licence Scandal\***

**Editorial of "People's Democracy"  
December 15, 1974**

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her colleagues in the Central Government should take the entire blame for all the disturbances in the two Houses of Parliament which made it impossible for a month to transact the business for which the winter session was called.

They know, as the entire people in the country know, that the notorious Pondicherry licence affair which came before Parliament in the last session, had created legitimate suspicions in the minds of the common people about the doings of the Foreign Trade Ministry headed by the present Railway Minister. People at large and the Opposition in Parliament cannot be satisfied unless and until a full probe is made by a Committee of Parliament.

Facts had come before Parliament in August last showing that applications made by 21 businessmen in Pondicherry which had been rejected by four former Ministers of Foreign Trade were taken into reconsideration when the present Railway Minister was holding that office. That it was 22 Congress Members of Parliament from North India who championed the case of the businessmen from the South naturally created the suspicion.

The mystery surrounding this became still more hardened when most of them—all of them except one, in fact—alleged that if their signatures are found in the petition, they

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\*Refer Document under Item No. 78 of this Volume.

are forgeries. One of them, however, admitted that he had in fact signed it.

Members of Parliament, including those in whose name and with whose signatures the petition had been submitted to the Minister, rightly considered this to be a fit case for a thorough enquiry by a Committee of Parliament. For, the honour of Parliament as a whole as well as of every one of its members individually, was involved. The suspicion surrounding the Minister and 22 Members of Parliament belonging to the ruling party cannot be removed through an enquiry by a body like the CBI whose officers are committed to the Prime Minister and her colleagues. Nothing less than an enquiry by a body in which the Opposition will also be represented will be competent to conduct an impartial enquiry. The demand for such an enquiry was, therefore, raised on the floor of Parliament even by those Members of Parliament who were involved in the case, but they were forced on pain of disciplinary action to withdraw their demand. The Government, however, assured the House that a thorough enquiry would be conducted by the CBI, after which the House would be taken into confidence.

A couple of days before the present session of Parliament was to meet, however, it was announced that the CBI had completed its probe, found three persons (including one M.P.) guilty and filed charges against them in the Court. This was a clear violation of the assurance given to Parliament. It was, in fact, a scarcely veiled trick to bar any discussion in Parliament, since the fact of a charge having been filed in the court would make any discussion on it *sub judice*. The entire Opposition was, therefore, rightly indignant and protested against the contempt in which the Government was holding Parliament.

The utter irresponsibility of this whole approach has now become clear to all interested observers. There is not one national newspaper worth the name which has not adversely commented on the manner in which the Government handled the case. Within the ruling party itself, it is known, the feel-

ing is strong that the Government bungled in the whole affair.

It would, therefore, have been unimaginable for the Government to do what it did—consistently and stoutly reject the Opposition demand that all the relevant material concerning the CBI inquiry should be placed on the table of the House. That it adopted this course is clear proof that this Government, having found itself thoroughly exposed, does not dare face an enquiry.

To this dogged refusal of the Government to concede the demand of the Opposition should be traced all the disturbances in the two Houses of Parliament which brought to a halt for a month the normal functioning of Parliament. That the Government had at last to yield substantial ground by agreeing to place all the relevant papers before the leaders of the Opposition shows the utter baselessness of the Government's case and the position adopted by it for so long.

The end of the confrontation in Parliament, however, is not the end of the struggle. It is only the end of one and the beginning of another phase in the struggle for exposure of corruption indulged in by the Congress rulers. The charge-sheet in the licence case itself brings out the undue interest shown by Minister L. N. Mishra in having the case re-opened. The lawyer-like defence put up by him in his statement before the House on December 9 would not detract from the fact that it was in his time, through a noting by his Personal Assistant and in the name of 22 Congress M.P.s, that the case was re-opened.

Nor can it be disputed that the key figure in the whole episode, Tul Mohan Ram, who had to be suspended by the Congress party, made "donations", including the one for putting up a school in the name of the Minister's father.

Even supposing that nothing more incriminating is found in the material that will be made available to M.P.'s the very bare facts that have come out in the charge-sheet filed by the CBI would be enough to expose the Railway Minister and all those who support him.

This, however, is only one among the innumerable cases which bring out the brazen manner in which the leaders of the ruling Congress party and of the Government are abusing their power not only against the Opposition and in the interests of their own *party*, but even to serve their *narrow personal interests*.



## **Statement on Current Situation\***

**Issued by the Central Committee of the CPI(M)  
following its session in Calcutta on  
December 4-9, 1974**

Meeting in Calcutta from December 4 to 9, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) reviewed the economic and political situation in the country as it developed since it met last in September.

### **Further Deepening of Crisis**

It noted that far from easing as is claimed by the leaders of the ruling party and the Government, the economic crisis has further deepened.

The slight fall in wholesale prices of some commodities does not indicate any easing of the situation regarding the economic crisis. It, on the other hand, shows that the steady fall in the common people's purchasing power—the result of rising prices of the most essential consumer goods combined with wage freeze and other attacks on the wage and salary-earning population as well as relatively lower prices for the products of peasants and small producers—has begun to have its impact on the market, showing signs of consumer resistance. Furthermore, the fall in wholesale prices of certain commodities has not reached the consumers.

What are called “anti-inflationary” measures like the credit squeeze have further intensified the crisis by adding to the difficult problems faced by small industries in general. Together with the fiasco of planning which has led to a drastic

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reduction in investment, this has brought several industries into a state of stagnation and closure.

The Government which has brought the country into the present economic disaster, is eager to open the gates for the free and unfettered penetration of foreign capital, specially U.S. capital. The recent talks between the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. Kissinger, and our Government's representatives, the repeated offers made to the multi-national monopoly companies of Japan, Western Europe and the USA and the talks and agreements entered into between the Shah of Iran and our Government—all go to show that the Government has come to believe that massive aid from the U.S. and other foreign monopolists alone can salvage the crisis ridden economy of the country. The Government, while utilizing all the aid and assistance from the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries of Eastern Europe to ease the economic crisis and to increase its bargaining position, is following such policies that make the country extremely vulnerable to neo-colonial attacks. The people will have to be alerted against this danger and mobilized to fight against it.

The inevitable result is increasing unemployment in the industrial sector at the very time when unemployment in all other sectors is already serious, and even the educated are unable to secure jobs.

### **Growing Struggles**

Such a deterioration in the economic situation in the country, together with the continuing non-availability of foodgrains, the collapse of what is called the public distribution system, the consequent famine and even starvation deaths in several parts of the country and so on have naturally added to the discontent of the people. The C.C. notes the growing phenomenon of class and mass struggles all over the country. The C.C. heard reports of conventions, rallies, demonstrations, struggles of various kinds in which the organized working class is engaged. Agitations against famine, food scarcity, high prices and so on are also taking place. The C.C. heard

reports of the activities of Party units as well as of the Kisan Sabha and agricultural labour organizations in mobilizing peasants and agricultural labourers on the urgent problems facing them and for the realization of their immediate demands. Various forms of agitation and struggles are also being developed by the organizations of the students, youth, women and so on.

### **Repressive Measures**

The C.C. noted that while the working people and their class and mass organizations as well as the Left and democratic parties are thus engaged in developing movements and struggles on the problems arising out of the deepening economic crisis, the ruling Congress party, with the support and assistance of its Right Communist and other allies, is sharpening its weapons to be used in the struggle against the masses, their organizations and the Opposition parties. The Government is still continuing the Emergency even though nearly three years have passed after the Indo-Pakistan war was terminated. The draconian provisions in the Defence of India Rules are used in order to prevent the working people from exercising their legitimate rights including their right to get such immediate demands as D.A. and bonus. Using the DIR, the MISA and other Black Acts, they are banning meetings, demonstrations and other forms of people exercising their freedom of speech. They are denying the legitimate right of every citizen to freely move about the country by the brazen use of the provision for externment of any individual from wherever the authorities do not like him to go.

The C.C. notes that these repressive measures have not stemmed the tide of people's resistance. On the other hand, the people are courageously facing the lathi-charges, firings, lock-up tortures and so on and yet coming out in larger and larger numbers in protest against the policies and practices of the Central and State Governments. The C.C. greets the lakhs of people who have participated in such resistance actions. Belonging as they do to various political parties and

mass organizations, their actions in jointly or separately resisting the anti-people policies and practices of the Congress regime have added a new chapter to the history of the growing unity of the common people in the country.

### **Rampant Corruption**

One of the reasons for the growing discontent of the people and their growing resistance to the Government policies is the rampant corruption both at the administrative and political levels. This, in fact, was one of the biggest factors which roused the millions in Gujarat and Bihar to rise against the State Governments. This has also been reflected on the floor of Parliament as well as in various State Legislatures. The struggle against corruption has thus become one of the most important factors that binds various sections of the democratic movement in the country.

The C.C. noted the happenings in Parliament around the issue of the notorious Pondicherry licence scandal. It denounced the brazen manner in which the ruling party tried to bar a discussion on it on the floor of the House. The pettiness of the tricks resorted to, however, was so transparent that there was nobody to justify the stand adopted by the Government which in the end had to concede the demand of the Opposition, though not fully.

What happened to the Pondicherry licence case in Parliament, the C.C. noted, also happened in Kerala with regard to the notorious forest case. Here, the Opposition demand was sought to be resisted by the Government through crude tricks and stratagems. The demand, however, had in the end to be partially conceded.

### **New Manoeuvres of Ruling Party**

The C.C. noted that the loss of prestige suffered by the ruling party and the factional rivalries that have riven the Congress are sought to be compensated for by new manoeuvres. The much advertised "offensive" against smugglers, the slogans of time-bound programme of organizing

the system of public distribution and catering to the needs of the rural poor, tightening the organization of the ruling party through the holding of 500 camps all over the country, the recruitment and training of 50 lakh Seva Dal volunteers—all these are intended to give a new “face” to the ruling party from the top to the bottom. This is calculated to enable the ruling party to approach the electorate once again and to get a new mandate from the people as they got in 1971 and 1972.

The C.C. desires to warn the entire Opposition against the timing and manner of conducting the elections to the Lok Sabha as well as to the Legislatures of such States as Gujarat, Pondicherry, Bihar, Kerala and so on where elections are due either in early 1976 or still earlier. While the Prime Minister, the Election Commission and other authorities make open declarations denying the idea of having any snap elections to the Lok Sabha, there are indications that a snap election might be held in early 1975. Still more important is the fact that whenever the elections are held, they will be held in the most undemocratic manner.

### **Conditions for Fair Elections**

The semi-fascist terror imposed in West Bengal still continues. In several constituencies the activities of the Opposition parties are not allowed. Under these conditions it is hypocritical to talk of free and fair elections in the State of West Bengal.

Although not to that extent, repression of various shades and degrees is going on in Kerala, parts of Andhra Pradesh and so on. The technique of organizing armed gangs of Congress “volunteers” whose attacks will be supplemented by those of the police, was perfected in West Bengal and is now being sought to be extended to the entire country. The Narora directive of organizing Seva Dal volunteers all over the country is in fact the well-calculated plan to organize such armed gangs on a countrywide basis. Putting an end to this is the essential pre-requisite for that free and fair

elections about which the ruling as well as other Opposition parties are taking.

The C.C. considered the various proposals that are made by the Opposition parties on electoral reforms. It is glad to note that there is a consensus within the ranks of the Opposition on the need for proportional representation, the right to recall and other changes in the Constitution. There is agreement also on the urgency to making effective provisions to prevent the use of money power in the electoral process. The CPI(M), for its part, has in its memorandum to the Tarkunde Committee appointed by Jaya Prakash Narayan made its views well known. It hopes that all Opposition parties would exert the maximum pressure on the Government to break its resistance to electoral reforms, since the ending of the terror regime in West Bengal and other parts of the country together with drastic changes in the electoral system are the essential pre-requisite for a democratic election.

The C.C. holds that whether it is for developing countrywide mass struggles against the anti-people policies of the Congress regime or for breaking the resistance of the ruling Congress party to the urgently needed electoral reforms or for defeating the Congress in the elections whenever they are held, the crying need is to unite all the Left and democratic political forces in the country. The C.C. pledges itself to work towards forging such a unity.

### **Right Communist Disruption**

The biggest impediment in the way of forging the unity of Left and democratic forces is the Right Communist Party which was one of the biggest single force during the last five years that contributed to the disruption of the unity of the Left and democratic forces which had to a certain extent been realized in the mass and electoral struggles of 1966-69. Joining hands first with the anti-Marxist elements inside the united front such as the Bangla Congress and the Muslim League, the Right Communist Party in the end ended in

collaborating with the ruling Congress itself to overthrow the Marxist-led Left governments of Kerala and West Bengal. The logic of their action in this regard has now led them to the abandonment of even their earlier pretence of working on the basis of “unity-struggle-unity” with the ruling Congress party. The draft Political Resolution released by their National Council for discussion in the ranks preparatory to their Tenth Party Congress has shamelessly declared that they would work for the realization of the objective of forming a Congress-Right Communist Coalition Government at the Centre and that, as an immediate aim, they would try to secure such Coalition Governments in as many States as possible.

This open collaboration with the ruling Congress party to the extent of forming Coalition Governments at the Centre and in the States is sought to be justified on the alleged danger of an imminent takeover of political power by the forces of fascist Right. Their very draft resolution, however, admits that it is the anti-democratic policies of the Congress Government that have created fertile grounds for the growth of the Rightist forces in the country. Furthermore, they admit that after five years of their attempts to shift the Congress and its Government to the Left, Congress policies have in fact shifted to the Right leading to a crisis which is unprecedented in the history of independent India. Yet, they are trying (as they did in 1968 and later) to oppose and slander those very Left and democratic forces—the CPI(M) above all—which have been consistently fighting the policies of the Congress Government. This struggle against the Congress Government and its policies is, according to them, “blind anti-Congressism”.

### **Distorting the Concept**

The Right Communists, like their Congress allies, are distorting the essence of the concept of Left and democratic unity, which is that the mass of the working people together with the Left and democratic political parties and mass

organizations should unite their forces against the landlord-bourgeois policies of the ruling party as well as of such Opposition parties as stand behind the interests of the propertied classes. The 27 years of Congress rule have shown that the Congress party being in power and exercising its power in the interests of the owning classes have always been and still are the saviours of the owning classes led by the monopolists and in alliance with the foreign capitalists and that, therefore, anybody who claims to be Left or democratic should fight the Congress regime even while making no political compromise with such Opposition parties as champion the cause of the owning classes.

### **Socialist Party's Position**

It is from this point of view that the C.C. views with regret the fact that the Socialist Party, whose leaders had agreed with the CPI(M) that it was necessary for the two parties together with all other radical forces in the country to work towards the creation of a viable radical alternative through the development of mass struggles, has been departing from this path. An essential element in this programme of creating a viable *radical* alternative is that the Left and democratic forces should make no political alliances with the forces of the Right even though, as two sections of the Opposition, there may be synchronized actions against particular measures of the Congress regime. The leaders of the Socialist Party, however, have regrettably abandoned this position by joining the Jana Sangh, BLD and the Congress(O) in a National Co-ordination Committee. The C.C. is of the view that if the leaders of the Socialist Party persist in this it will only end in a repetition of that very polarisation between the Congress-Right C.P. alliance on the one hand and the so-called Grand Alliance on the other which was the characteristic feature of the 1971-72 elections.

The C.C. notes that as opposed to such polarisation, there are possibilities of consolidating the Left and democratic forces as is seen in Kerala. Four Left parties in that State—



the CPI(M), S.P., KSP and KTP—are striving to unite all the Left and democratic forces that are willing to unite on the basis of a common minimum programme. If such democratic unity and a united front fructifies, it will become the focus around which democratic elements in other parties also may be rallied. There is, however, no question of either the Jana Sangh, BLD or the Congress(O) joining it.

### **Appeal for Unity**

In West Bengal, too, the possibility for a Left and democratic front is real, if only the combined pressure of all the democratic and Opposition forces in the entire country is built to break the resistance of the Central and State Governments and create conditions for the conducting of free and fair elections. That, in its turn, will create the necessary conditions in every State for the consolidation of Left and democratic forces which is the pre-requisite for working towards the viable radical alternative to which the S.P. and the CPI(M) have committed themselves.

The C.C. appeals to all democratic parties, mass organizations and individuals to work towards the development of such a unity of Left and democratic forces.

## **On Indo-Pak Trade Agreement\***

**Resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its session in Calcutta on December 4-9, 1974**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) welcomes the joint decision of the two Governments to resume Indo-Pakistan trade which was stopped some time ago. The two countries having economies that are supplementary to each other, the development of trade relations between them would help the peoples of both countries.

While it is thus a welcome step, the resumption of mutual trade should be considered only as a step to further advance the process of normalisation of mutual relations in all respects. It is therefore regrettable that normalisation as visualised in the Simla Agreement is proceeding at a very slow pace. The Indian people would expect their Government to take all positive measures to accelerate the process.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, December 15, 1974.

## **Resolution on Kashmir\***

**Adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M)  
in its session in Calcutta on December 4-9, 1974**

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) expresses its disappointment that the dialogue between the Government of India and the leaders of the democratic movement in the State of Jammu and Kashmir headed by Sheikh Abdullah, has not reached the conclusion that was expected of them. The continuance of the deadlock is not conducive to that restoration of peace within the State and in Centre-State relations that alone will deprive the disruptive communal forces of the opportunity to make the whole region a hotbed of tension, thus facilitating imperialist intrigues. The C.C. calls on the Government of India to expedite the process of bringing normalcy to the internal relations in Kashmir as well as in the relations between that State and the Centre.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, December 15, 1974.

## **Statement on Bihar Movement\***

**Adopted by the Central Committee of the CPI(M) in its session in Calcutta on December 4-9, 1974**

*The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), meeting in Calcutta on December 4-9, has adopted the following statement on the Bihar movement :*

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) greets the people of Bihar, who are engaged in a prolonged struggle for certain legitimate and democratic demands, including the dissolution of the Assembly and the resignation of the Government and free and fair election. It notes particularly the magnificent participation of the people in the continuous three-day bandh from October 3 to 5, the Patna and Bihar bandhs on November 5 and 6 and the response to the call of the rally on November 18 which was far bigger than the rallies of the Right Communist Party and Congress put together.

In the same period many members and supporters of the CPI(M) were arrested and detained under the MISA for participating in independent movements on various demands of the people, including the demands of the movement led by Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan. The C.C. greets all those who participated in such movements.

The C.C. rejects outright the Congress Working Committee's dangerous stand in asserting that the people have no right to struggle for democratic demands and for the removal of an elected Government and recall of elected members of a

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Legislature, whatever crimes they commit and however much they betray their pledges. It strongly condemns the call of the Congress to its followers to organize "counter offensives" against the struggling people and the violent and repressive measures of the Government to suppress the movement as seen on November 4 in Patna.

The Congress Government is violating all democratic norms and civilized behaviour in dealing with the Opposition. The machinery of the Government is being used by the Congress and the Right C.P. to bolster themselves. This is not fortuitous. It is part of the well-laid plan of the ruling party to bar the advance of the democratic movements and the Opposition, to perpetuate itself in power by resorting to any means. It is in keeping with the notorious "liberation struggle" in 1959 to overthrow the duly elected Communist Government in Kerala; the semi-fascist terror and subversion of parliamentary democracy in West Bengal in 1972; and the police methods supplemented by gangster attacks in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and other parts of India.

The C.C. notes with indignation that the Right Communists are acting as shameless agents of the ruling party in every part of the country, shielding its misdeeds and doing all that is possible to prevent Left and democratic unity.

The C.C. while according full support to the popular demands and the movement in Bihar, is unable to participate in the Bihar Jana Sangharsh Samiti or in the All-India Co-ordination Committee due to the inclusion and active participation of avowedly reactionary parties like the Jana Sangh, BLD, Congress(O), the policies and programmes of which are against the interests of the people.

Moreover, a serious drawback of the movement lies in the fact that the specific and urgent demands of the peasants, agricultural workers, factory workers and other working people have not been taken up and unless these sections are drawn in, the effectiveness of the struggle and the sweep of the movement will be greatly limited. The Congress leadership may also find it easier to divert attention from its

policies to confuse and mislead the people by pointing to the Right reactionary programme of some of the parties in the combine which are trying to take advantage of the situation.

The C.C. considers a Left and democratic programme as the only alternative to the reactionary policies of the Congress, and it is only a front of Left and democratic forces which can successfully confront it.

These aspects of the drawbacks, weaknesses and limitations of the movement have been discussed by representatives of the CPI(M) with Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan and the Socialist Party and some other Left parties and a joint communique has also been issued by J. P., the CPI(M) and S.P. on the need to radicalise the movement. But it notes that no joint actions have been organized in co-operation between the CPI(M), S.P. and J.P. on the demands of the workers and peasants.

Unfortunately, neither J.P. nor the other Left parties could yet be convinced by our Party about the dangers of associating with the parties of reactionary Opposition and the need to exclude them and to build up a Left and democratic alternative as the only way to meet the challenge of the Congress. Our Party is, therefore, attempting to build up movements on its own with the general democratic demands of the movement led by J.P. together with concrete urgent demands of the workers and peasants. It will also continue to attempt to build up movements under united committees with Left and democratic parties wherever possible and will keep in close touch with J.P. and other Left parties so that synchronized movements can be organized on specific occasions, while preserving our independent position.

The C.C. calls upon our Party units and the people to organize mass rallies and demonstrations throughout the country in support of the popular demands raised in Bihar and against the counter-measures of the Congress and its Government to suppress it.

Similarly, though we are opposed to the concept of J.P.

that selection of candidates to the Assembly and Lok Sabha should be made by the Jana Sangharsh Committees which he wants to function as a superparty, replacing the existing parties, the C.C will do everything possible to co-ordinate our campaign and movements with those led by J.P. for free and fair election, for proportional representation and right of recall of Legislators and right of vote for adults over 18 years. This must be linked up particularly with the struggle against terror in West Bengal and for restoration of democratic liberties.

The C.C. appeals to all Left and democratic parties, organizations and individuals to realise the need for well-organized and countrywide movements against the authoritarian rule of the Congress Government which is launching attack after attack on all sections of the common people. The only way in which this danger can be met is by the unity of the Left and democratic forces in the country. Any attempt to set up a united front of the entire Opposition without any distinction between its Rightist and Leftist elements will only help the ruling Congress to confuse the people, thereby weakening and disrupting the ranks of those who should be mobilised against the regime.

## **P.B.'s homage to Comrade Rajani Palme Dutt\***

It is with deep grief that the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) heard the demise of Comrade Rajani Palme Dutt on December 20, 1974.

A front ranking leader of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Comrade RPD was closely associated with the Communist movement in India all through his life. It was only a Communist Party in an imperialist country that can champion the cause of the freedom of its colonies and we recall with pride the CPGB's fight for Indian independence and its active support for our freedom struggle. The integration of our freedom struggle with the Communist movement in Great Britain was to a great extent personified in Comrade RPD.

Comrade RPD was not only a leader of the CPGB. As a Marxist theoretician and as a member of the Executive of the Communist International, he made a big contribution to the international Communist movement, specially to the national liberation movement represented by the Communist Parties.

We dip our Red Banner in homage to Comrade RPD and convey our heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family.

*December 22, 1974.*

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## Rajani Palme Dutt\*

### His life and work

Comrade Rajani Palme Dutt was born on June 19, 1896. His father, Upendra Krishna Dutt (born in Calcutta on October 17, 1857) left for England in 1878 for medical studies and settled in Cambridge as a practising doctor— what was called a six-penny doctor or a poor man's doctor in those days.

Upendra Krishna Dutt had extensive contacts with the leaders of the National Congress and RPD used to say he got his first political baptism listening to the discussions between his father's friends. He dedicated *India Today* "To my father, Upendra Krishna Dutt, who taught me the beginnings of political understanding—to love the Indian people and all people struggling for freedom".

He graduated from a school in Cambridge with highest honours and securing a county scholarship. After the outbreak of the First World War, in 1915, RPD was conscripted into the Army, but soon found himself in prison for propagating anti-war ideas from a Socialist standpoint. Though not yet a full-fledged Communist, he had characterized the war as imperialist. His exposure of prison conditions made things too hot for the authorities and they released him as good riddance.

In Oxford from October 1916, he founded the Socialist Society and organized a meeting in October 1917 to welcome the coming Great October Revolution in Russia,

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Conservative students created trouble, but it was RPD who was expelled from Oxford. He was allowed to appear in the examination next year, but under three stringent conditions—he must reach Oxford only the night before the examination, must leave Oxford immediately on termination of the examination and must not address any public meeting during his stay in Oxford. He got First Class in all the eight papers of Classics (Greek and Latin).

The Communist Unity Convention was held on July 31, August 1, 1920. RPD was one of the founder members of the Party.

In 1922, a Party Reorganization Commission was appointed with RPD as Chairman. Its report helped to unify the Party and laid the basis for its further development.

In 1920, Salme Murik, a Finnish, had come to London on behalf of the Comintern to help in the organization of the CPGB and she and RPD were married in 1922. She predeceased RPD by two years.

From 1924, RPD had to live in Belgium and other countries of Western Europe, sometimes openly, sometimes underground or semi-underground, working as one of the leaders of the Communist International's West European Bureau. He had founded the *Labour Monthly* in 1921 and his famous "Notes of the Month" were not interrupted even while he was in Western Europe for 12 years from 1924 to 1936.

In 1936, the Dutt-Bradley Thesis was written in Brussels for the Communist Party of India.

RPD came back to London in 1937 after attending the Seventh Congress of the Comintern. He was then a member of the Polit Bureau of the CPGB, editor of the Party's daily, *Daily Worker* and also of *Labour Monthly* and member of the six-man Popular Front Committee composed of the Independent Labour Party, Socialist Party and the CPGB. In 1939, he was elected General Secretary of the Party and continued in that post till 1941, during the imperialist phase of the war.

In March 1946 he came to India for the first time as

Correspondent of *Daily Worker* to cover the Cabinet Mission, and travelled all over India and interviewed almost all the important political leaders of the country.

RPD is the author of a number of well-known books—*Socialism and the Living Wage*, *Two Internationals* written in the early twenties; *Life of Lenin*, *World Politics*, *Fascism and the Social Revolution* in the early thirties; *India Today*, *Britain in the World Front* in the early forties; *Crisis of Britain and the British Empire* in the fifties; and *The Internationale* in the sixties.

RPD retired from the leadership of the CPGB in 1967 due to bad health but continued as editor of the *Labour Monthly* till the day of his death. For the last two years, he was literally confined to bed but he wrote his "Notes of the Month", and carried on the general editorial work with un-failing regularity, writing as always in the same terse analytical style.



## There is Scope for United Actions, United Struggles\*

B.T. Ranadive

“Sri Siddhartha Shankar Ray is an unalloyed bourgeois”,  
Dange at the AITUC Session.

“We are a bourgeois Government no doubt, but the Government had provided funds for the AITUC exhibition”—  
Siddhartha Shankar Ray.

These repartees reveal the reality about the AITUC session.

The first reveals the public stand of the leadership—the pose of the class struggle. The second reveals the inner relationship—class collaboration for which the Congress Government obliges the leadership with financial help.

This is not to belittle the importance of the hundreds of delegates who came to attend the session from all parts of the country nor to challenge their integrity or honesty, their concern for the cause of the workers.

Quite a number of those delegates had participated in recent strike-struggles; a large number of them were active in united struggles along with CITU, some of them had to fight their own opportunist and corrupt leaders to forge unity for action. Some of them had seen many a trade union battle in the past and were victimised by the employers or jailed by the Government. They genuinely desire unity, defence of the interests of the working class. Some of them seem to be developing misgivings about the line pursued by the leadership and this found expression in their speeches.

\*Published in “PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY”, Calcutta, February 18, 1973.

### **Precedence to Ruling Party**

The ranks did not know that the disgusting pomp and display of show was based on Government patronage and finance. Newspapers correctly reported the venue of the session as a mini-Bidhan Nagar which neatly sums up the situation, for everyone knew what it conveyed.

Naturally, then, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, West Bengal Chief Minister and author and justifier of the notorious labour Ordinances which the session later condemned, virtually inaugurated the session. He had preference over the fraternal delegates from Socialist and other countries. It was, therefore, logical that with this precedence to the ruling party and the bourgeoisie, the AITUC leaders should refuse to invite the CITU for fraternal greetings.

The reports and the resolutions of the session express this contradiction between the Right Communist Party's necessity of alliance with the Government and of striking a radical class pose to meet the militancy of the delegates and the workers, who are under constant attack.

On the one hand, concentrating fire on the monopolists in such a way as to exonerate the Government from the economic consequences of its class policies; extolling the "progressive", sections of the Government and the public sector; on the other hand, sallies against the Government and the ruling party where Government policies cannot be screened because of their direct attack on the workers. At the same time, the central point is to maintain the class collaboration and alliance with the ruling party. Therefore, despite the denunciation, the steps proposed are such as not to disturb this alliance. Hence the trade union unity that is advocated is to include only the INTUC, HMS and AITUC—the unity which the Labour Department of the Government of India has been working for. The CITU and other militant organizations are to be excluded, though occasional calls may be given.

The ruling party does not require unity beyond this because what it requires is a facade for its anti-labour policies and disruption of working class struggles.

## **No Word About Semi-Fascist Terror**

The session gave a visible demonstration of this line of the Right C.P. leadership which dominates the AITUC.

The leaders pretending to represent the most advanced class, expressing their concern for democracy everywhere, and the national tasks of the working class, had not a word to say about the semi-fascist terror in West Bengal, the murder of more than 700 cadres and members of the CPI(M) and CITU, the occupation of more than 200 offices of CITU unions by Congress goondas, the uprooting of 40,000 people from their homes, the hundreds of people put in jail, with some denied bail for three years and the rigging of the elections. How could the leadership protest against it since their role has been that of the abettor and slanderer on behalf of the ruling party? The role of the Right C.P. and the AITUC leadership has been that of disruption of the Left to bring success to their ally. They have condemned repression everywhere else, but not in West Bengal. They have passed even a resolution demanding release of Naxalites but not of CITU leaders held under MISA or on fake murder charges.

The leadership concealed from the ranks the danger to the working class arising from a trend towards one-party dictatorship and the semi-fascist terror in West Bengal.

At the same time, they had to take notice of the goondaism of their allies against their own unions and cadres. Their resolution does not mention the West Bengal Government but says, "Of late, political leaders in Government have encouraged attacks on rivals in order to 'capture' unions and even to 'liquidate' the cadre belonging to other groups". In their report they say the same thing but slanderously accuse the CPI(M) of starting violent attacks with the support of the U.F. Government. But now they are being made to pay the price of treachery. But even then there is no review of the past mistakes nor a condemnation of the Congress Government.

**Economic Analysis and Presentation**

A convenient analysis is made that the entire crisis, the rise in prices, etc. are just the mischief of the monopolists and the poor innocent Government of Smt. Indira Gandhi is being misled. "And high-placed Government leaders and even a person like Indira Gandhi are led into believing that a moratorium on strikes and wages is the only solution to rise in prices". Poor Indira Gandhi, a few months ago she was misled into plagiarising a third-rate Pakistan economist's views; now she is misled into following the big bad wolf of the monopolists. This is a refined service to the bourgeois landlord Government.

The demand for the nationalisation without compensation of all monopolist concerns is of course a correct demand. But can it be achieved by sowing illusions about Indira Gandhi?

Why cheat the workers? The monopolists are the creation of Congress policies. They have existed and fattened on the various Plans. Congress policies protect them.

Take the question of high prices. While the monopolists, the hoarders, no doubt, do their best to raise them, is not the major element the Congress Government's deficit financing—the specific way of capital formation for their so-called Plans. The robbery of the people through this deficit financing which leads to rising prices is a continuing element and helps the monopolists. Do not the AITUC leaders know it? In their report, they hold the Government responsible for rising prices along with the monopolists. But this is a "deviation" which is corrected in the resolution and only the monopolists are made responsible and the Government is screened.

That is why at every step in spite of some criticism here and there, an alibi is established for the Government. Do we not feel, know the excruciating tax burden imposed by the Congress Government? Is the working class free from it? Does not this tax-burden on commodities raise their prices including prices of necessities of life? But of this you will



not find a word in the report. Even when they refute the argument that rise in wages causes rise in prices, the leaders carefully avoid any reference to Excise and other taxation adding to the prices of commodities.

### **Illusions About Public Sector**

Then illusions are being created to give a boost to the public sector. Every worker should know that nationalisation by a bourgeois-landlord Government cannot bring about a qualitative change, cannot even remove the corruption and inefficiency—for after all it is capitalism—ownership of the capitalist State. If the working class supports nationalisation it is because it gives it a tactical advantage in its struggle for Socialism, also an immediate advantage to the working class and the people in unmasking the role of the Government as an above-the-class organisation and for enforcing some of its demands by drawing the people into its struggle. Besides it is absolutely essential to expose the Congress claim that their 'nationalisation' is a step towards Socialism.

The reformist leaders of the AITUC, following the line of the revisionist leaders of the Right C.P., boost up the public sector and its potentialities under Congress rule in a thoroughly unrealistic manner.

They correctly attack anti-working class practices in the public sector, police verification, etc, which are evident to the workers. They correctly say that the public sector is a State capitalist sector. Having made this 'class' formulation, they pipe down : "However since the bourgeoisie is that of a newly liberated country which takes anti-imperialist positions through laying the foundation for industrial advance and helping it towards self-reliance has anti-imperialist potentialities.... The consolidation and expansion of the public sector could help in reducing foreign imperialist dependence and could form the basis of a rapid industrial advance."

They themselves destroy this rosy illusion when they say, "We need not describe this process as everybody now

admits, including our present Congress Government, how much mortgaged we are to the USA, the World Bank .... The Government of India had to ask the World Bank for debt relief for this year, another next, before it makes its new budget for 1973-74.... we have now come to a stage where most of our export earnings have to be used for paying back these foreign loans.”

This is the experience of the last 25 years. The excuse that the bourgeois friends of the Right C.P. leaders are building an independent economy through their public sector does not hold water. They are building capitalism and getting enmeshed with greater reliance on foreign monopolists. One can justifiably say that the entire position would have been hopeless had it not been for the help of the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries.

Instead of exposing this, warning against this while supporting nationalisation, illusions are raised that these evils can be removed by a few reforms, by calling for removal of some bureaucrats, that the public sector can be really made to function in the interests of the people without a change in the class ownership. The workers should certainly fight against all the evils in the public sector, expose them, demand improvements, but there should be no illusion that under the present class rule it will cease to be an instrument of exploitation.

The trick here is to justify class collaboration, and support to the Government by advancing the excuse that it is the bourgeoisie of a newly liberated country.

### **Foreign Capital**

The AITUC leaders with their international affiliations are supposed to be fully alive to the American danger. The American penetration in our economic life, the mortgaging of our resources, the CIA activities, which recently led the Congress Government to protest—all these are of vital importance to the working class. The AITUC leaders who spread illusions about the Congress and public sector in the name

of fighting imperialism should have attached all the more importance to it. But, strangely enough, after narrating that we are mortgaged to the USA, there is no demand in the report nor is there a separate resolution demanding confiscation of foreign monopoly capital, its nationalisation, nor a demand for at least moratorium on all foreign imperialist debts. Why this omission? We had presumed that at least this opposition to imperialism was common between us and them. Is it just due to the non-serious methods of functioning? Or is it due to a feeling that such a demand will embarrass the big ally or is it the international atmosphere of *detente* that is exercising its influence on our good Indian internationalism?

### **Collaboration and T.U. Unity**

The political outlook —the outlook of class collaboration dictates the outlook on trade union unity and explains why the AITUC leaders took the path of disruption after the May 1971 conference. It was a political necessity for them dictated by their alliance with the ruling Congress as was stated in Comrade P. Ramamurti's report to the CITU General Council meeting in Bombay in December last.

The leaders of the AITUC confirm the charge that the May 1971 unity was deliberately broken by them for the sake of their political line of collaboration with the Congress, though they mix this admission with slanderous accusations against the CITU.

"The participants in the May 18-19 conference met again on May 22 to review the Government-sponsored conference. Since then, though the three members of the convening group met several times informally, only one formal meeting of the group was held (November 18-19, 1971) and the participating organizations met in full also only once (October, 20-21, 1971).

"This is not accidental, nor due to any negligence,...

"The events after the split in the Congress led to a realignment of political forces in the country. This was further

sharpened and considerable polarisation took place during the mid-term poll (January to February 1971). In this context, the type of united platform set up by the May 18-19 conference of trade unions became more and more unrealistic. As a result of these political developments, as well as the extremely sectarian line pursued by the CITU, its open abuse and slander of other centres, and the continuation of fratricidal attacks on other unions the efforts to establish a united continuing general platform with the CITU lost validity". (29th session of the AITUC, Report of the Secretariat, pp. 112-113.)

'Political realignment' means Right C.P. collaboration with the Congress, its open disruption of the Left front, its attempt to isolate the CPI(M) at the bidding of its masters. It was during this period that Assembly elections were held, with the Right C.P. in West Bengal and elsewhere entering the electoral battle as allies of the Congress. It was in this period that the rigging of elections took place, and unprecedented gangsterism and arson were let loose on the people of West Bengal. The Right C.P., became a party to this, justifying it. Trade union unity was openly sacrificed for this new 'political realignment'.

As a price of this unity the AITUC leaders sacrificed the workers' right to recognition of unions through secret ballot. "During the course of the prolonged discussions the three centres came to agreed positions on the need of collective bargaining . . . on the method of recognition effort was made to make an advance by combining verification and ballot." (Report of the Secretariat, p. 96.)

It is clear that the leaders of the AITUC wish to continue this opportunist and disruptive outlook and policy regarding trade union unity. In pursuance of the need of the ruling party to isolate and fight the CITU and other Left trade union organizations, united in the United Council of Trade Unions, they seek an understanding only with the INTUC and the HMS and mislead their followers into believing that they are working for trade union unity. The earnest desire of

the working class to forge unity for defending its rights is utilised to restrict it within confines decided by the interests of the capitalists.

All talk of trade union unity and appeals are suspect if trade union unity is treated as a hostage to the political alliance with the bourgeoisie. The ranks of the AITUC have to decide whether this policy defends or betrays the interests of the working class. A united front of all the organizations represented at the May 1971 conference together with the INTUC has to be worked for on the basis of a common programme to fight the monopolists, the capitalists and the Congress Government's anti-labour policies. A united front to avoid confrontation with the ruling party, to fight the Left is just an instrument of class collaboration.

### **Unemployment, Wages, etc.**

It is amazing that the Secretariat's report should not seriously discuss the major problem facing the working class—the problem of unemployment. Except the demand for work and dole, there is hardly any reference to the gravity of the problem, no serious attempt to analyse it in the report. The unemployed youth is used against the trade union movement in States like West Bengal. The workers are asked to compare their condition with the unemployed and refrain from demanding increased wages. Fake plans to relieve unemployment are announced by the ruling party to create illusions among the unemployed and the employed. The huge unemployment exposes as nothing else the bankruptcy of Congress planning. It is absolutely essential to educate the workers about this inevitable consequence of bourgeois planning and call for unity of the employed and the unemployed and stave off the danger to the trade union movement. Perhaps the session had to be content with only a formal resolution.

Everyone knows that the real wage of factory workers in India has not increased since 1939. Official figures show that by 1965 itself the real wage had gone below the 1949

level which approximately represented the same wage as in 1939 on base 1961 = 100, the real wage was 97 in 1965. Since then there is a more or less continuous downward trend.

But for the AITUC leaders "It was only after Independence that the whole framework of colonial-cum-feudal wage was first *ideologically* smashed. It began to be replaced by the humanist concept and norms starting with the adoption of the resolution on need-based minimum wage". Resolution is ideological smashing. What the worker gets however is lower than the 1939 wage.

No doubt the United Front Ministries did help the workers. But see how the Secretariat's report presents the picture: "A transformation in wage structure began to be forced on the capitalists in India. In the old days we were rooted to the 25 to 30 rupees .... Today we are doing it in terms of Rs. 250." Everyone knows what value today's Rs. 250 possess. Real wage is falling and even official figures do not claim the same advance as Dange & Co. claim. But they argue even if the real wage is not high, "the change in the quantum of money terms has changed the outlook and thinking of the worker". In reality all this is nothing but the disgusting paraphrase of Indira Gandhi's statement that there has been a general betterment of living conditions of all sections and that it is untrue that the poor have become poorer.

If we have dealt with these ideological presumptions of the AITUC leaders, it is only to show to the ranks what prevents them from entering into a genuine united front with the CITU and how hollow is their cry that the latter seeks to impose its own politics on the trade unions. The AITUC session shows that it is the class collaborationist politics of the AITUC that is the obstacle in the way of enduring all-embracing unity.

The AITUC leadership claims a membership of nearly 20 lakhs and says that it represents a growth rate of 1.20 lakhs every year. None who knows the state of affairs about a

number of AITUC unions will take these figures seriously. They are intended to give a false boost to the organization and create an impression that together with the INTUC and the HMS, the AITUC covers the entire organised working class. An obliging Government is there to accept the AITUC claims.

It would have been more realistic if the leadership had properly assessed in how many strikes their unions had participated, what role they played and whether they were following correct policies. It is known that the role of the AITUC leadership in the prolonged Simpson strike in Madras was disruptive; that it vacillated on the West Bengal bandh for Bangladesh; that in the steel negotiations their role was one of succumbing to the pressure of the managements. These practices and lapses of the leaders, if they had been openly discussed, would have helped the movement.

It is again true that the AITUC unions, like unions affiliated to other central organizations, have done little for Vietnam. This shows a low level of consciousness regarding international responsibilities. There is hardly any democratic functioning in most of the unions. Dues are spasmodically collected. Meetings of the Executives are not regularly held. The participation of the workers in union activities is very little. All these weaken the trade union movement. But neither the report nor the resolution considered these serious shortcomings.

### **Scope for United Action**

In spite of this reformist ideological garbage that the leaders carry, there is plenty of scope for united actions, united struggles in defence of the working class interests only if the leaders honestly practise what they preach. The demands of the workers, of the trade union movement, cannot be ignored by the leadership. The attacks on wages, the attacks on trade union liberties that are multiplying have to be fought back. In West Bengal itself goonda attacks on the AITUC cadres have started in some places.

These attacks on cadres, these attacks on working class conditions through new policies and legislations constitute attacks on the entire trade union movement and must be resisted as such.

On some of these important questions the AITUC session has taken very correct positions, positions with which the CITU and others can easily agree. The actual movement is demanding a class opposition to governmental measures despite the class collaborationist outlook of the leadership.

The stand on industrial relations and recognition of trade unions is one which positively helps the trade union movement. It correctly notes the feature of the proposed legislation like de-registering of existing unions, increasing the powers of the bureaucracy, interfering in the internal matters of a union, provision of recognition through official verification, compulsory adjudication and nullifying the right to strike. In reality this is a programme to incorporate the trade unions in the ruling party, to have stooge unions, to extinguish all trade union liberties and make the unions an adjunct of the bourgeois-landlord Government.

The AITUC session has rejected it emphatically and made principled counter-proposals— proposals, which the CITU has been making all these months. It is good to see the AITUC leaders give up their earlier stand of combining verification with ballot and return to the secret ballot alone as the basis of recognition, statutory enforcement of the rights of recognition, settlement of all disputes through bilateral negotiations, association of minority unions and no restrictions on the right to strike.

The resolution calls all trade union organizations to come together and the CITU will gladly respond to this call. In fact, at its General Council meeting in Bombay, it welcomed the stand of the AITUC and called upon all central trade unions to come together to defeat the new offensive.

The AITUC session correctly exposes the incomes and wages policy of freezing wages. It exposes the fraudulent character of the cost of living index compiled by the au-



thorities; it demands complete neutralisation of the rise in cost of living and point to point increase in D.A.; it protests against the low wages for jobs which are manned by so-called low castes and tribals. It demands recasting wages and salaries to establish on a national and all-industrial level a need-based wage. It rejects the proposal to link wage-increases with productivity or a so-called income policy and raise all minimum wage areas to Rs. 250 per month.

The AITUC report notes : "The bourgeoisie and its Government at the Centre and the States... are all united in how to curb and control the trade union movement, though they may adopt and propose different ways to do this. Class antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the working class is at the sharpest in the matter of their relations with each other". United action for trade union rights will not be difficult if the leaders stick to this understanding.

Besides these issues, solidarity with Vietnam, the American danger, the fight against foreign and Indian monopolies, the struggle against high prices, famine and taxation, the right to work and unemployment wage, radical land reform can easily form points of joint action.

The obstacle is the collaborationist outlook of the leaders which makes them justify terror against sister organizations.

### **Ranks will Play their Role**

But the trade union movement in India, the awakened working class, is inexorably set on the course of unity. The leaders of the INTUC, HMS, AITUC have to listen to its voice. Whatever obstacles may be put forward, the rising actions are bound to overcome them. The record of common action already established, augurs well for the unity of the movement. There is no doubt that the ranks of all organizations will play their role in building this unity.

## **A Correction on Assam Language Problem by P. Sundarayya, General Secretary of the CPI(M)\***

### **Correction**

The Assam State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has brought to the notice of the Party's Polit Bureau, that Sri H. Saikia, Assam Minister of State, had denied Press reports that "Assamese would be introduced in non-Assamese schools as medium of instruction". The *Assam Tribune*, reporting the Minister's statement, had quoted him as saying that "the decision of the Government was to introduce Assamese as a compulsory subject in non-Assamese secondary schools".

"This decision, he said, had further been reiterated by the Assam Chief Minister in his statement on November 11." (*Assam Tribune*, December 12, 1972.)

The Polit Bureau, in its resolution of January 14, 1973 (published in *People's Democracy*) had criticised the Assam Government's earlier reported move.

We are happy that it is not true. We hope that the Assam Government would give up its present stand that it would make Assamese a compulsory subject in non-Assamese secondary schools as well as making it the sole medium at collegiate level.

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\*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", Calcutta, February 18, 1973. Refer the Document under Item No. 7 of this Volume.

## **Campaign for Release of all Political Prisoners, Full Civil Liberties\***

**Text of letter of P. Sundarayya, General Secretary of the CPI(M) dated March 12, 1973 to Shri R.K. Garg**

Dear Shri R. K. Garg,

Comrade E. M. S. Namboodiripad sent me your letter of January 8, 1973, enclosing an invitation to attend a meeting of the Committee for the Defence and Release of Naxalite Prisoners. I had also received your letter in February. I did not immediately reply to you because I wanted to place the whole issue before our Polit Bureau which I have now done.

You must be aware that the Naxalites chose as their first targets of attack our comrades, often with the connivance and encouragement of the Congress and the police. In West Bengal alone, 206 of our comrades, including 70-year-old Comrade Jiban Maity, a member of the Secretariat of the Howrah District Committee, Comrade Ram Chandra Roy, leader of the jute workers, Comrade Santosh Bhattacharjee, a secondary teachers' leader, and Comrade Bithi De, a leader of the Mahila Samity of Calcutta, had been assassinated in cold blood by the Naxalites. So far, no leader of any Naxalite group has expressed disapproval of these murders or dissociated itself from them.

This fact has not, however, prevented us from raising our voice of protest against the atrocities meted out to Naxalites whenever it was thought necessary by the police. We have done so repeatedly in West Bengal. In Andhra Pradesh, when Girijans and Naxalite leaders in Srikakulam were shot out of hand by the police, our Party condemned it and in a

\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, March 25, 1973.

memorandum to the Prime Minister, demanded an end to such murders. In Punjab, too, our Party condemned the brutal killings of Naxalites in police custody.

I may also inform you, in case you are not aware of it, that apart from the 1,000 and odd Naxalites, about 700 to 800 of our comrades are almost constantly being detained without trial under the MISA. Even now whilst some may secure their release, others continue to be arrested. Further, about 500 of our comrades who are implicated in false cases are rotting in jails for the last three years and have failed to get bail. Their trial in the near future is uncertain. Besides these, about 1,000 under-trial prisoners are constantly in prison for shorter periods awaiting trial. Over a lakh of warrants have been issued or are pending against the members and supporters of our Party and other Left parties. From vast areas of 24-Parganas, Calcutta, Burdwan and other districts over 20,000 of our members and supporters were forced to leave their homes and areas as a result of the joint operations of the Congress gangsters and police. Similarly, over 200 trade unions belonging to the CITU and other central trade unions have been attacked and many taken over forcibly by Congress hoodlums with the police standing by. Hundreds are even now unable to go back to their places of work and in some cases despite orders by the High Court. During the last 11 months, 73 people belonging to our Party or other Left parties have been killed by the said gangsters. In fact, in West Bengal, no rule of law exists. In Kerala, during the Government employees' strike, the police under the orders of the Government savagely beat up strikers, scores of whom had to be sent to hospital. Thousands of the employees were arrested for participation in the strike. In other States, also, violence is being perpetrated under the Congress regime against all those who dare to organise movements against the policies of the Government and for a better means of livelihood. It is strange that none of your committee members has thought it necessary to inform himself about this grave state of affairs and to protest against the serious infringement of fundamental and democratic rights.

I wish to inform you that despite all the attacks against us by the Naxalites, we are seriously concerned with the safeguarding of civil liberties and democratic rights of every citizen of the country. We are totally opposed to detention without trial, to the practice of implicating people in false cases, to the inhuman treatment that is being meted out to the detenues and other prisoners. We are trying to do all that lies in our power to oppose the vicious policy of the Governments in these respects. We shall be happy if various sections of the people take up the issues of civil liberties in right earnest. You may be probably aware that Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan is making efforts to form committees in various States as well as an all-India committee, for safeguarding civil liberties and democratic processes.

We are of the view that such a committee which would take up the question of civil liberties for all citizens irrespective of their political affiliations, unlike your committee which is concerned only with Naxalite prisoners, will be far more effective and necessary. We hope that Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan's efforts will meet with success and we would request you to extend your support to him.

## **Complaints of Trade Unions to I.L.O.\***

### **Infringement and forcible suppression of Trade Union rights in West Bengal after Election to the State Assembly was rigged in 1972**

A number of times the West Bengal State Committee of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions and other Left trade unions had lodged complaints with the International Labour Organisation against the all-out attacks of the ruling Congress party and the police on the trade unions affiliated to them.

Considering a series of such complaints from March 22, 1972, onwards by the CITU, United Trade Unions Congress and the Calcutta State Transport Employee's Union, the Committee on Freedom of Association of the ILO observed in its 136th report.

"The Committee takes the view that the situation involving the large number of unions affiliated to the complainant organisations was of a sufficiently serious nature, involving not only physical violence and destruction on property but also the severe restriction on the free exercise of trade union rights, as to warrant stringent measures being taken by the authorities to restore a normal situation."

Again in para 66, the Committee recorded,

"It would appear, however, from the detailed information supplied by the complainants that although the authorities were aware of the frequency and gravity of the attacks on members of the CITU-affiliated organisations, on the property of these organisations, intervention on the part of the

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\*This report was published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, March 25, 1973. Refer Document under Appendix (v) of this Volume.

authorities was often inadequate to ensure protection of trade union rights.”

The observations by the Government of India to the Committee on the CITU complaints would have it that there had been general improvement in the situation and that outstanding grievances were being investigated by the police and the administrative authorities and other cases had been referred to conciliation or industrial tribunals for settlement.

But let the Government of India answer this one question: is it a fact or not that even now more than 200 unions belonging to the CITU alone in the Barrackpore industrial belt and Sonarpur in 24-Parganas district, in Beliaghata, Belgachia, Cossipore, Tollygunj and Jadavpur in Calcutta, in Durgapur, Asansol and Raniganj in the Burdwan district among others are seriously affected by terror and gangsterism?

### **Minister Wants to Know Facts!**

As late as on March 10, the CITU in a memorandum to the Union Labour Minister, at the time of his meeting with representatives of central trade unions in Calcutta, again made the above complaints among others. Sri Raghunatha Reddy, the Minister, in answer only said that he had taken charge of the Ministry only recently and he had to know all the facts.

Sri Reddy can feign ignorance, but what is clear to all is that the Congress regime is suppressing the real facts, particularly about West Bengal—facts which again have substantiated the barbarities by the Congress regime and its police.

At the Calcutta meeting also the CITU, UTUC (Lenin Saranee) and UTUC leaders charged—

—Unions belonging to the CITU and other Left trade unions have been forcibly captured and union offices burnt or captured and occupied;

—Activists of these unions have been prevented from reporting for work;

—Workers belonging to these unions have been forced to sign membership forms of Congress unions;

—Donations are being extracted from the workers under threats of murder;

—Trade union activists in their thousands have been evicted from the areas of their residence;

—Hundreds of trade union leaders have been brutally assaulted;

—A large number of them have been murdered.

With all this before him, the Central Minister still wanted to know the facts while the State Labour Minister assured that there was an improvement in the situation.

But the State Minister, truthful man that he is, did not refer to the “cases (of) outstanding grievances (that) are being investigated by the administrative authorities” or to “other cases referred to conciliation or to industrial tribunals for settlement”—the understanding that the Government of India had given to the ILO.

Not that it matters much since the police and the administrative machinery have been so totally in league with the Congress gangsters that any enquiry by them can only be meant to be a whitewash.



## **Infringement of Trade Union Rights in West Bengal\***

**Jyoti Basu**

The following pages will reveal the dreadful experience of the working class of West Bengal which has to a considerable extent been taken note of by the 'Committee on Freedom of Association' of the I.L.O.

The most violent attacks on workers and employees and trade unions and gross infringement of trade union rights are a part of the semi-fascist terror unleashed by the ruling Congress party since March 1970 after the fall of the United Front Government to crush all democratic forces in West Bengal. The intensity of attacks and magnitude of repression perpetrated by the ruling Congress party with armed gangs, backed by police and administration, are unprecedented in the post-independence period in India. Seven hundred and eighty five active cadres and leaders of trade unions and democratic movement have been murdered by these marauding forces since the toppling of the United Front Government on 16th March 1970. It is nothing but a deliberate and organized State violence against the working class and the people of West Bengal, planned and directed by the Government of India.

But why this semi-fascist terror in West Bengal? Why these violent attacks on workers and employees and trade unions and infringement of trade union rights which have

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\*This write up was actually a 'Foreword' to the booklet 'I.L.O. on Infringement of Trade Union Rights in West Bengal' published by the West Bengal Committee of C.I.T.U. in April 1973. Refer Document under Appendix IV of this Volume.

virtually illegalized the trade union movement in many areas of West Bengal?

These are pertinent questions. And one must raise these questions to understand the purpose of this terror. One must go into the root cause of this dangerous development which is a matter of concern to all democrats throughout India.

The people of West Bengal, with a glorious tradition of anti-imperialist struggle, always stood in the forefront of democratic movements in the country. Their love for freedom and undeterred courage and militancy caused serious concern to the British imperialists during colonial rule. In the post-independence period, because of several historical factors, the people of West Bengal could carry on a relentless struggle against oppression and injustice. They braved savage repression on numerous occasions for vindication of their rights and relentlessly fought against the anti-people policies of the Congress Government. The movements organized by the Left Forces rallied the masses of the people in West Bengal and inspired the toiling masses throughout India. Tens of thousands were imprisoned and hundreds killed in the innumerable struggles for a better means of livelihood and for democratic rights. When Mrs. Indira Gandhi assumed Prime Ministership of India in January 1966 there was also no change in the attitude of the Central Government towards the democratic movement in West Bengal.

The democratic forces of West Bengal achieved a new consolidation during the mass upsurge of 1966 on the demand for food and reduction of prices and release of political prisoners. The advance of the democratic forces and the unpopularity of the Congress party were reflected in the general election of 1967 when Congress party was defeated and the first United Front Government of Left and democratic parties was formed in this State. This United Front Government was an effective challenge to the Congress Government at the Centre and a centre of attraction to all peoples struggling against the oppressive rule of the Congress Government.

The first United Front Government was removed from power under Presidential prerogative within nine months. But it endeared itself to the masses which contrasted it with the 20-year-old Congress Government. After a spell of President's Rule when mid-term election was held in West Bengal in 1969, the Congress party faced a miserable defeat securing only 55 seats in the Assembly of 280 and the second United Front Government was formed. The United Front Government with its limited powers was an instrument of struggle and the democratic forces were further consolidated. There was a new awakening amongst the toiling masses as a result of the policies pursued by the U.F. Government. The working class and the peasant movements assumed new dimensions. Isolated from the people and unable to remove this popular Government by democratic means the ruling Congress party and the Congress Government at the Centre spread its tentacles within the alliance and toppled the second United Front Government in a conspiratorial swoop with the help of Right Communists and some other treacherous elements, because the very existence of such a Government was a standing menace to the bourgeois-landlord rule.

The second United Front Government was toppled on 16th March 1970 and on the next day—17th March—there was a spontaneous State-wide protest general strike and hartal. Seventeen people were murdered and killed on this day by the strike breakers. Immediately thereafter the State of West Bengal was plunged into a reign of terror. Police, Central Reserve Police (CRP) and army—all were deployed to subdue the people. The gangsters and anti-social elements were specially recruited and armed by the ruling Congress party with direct help of police and administration to disrupt democratic forces and to murder the workers and leaders of trade unions and democratic movement. Arrests were made in thousands and arrest warrants were issued against over 1,00,000 workers and leaders of trade unions, peasant organizations and Left democratic parties. Prevention of Violent Activities Act and later the Maintenance of Internal

Security Act (MISA) were enforced, to detain people without trial. Police and CRP were given unlimited power. The age-old practice of administrative enquiry in every case of killing by police firing was made redundant. Murders were committed in police lock-ups and in prisons. Many Naxalites became handy weapons to the Congress party and the administration to murder vital cadres and leaders of the trade union and democratic movement.

Curfew and combing operation by police, CRP and army to terrorise and arrest opponents of the Congress party became a matter of daily experience. Even women were tortured and humiliated before arrest. To crush the eleven-day-old strike struggle of 60,000 workers of Durgapur Industrial Complex in defence of democratic and trade union rights in August 1970, 25,000 police, CRP and para-military forces were deployed and unprecedented repression was perpetrated. Milk supply for children and ration supply for workers, families were forcibly stopped to break the morale of the strikers. It was a new experience for the people and working class of West Bengal. It was a new challenge to trade union and democratic movement of West Bengal. This sort of barbarism and State violence was hardly experienced by the people of India since the colonial rule under the Britishers.

The working class and the people of West Bengal heroically stood against this terror and repression. State-wide protest, general strike and hartals (Bundhs) were successfully observed on 14th July 1970, 8th December 1970, 27th August 1971 and 13th October 1971. Protest strikes were organized in hundreds of factories and areas. Massive protest demonstrations were organized whenever murders took place and police took to violence. Thousands of women participated in such demonstrations and waited for hours before local police stations and administrative offices. The fighting mood of the people had its reflection in 1971 mid-term election in West Bengal, after one year of President's Rule and killing of 250 people who were opposed to the Congress party. The ruling Congress party again failed to secure an absolute majority in

West Bengal Assembly, they even failed to become the first party in the Assembly yielding place to the CPI(M). They, however, formed a Coalition Government with the help of Muslim League, Jana Sangh, the Right Communists and others. But it could not last more than three months. Being unable to carry on its rule with a precarious majority, it dissolved the Assembly and thereafter resigned. The Left parties were denied the opportunity to form an alternate Government and President's Rule was again imposed in West Bengal.

The ruling Congress party was completely isolated from the masses in West Bengal at a time when it was scoring great successes in the elections almost in all other States in India. It failed to suppress the people by continuing terror and repression. The ruling Congress party realised, in panic, after three successive defeats in elections that it could never secure a majority or form a Government in West Bengal through a democratically held election. It was in this background that in the election of 1972 in West Bengal the ruling Congress party subverted parliamentary democracy in the State and took recourse to unprecedented gangsterism and rigging. The polling booths were captured by the armed gangs during the election with direct support from the police and administration with the patrolling army looking on. In innumerable areas where gangsterism could not be organized, rigging was resorted to. This was how the Congress party was saddled in power in West Bengal.

The election in 1972 was held on 11th March. From this day onwards terror and repression were further intensified and within seven days following the election 20,000 workers and leaders of trade union and democratic movements were forcibly evicted from their houses and areas and turned into refugees. The houses of T.U. workers and leaders were looted and burnt. Left trade unions were forcibly occupied by the men of ruling Congress party. The workers were told to join the unions of the ruling Congress party under threat of assault and murder. Many active workers and leaders of Left trade unions were forcibly prevented from reporting for

their duties. Collection of money from the workers by force formed booty of the rowdies employed by the ruling Congress party. The orders issued by the High Court directing the police and administration to give protection to the workers enabling them to resume duties were flouted. Three hundred and sixty unions of CITU alone in West Bengal have been made defunct by creating terror and through forcible occupation. Within a year 74 political murders have taken place and the criminals are Congressmen. Thousands of members and supporters of Left political parties and mass organizations have been in continuous detention without trial, tens of thousands have been implicated in false criminal cases. Hardly any rule of law exists in West Bengal.

This terror and repression is being organized by the ruling Congress party in the name of restoring law and order. The State power is being used to suppress Left trade unions and to foist upon the workers the unions of the ruling Congress party. Isolated from the people and unable to solve the burning problems and sufferings of the people caused by ever-increasing unemployment, high prices, food crisis, water and electricity shortage etc., the ruling Congress party in West Bengal has taken the same path the autocratic rulers have taken recourse to in various countries to stifle democracy in order to suppress the people.

This was in this background that the complaint of CITU West Bengal Committee was made to the 'Committee on Freedom of Association' of the I.L.O. of which the Government of India is a member. It is in this background that the attacks on workers and employees and trade unions and infringement of trade union rights are to be understood.

From some of the observations of the 'Committee on Freedom of Association' of the I.L.O. it appears that this international organization is alive to the portentous development in West Bengal. On reviewing the complaint of CITU West Bengal Committee and comments of the Government of India the 'Committee on Freedom of Association' observed:

"It would appear, however, from the detailed information

supplied by the complainants, that although the authorities were aware of the frequency and gravity of the attacks on members of CITU affiliated organizations, or the property of these organizations, intervention on the part of the authorities was often inadequate to ensure protection of trade union rights."

The 'Committee on Freedom of Association' also said in their observation:

"The Committee takes the view that the situation involving the large number of unions affiliated to the complainant organizations was of a sufficiently serious nature, involving not only physical restriction of the free exercise of trade union rights, as to warrant stringent measures being taken by the authorities to restore a normal situation."

It is also understood from the comments of the 'Committee on Freedom of Association' that 'India has not ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize convention, 1948 (No. 87) or the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)' of the I.L.O.

There is grave doubt that the ruling Congress party and their Government would take cognizance of the observations of the 'Committee on Freedom of Association' of the I.L.O. and restore peaceful normal condition and freedom of trade union functioning. The Government has already tried to impress upon the I.L.O. that the situation has improved when experience shows that the situation is as grave as before. The CITU West Bengal Committee in their rejoinder to Government's comments have submitted detailed facts printed in this booklet along with the minutes of the meeting of the 'Committee on Freedom of Association' of the I.L.O.

This booklet should be read by all who believe in democracy and freedom to organize and function trade unions. It should be explained in detail to the workers and employees all over the country so that united protests and resistance grow against the onslaught of the ruling Congress party and its Government. The battle for democracy is indivisible.

## **A Review of the CPI(M) Movement in Punjab\***

**Harkishan Singh Surjeet**

The struggle which was started on the initiative of the Punjab Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) for immediate demands of the toiling people, came to a successful conclusion on March 29, 1973.

Lakhs of people participated in the struggle, more than 700 volunteers courted arrest and another 3000 participated in the demonstrations with a view to courting arrest.

After the anti-betterment levy struggle of 1959 this was the first Statewide struggle led by the Party which forced the Government to accept the just demands of the toiling people. The credit for this victory goes to those volunteers who constantly faced police lathis at the district headquarters towns. The credit for this victory goes to those volunteers who participated in the satyagraha in district headquarters towns as well as in Chandigarh where they marched in *jathas* of 500 each and began filling the jails, defying all restrictions imposed by the Government. On the day the struggle was withdrawn after the demands were conceded, 500 volunteers had already reached Chandigarh to court arrest. Even the next day volunteers from far away villages, where they could not get the news of the withdrawal of the struggle, came to Chandigarh to court arrest. The credit for this victory goes to those lakhs of people who, irrespective of their political affiliations, supported the demands of the struggle and helped the volunteers in all ways.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, April 29, 1973.



## **The Main Demands**

What were the main demands of the struggle?

1. Stopping of all evictions and conferring ownership rights on those tenants who had brought waste and evacuee lands under cultivation.

2. Providing house-sites for agricultural workers and Harijan families.

3. Fixing of minimum wage of agricultural workers and setting up a machinery to ensure its implementation.

4. Immediate steps to control prices and to ensure reasonable price for the produce of the peasants.

5. Ensuring supply of atta, cloth and other essential commodities through a network of fair-price shops in towns and rural areas.

6. A solution to the power crisis and to ensure regular supply of power.

7. Ensuring the application of the Industrial Relations Act to the brickkilns.

Apart from these, it was demanded that the conditions of the Government employees be improved, their victimisation be stopped, full democratic rights for the students in the educational institutions, steps to eradicate unemployment, fixing of minimum wage for the industrial workers, restoration of civil liberties etc.

## **Three Stages of the Struggle**

The first stage of the struggle began when on January 9, 1973, the State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) submitted a memorandum to the Government on the immediate demands affecting the industrial workers, agricultural workers, poor peasants and other toiling people. The memorandum had exposed the fallacy of the claims made by the Congress Government and put forward positive demands concerning immediate relief.

Ten thousand copies of the memorandum were printed and sold. Almost 25 per cent of the villages in the State were covered in various ways to popularise the memorandum.

Flag marches were organized in various districts covering 4000 villages and rallying the people behind the demands raised in the memorandum.

It was a result of this campaign that, when on February 2 demonstrations were organized in all the district headquarters towns of the State in support of the demands, nearly 50,000 people participated, the number of agricultural workers and poor peasants being significantly large. The success of the flag marches and these demonstrations clearly indicated the justness of the demands and the mass support which the Party had mobilized behind them.

### **Second Stage**

When month's campaign in the form of public meetings and demonstrations did not move the State Government into considering the just demands, the State Committee of the CPI(M) in co-operation with the Kisan Sabha and the Agricultural Workers' Organization decided to intensify the struggle, and began enrolment of volunteers. In a short period of two weeks 8000 volunteers from various districts signed pledges to make all sacrifices for winning the demands raised in the memorandum. Many more were enrolling themselves to take part in the struggle. It was decided that in order to win the demands and in order to mobilize wider sections of the people, Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet should lead a march to Chandigarh with 250 volunteers.

This march started on February 20, 1973, from the historic village of Ajnala, Amritsar district, where, in 1857, during the First War of Independence, many people were burnt alive in a well-known as Kalianwala Well. The *jatha* covered five hundred miles in eight days addressing 50 rallies covering most of the districts of the State. Nearly three lakh people gave receptions to the *jatha*. Not only did the people give receptions, they gave Rs. 21,000 to the leader of the *jatha* for conducting the struggle.

At every rally it was made clear on behalf of the *jatha* that they would not return till the demands were conceded.

At the same time an appeal was made asking the people to give their full support when the direct action started. The response given to the *jatha* by all sections of the toiling people forced the Government to move a little and the Punjab Chief Minister, Giani Zail Singh, sent an urgent letter accepting the justness of the demands and asking for a dialogue.

This letter was written by the Government one and a half months after the memorandum was submitted. The letter was received by the Party when the *jatha* had reached its last stop before reaching Chandigarh. The letter was immediately answered and the Punjab Government was asked to give a concrete answer to the concrete demands instead of promises and discussions. The march continued and on February 28, after marching on the main street of Chandigarh, the *jatha* courted arrest by defying Section 144.

### **Third Stage**

Immediately after the arrest of the *jatha* the Action Committee gave a call for direct action and instructed all the district units of the Party and mass organizations to court arrest in all district headquarters towns from March 2 defying all the restrictions imposed on civil liberties. The volunteers were already waiting for this call and the direct action began in all the district headquarters towns.

Even at this stage, the Government, instead of accepting the just demands, resorted to the policy of repression and harassment. Volunteers were arrested and let off in far away places. When these methods failed to check the tempo of the movement, the Government instructed the police to resort to severe repression. Taking the law into their hands the police of the Congress Government, without enforcing orders under Section 144CrPC, began arresting volunteers, beating them mercilessly, keeping them without food throughout the day and letting them off at night.

Thousands of people were coming to witness the police repression on the unarmed satyagrahis in Jullundur and

protests came from various political parties and individuals against these police methods. Many old people were remarking that the Congress was surpassing the British record of repression. But the Government did not heed any protest from the political parties. Comrade Kartar Singh Dosangh narrowly escaped death when due to the beating of the police, the ulcer in his stomach burst. He is still in hospital. But all this repression could not deter the volunteers from participating in the struggle, nor could it succeed in weakening the struggle in any way.

To meet this situation the Party decided to open another centre of struggle in Chandigarh, the State Capital. For a week, along with the continuation of the struggle in the district headquarters towns, volunteers were sent to Chandigarh to court arrest and from March 21, it was decided to send 500 volunteers everyday to Chandigarh to court arrest. The *jathas* began pouring into Chandigarh everyday. Since the city came into existence, this was the first time that any political party had sent 500 volunteers everyday to court arrest in Chandigarh. On the one hand this upset all the calculations made by the State Intelligence and on the other, put the Congress and the Right Communists on the defensive. The struggle won the sympathy of all sections of public opinion. In spite of the repression resorted to by the Government the struggle began gathering more and more momentum. The Opposition in the State Legislature except the Right Communists had to stage walk-outs many times in protest against the repressive measures. But due to the continuous mass support to the struggle the Government was ultimately forced to concede most of the demands of the struggle.

### **Demands Accepted**

In his letter to Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet who was then locked up in Chandigarh Jail, the Punjab Chief Minister Giani Zail Singh conceded the following demands:

1. Opening of fair-price shops to ensure supply of wheat,

flour and such cloth as is generally consumed by the middle and lower middle classes at reasonable rates.

2. To secure adequate supplies of diesel and crude oil for distribution to farmers.

3. To take up with the Central Government the issue of ensuring reasonable price for the peasants' produce, especially cotton and groundnut.

4. Stop all evictions and remove the legal limitations in order to confer ownership rights to tenants who have brought evacuee and wastelands under cultivation.

5. To set up the machinery for the implementation of the notification on wages of agricultural labourers which fixes the minimum wage at Rs. 6.50 per day and Rs. 1200 plus food or Rs. 1800 per year for farm servants.

6. To ensure house-sites to all agricultural labourers and Harijan families by the end of August 1973 with not a single family to remain uncovered.

7. To ensure that threshing processes are not adversely affected because of shortage of power.

He also promised to discuss the other demands and to find a satisfactory solution. It was on this basis that the State Committee decided to call off the struggle.

### **Significance of Victory**

The victory of the struggle has great significance for the democratic movement in the State. As a result of the struggle, many of the immediate demands of the agricultural workers and the poor peasants have been accepted. Perhaps Punjab will be the first State where not only a daily wage of Rs. 6.50 for agricultural workers has been agreed to but also the establishment of the machinery to implement it. The other demands accepted are also not insignificant.

Apart from the acceptance of the main demands of the movement, the struggle has significance in many other respects. It proves that when the Congress Government is not prepared to accede to the just demands of the toiling people without struggle, it is the Communist Party of India (Marxist)

which consistently fights for the cause of the downtrodden, defying all suppression and repression at the hands of the ruling classes.

Another significance of the struggle lies in the fact that in the history of the peasant movement in the State this is the first Statewide struggle where the demands of the agricultural workers and the poor peasants were kept in the forefront. The Party was also able to draw large sections of the agricultural workers and poor peasants into the struggle. Reports show that out of the total 7000 volunteers who courted arrest, 25 per cent were agricultural workers and another 15 per cent landless peasants. Amongst the participants, more than 50 per cent were young people. In fact, the struggle was able to give new orientation to the peasant movement of the State taking it to the agricultural workers and the poor peasants.

The success of the struggle has created a situation where the CPI(M) has become a rallying centre for the Left and democratic elements in the State.

This struggle is not an end in itself but is the beginning of a bigger struggle against the anti-people policies of the Congress Government. The struggle which was fought for the immediate demands of the agricultural workers, landless and other toiling people has, on the one hand, created confidence in the unity and class struggle and on the other has exposed the claims of the Congress Government that it can find a solution to the economic ills of the country within the present set-up.

The struggle has exposed the role of the Right Communists who, in a period of deepening economic crisis, are on the one hand advocating the line of collaboration with the Congress and on the other, slandering and belittling the struggle.

### **Tasks Before the Party**

As has been stated above this victory of the struggle is the beginning of a bigger struggle. The implementation of the

demands that have been accepted has to be ensured. The Congress Government is bound to throw the burdens of the deepening crisis on to the shoulders of the toiling people. We can defeat this game only if we intensify the class struggle. We should organize the lakhs of people who lent their support to the struggle in the mass organizations of peasants and agricultural workers. Our agricultural workers' and peasants' organizations must cover 50 per cent of the villages in the State. We must recruit the majority of the volunteers into auxiliary groups after preliminary education.

The struggle has also exposed the weaknesses of the Party. The State Committee, in its next meeting, will take necessary steps to overcome them. The struggle has proved that the intensification of the class struggle is the only way to strengthen the democratic movement. The path of class collaboration leads to trailing behind the ruling classes.

## **Political Prisoners Confront Inhuman Treatment In West Bengal Jails under Congress Rule\***

The Congress rulers describe this country as an “open democracy” with equal rights, equal protection under the law guaranteed to all citizens.

There are approximately 2500 political workers incarcerated in the stinking cells of West Bengal jails. Mostly young men, workers, supporters, sympathisers of the Left and democratic movement in the State. Of them about 1000 are of the CPI(M), there are also a large number of Naxalites.

Where are the equal rights, where is the protection that has been guaranteed to the citizens of the Republic by the Constitution?

Their only crime is to have raised their voices in protest against the inhuman exploitation under the Congress regime where man is reduced to a state hardly better than that of a beast.

But in this “open democracy” that is more than sufficient to be arrested on cooked-up charges, to be denied bail, to earn a lifetime, endless years, behind bars.

At present among the CPI(M) prisoners there are at least 500 who are under-trial prisoners facing criminal charges. The large majority of them have been denied the status of political prisoners.

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\*This Report was published in “PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY”, Calcutta, July 15, 1973.



### **Cooked-up Charges**

How are the charges against them framed?

The classic example of how a man or woman is by a sleight of the hand termed a "criminal" is that of the CPI(M) woman leader of Howrah district, Comrade Nirupama Chatterjee, who, in 1971, was picked up by the police along with others on charges of rape! It was so ludicrous that later the S.P. had to withdraw the charges against her—but even though it was so blatantly a fictitious case, the charges against the other comrades arrested with her remained.

Another example was that of Comrade Chitta Ghosh who was arrested after the 1972 rigged elections. He was implicated in four cases in three different police stations. Comrade Prasad Gupta has been implicated in seven cases by five police stations from Cossipore in the north to Tollygunge in the south.

These are only a few instances. They can be multiplied a hundred times over. For, in Congress India, "democracy" provides for support only to the ruling party, for the rest it is the darkness of jails.

Having done their part of the job, having arrested these political activists, the police pass the prisoners on to the courts for the blatantly fictitious charges to be given legality.

### **Bail Denied for Years**

In ninety-nine out of a hundred cases, the prisoners are denied bail. In case after case, while the Public Prosecutors get more time and hearings are postponed so that more 'evidence' can be cooked up, bail is denied. Comrades Benoy Konar and Gokulananda Ray, for instance, have been in jail for the last three years, implicated in the Sain brothers' murder case. Their names did not appear in the First Information Report nor in the statements before the police for several months. And yet the trying Magistrates have refused these comrades bail.

Or take the case of the three young comrades—Surya

Mukherjee, Asish Dey and Mukti Sengupta, who were arrested on a charge of attempted murder in the Calcutta University. More than two years have passed. For lack of evidence, the Public Prosecutor has asked twice, thrice for postponement of the case. It drags on and on, and the accused have been refused bail.

A Forward Bloc leader, Sri Ajoy Dey, was arrested on charges of illegally having firearms in his possession. For well over a year, the Magistrate refused him bail. Finally, he had to be released because it became too clear that there was no adequate evidence—but who will give him that lost year?

Where no charges can be framed, or where the prisoners are granted bail, the police arrest/rearrest them under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act.

The large majority of Naxalites have been detained under this black law. About 300 members of the CPI(M) are in jail under the MISA.

A small number, hardly thirty or forty, have been released after the Supreme Court Judgement striking down Section 17A of the Act.

### **Other Charges Framed**

For three or four days after the judgement, the MISA detenus were not told anything. Then one day they were told that new charges had been brought against them, and now they were being detained under Section 3 of the Act.

One of the released comrades described the scene in Presidency Jail, Calcutta. He said that the average age of the MISA detenus there was 22 to 23 —the youngest was 15 years old. When the news of the judgement came to them, the comrades realised that other reasons and means would be found to detain them—but was it unnatural that in the young hearts there was a hope that perhaps they would get back their freedom?

Three days later, about thirtyfive names were announced over the jail microphone. Those concerned happily went to

the main office, expecting they would be told of their release.

Far from it. They were confronted by police officers who had blank warrants signed by the authorities. They were filled up there, in front of the comrades—new charges under Section 3—then back to their cells.

It is no democracy.

It is the bitter war waged by the Congress rulers against the people and their democratic leaders, where laws are framed, where the judiciary and the repressive state machinery are used by them to wage political vendetta against their opponents—young, old, women, men—it matters little to the Congress rulers—their aim is to establish and maintain their dictatorship.

There are no Geneva Conventions to protect the security and rights of the prisoners of India's class war, locked up in Congress jails.

It is not enough for them that they have falsely arrested and detained, thousands of young men and women, in the bloom of their youth. It is not enough.

### **Torture and Butchery**

Inside jail, they are treated worse than common criminals—for, what the Congress rulers aim at is to break their spirit, to maim minds, to try and make sure that they will never fight again on the side of the people.

And so the terror outside is supplemented by terror inside jails.

If the mute prison walls could speak, how many stories would they not tell of the innocent blood split in the police and jail lock-ups by brutalised thugs in uniform?

Berhampur, Dum Dum, Midnapore, how many young men have been butchered, maimed in prison cells.

And how many have been tortured.

In February last, in Dum Dum Central jail, 10 to 15 wardens entered the cells in which Naxalites were kept, and made a brutal lathi-charge. Scores were very seriously injured. One

boy had to have 14 stitches. His left-ear was smashed—his body paralysed.

The arrested CPI(M) leader, Comrade Narayan Roychoudhury, was burnt with cigarettes all over his body. His head was shaved and on his scalp, with a sharp instrument, were engraved the letters CPI(M). And the young courageous woman comrade Ashima Poddar. She was stripped in the police cell, badly beaten and assaulted.

### **Conditions in Jails**

And it is not just this or that incident. Life itself is one slow torture for political prisoners in jail.

For three, four years, these young men have been locked up in dingy cells, with no communication to speak of, with the outside world.

Those who have been denied political status are allowed to meet their families only twice a month and that is in the form of a collective interview, where ten to 15 prisoners at a time are expected to speak to their families, who are kept about seven yards away, with a barred gate between them. Even political prisoners can meet their families only once a week and that too only for a few minutes under a heavy guard. They are permitted only one letter a week to their families. Anything more than "I am well" is censored by the jail authorities.

No political papers or books are allowed. Even daily newspapers are irregular.

They are allowed out into the small lawns in the jail backyards for only a few hours in the mornings and for an hour in the evenings. At 5 p. m. they are herded like animals and locked up again.

### **Not Enough Water, Food**

The cells, infested with hordes of mosquitoes, bugs, are pervaded constantly with an over-powering stench, and it is in these dingy holes that they must live and eat.

Sanitary facilities are almost non-existent.

In Presidency Jail, for instance, there are only four taps for over 200 prisoners. In Alipore Central Jail, there is one bathroom to be shared by all, including the ordinary convicts. In Burdwan jail, there is one small open tank in which all prisoners must bathe.

There is a perennial water shortage, and since there is a limited time given to prisoners for bathing, etc., it happens so often, that they are forced to go without baths. In some jails, clothes can be washed only once a week.

And what are they given to eat? Stuff worse than cattlefeed. The rations in jails have been viciously slashed. In most jails, particularly those outside Calcutta no rice is given, only two rotis.

Where rice is given, it is one small cup of inedible stuff. When the rice sold by the Government outside is adulterated, the stuff fed to those in jails can well be imagined. The rotis are made of bajra, not wheat, and this too, is adulterated. With it is given a small bowl of dal, and some rotten vegetable, morning and evening, the same poison.

In such conditions it is no wonder that these young men are soon reduced to the state of walking bones. There are very few who do not fall ill.

Ninety per cent suffer from skin diseases picked up from the contaminated water or from the filthy mats provided by the jail authorities.

Tuberculosis is rampant, so also stomach ailments.

### **Lack of Medical Facilities**

But the medical facilities in Congress jails are something out of the pages of medieval history.

One day a week is usually granted for medical treatment at the jail hospital for fixed periods of time. Hundreds queue up only to be usually told that the doctor has not arrived. There are no X-ray facilities, no thorough medical examinations, sometimes even for a common cold medicines are not available. Unless you are an inch away from death, you are not permitted to go to outside hospitals.

In the earlier days the prisoners in jails under the British regime used to consider it an escape from the cells to be admitted into a jail hospital. Now it is considered a punishment.

There was a horrible case recently of a comrade, Ram Chakrabarty, about 53 years of age, who almost lost his life because of the callousness of the jail authorities. For some minor ailment, he was fed with strong drugs by the jail doctor and as a reaction, he developed dreadful sores on his tongue and high fever. He was transferred to the jail hospital where he was fed with the same inedible stuff of rotis and dal. Finally a specialist was called, but the medicines prescribed by him were not made available to the patient till 12 days later.

In another case, a young comrade, Mrinal Shome, fell down and cut himself deeply just under the eye. Bleeding profusely he was taken to the hospital. Only the ward boy was there and the jail authorities said that he would do the needful. A rusty needle was produced. Without sterilising it, the ward boy started jabbing at the wound. The patient fell down unconscious. The cut became septic. And Comrade Mrinal could not use his eye for over four months.

It is in these conditions of squalor, bad food and sickness that hundreds of our finest young men are forced to live, and it is in these conditions that the Congress rulers try to coerce them with offers of their freedom if only they will sign bonds swearing not to work for the Left political parties.

The whole process is part of the brutal class struggle that the Congress tries to conceal with its empty words of "democracy".

Arrests on false cases, denied bail for years together, kept like animals, promised freedom if only they join the Congress.

### **They Remain Undaunted**

But from all accounts from comrades who have been recently released, a clear picture emerges—that just as the

Congress failed to stem the movement developing in West Bengal under the leadership of the Left and democratic parties, so also in the darkness of their class jails they have failed to break the spirit of the flowers of the movement. Political workers in jail have again and again gone on hunger strikes and faced the lathis and bullets of the authorities.

Undaunted, these young heroes are readily sacrificing their futures in the cause of the people, of the revolution.

The Party is proud of them and, with the rest of the Left and democratic forces, will strive relentlessly to bring them back to the midst of the people and the democratic movement, where they belong.

## **Deshabhimani—Another Milestone\***

When Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad presented Prof. Joseph Mundassery with a copy of the Special Supplement of *Deshabhimani* daily to inaugurate the new rotary from the GDR, installed in the paper's newly constructed building in Cochin on July 1, 1973, not only those present but all over Kerala people were celebrating the big event. Not only because they have paid in small coins and one and two rupees lakhs of rupees to enable the paper to have this latest printing machine and its own building, for the last three decades *Deshabhimani* has been fighting their battles facing the most difficult ordeals. *Deshabhimani's* story is the story of the people's movement in Kerala.

Comrade A.K. Gopalan who was to inaugurate the rotary had suddenly been taken ill and was in a nursing home. Ever since the late thirties when Comrade A. K. Gopalan toured Ceylon, Malaya and Singapore to collect money to start the Malayalam weekly *Prabhatam*, he has been the chief fundraiser for *Deshabhimani*. And his absence due to illness did spread a pall of gloom over the audience.

Two other comrades who had worked hard to make *Deshabhimani* what it is—organizing collection of funds, advising editorial and managerial comrades—were not there—Comrades C.H. Kanaran and Azhikkodan Raghavan.

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\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, July 15, 1973. '*Deshabhimani*' is a daily newspaper of CPI(M) in Malayalam published from various centres of Kerala state.



Comrades looked back to that day in 1943 when *Deshabhimani* had first appeared as a weekly—printed on rough brown paper because it had no newsprint quota.

### **Weekly**

The Party had won legality towards the end of 1942. Most of the leaders had come out of jails or from underground. The Second World War was on and famine was stalking the land. Hoarders and blackmarketeers were minting money while the people were starving and dying.

It was a difficult situation and the Kerala Provincial Committee of the Party decided it should have its own organ. The Government refused to give back the declaration of *Prabhatam* which it had cancelled at the beginning of the war. And so the decision was taken to bring out *Deshabhimani* as a weekly.

There was no time for preparations. The Party gave a call for Rs. 30,000 and Comrade E.M.S. and some other comrades sold whatever property they had and overfulfilled the fund. There was the sixty-year-old peasant mother of Chirakkal whose only possession was a calf and she gave that to *Deshabhimani*.

The kitchen, dining room and the store-room in the building where the Party office was situated were converted into a hall to set up a small printing machine and type cases.

Power was allotted from 12 midnight but the connection was not given till three in the morning. Hundreds of comrades had gathered in the office to take their copies of the first issue. And from midnight till three they turned the machine with their hands—under no condition would they allow the paper to be delayed.

### **Attacks**

The paper became so popular, and it was such a fighting organ that it soon earned the wrath of the British regime, the landlords and blackmarketeers and the Congress leadership.

The first attack came immediately after the four Kayyur

comrades bravely marched up the gallows to meet their deaths with Communist Party Zindabad on their lips. For an editorial "Call from the Gallows", *Deshabhimani* was ordered to furnish a security of Rs. 1000. The people gave the money. The paper was banned in the then princely States of Travancore and Cochin. Further securities of Rs. 2000 and Rs. 5000 were demanded from the paper. Only a permanent *Deshabhimani Defence Fund* could meet these continuous attacks and the fund was organized. People went on donating to the fund and every time a fresh security was demanded, the paper could furnish it.

At about this time, Comrade P. Krishna Pallai wrote in an article: "If *Deshabhimani* is banned, it will be printed secretly and if that becomes impossible, it will be cyclostyled or even hand-written. *Deshabhimani* will go on". And that has been the spirit guiding it since then.

### **Daily**

Next the Party's effort was directed to converting the paper into a daily and *Deshabhimani* became a daily in January 1946.

By the end of the year, the Congress formed Governments in most of the provinces and they unleashed brutal repression on the popular movements. *Deshabhimani* was again their main target. For an editorial the paper was asked to furnish a security of Rs. 10,000 by the Congress Government. That also was paid.

Then came the all-out attack on the Party. In early 1948, many of the leaders at various levels were arrested and detained. Some went underground. The few comrades who were left outside were compelled to close down the paper.

When the comrades were released in 1951 and the general elections were announced for early 1952, *Deshabhimani* daily was brought out again.

In 1965, the paper faced another crisis. At the time of the Party split most of those working in the editorial and managerial departments belonged to the revisionist wing and were

using the paper to slander the genuine Communist movement. That had to be stopped. Comrade E.M.S., in whose name the paper was registered, appointed a new editor and the editorial and managerial teams were reorganized. The Right Communist leaders were furious and approached the police. But there was nothing either could do. And *Deshabhimani* again became the fighting organ of the CPI(M) and the big mass movements that have been developing in Kerala, fighting an indefatigable battle both against Right-revisionism and Left-adventurism.

One edition from Kozhikode became inadequate to meet the needs of the situation. And a second edition was started from Cochin. But with the old machine, the paper could not be improved nor meet the growing demand for it.

The new rotary has been installed to meet this demand and the pledge of July 1 is to increase the circulation by three times in the coming few months.

## **Why CPI(M) Didn't Join Kerala Delegation to Centre\***

**E.M.S. Namboodiripad's letter dated July 14, 1973 to C. Achutha Menon, Chief Minister of Kerala**

*Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad in the following letter to Kerala Chief Minister C. Achutha Menon, dated July 14, 1973, states the reasons why the CPI(M), considering the Government's approach, decided no purpose would be served by its participation in the delegation to the Centre proposed by the Chief Minister.*

My dear Achutha Menon, I have received your telegram and have today sent the following reply telegram :

“Your telegram. Considering your Government's approach no useful purpose served our participation proposed delegation. Letter follows. E.M.S. Namboodiripad”.

The circumstances which led me to the above conclusion are that during the whole session of the Legislature which has just ended, you did not show the slightest indication of your awareness that the food situation in the State is serious enough to be tackled by the entire people regardless of political considerations.

I would recall in this connection, that in the beginning you did not consider it necessary to have even a formal discussion of the food, coir and other serious problems facing our people. It was only due to the pressure exerted by us in the Opposition that you condescended to allot a day for the discussion of the food situation and two hours each on the coir and the handloom problems.

Even when forced by popular pressure to have a day allotted

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for the discussion of the food situation you were so callous in the matter that you had the motion moved by the Opposition making demands on the Central Government, rejected by the House through the sheer force of the vote that your Coalition could command. To pointed questions by us as to which part of the motion was objectionable from your point of view, you shamelessly answered that there is no part of the motion which was objectionable but that the adoption of even such an unobjectionable motion would mean an expression of no confidence in the Government. You know it, as well as anyone else, that such a motion has no such implication as it is normal for such motions to be adopted at the end of such general debates. It was obvious then and it is obvious now that the only consideration on which you had that motion rejected by the House was that you did not want even that much of pressure exerted on the Central Government which the adoption of such a resolution would mean.

In the course of the debate in the Assembly on the food situation, the Food Minister waxed eloquent on the "stern action" the Government proposes to take against the hoarders and blackmarketeers. This, however, was followed by Government's action in legalising blackmarket sales through the permission granted to the Kuttanad landlords to sell rice at Rs. 2.10—a decision to which objection was taken by the senior partner of your Coalition.

Finally, when the food situation became so grave that starvation deaths started taking place, a fact which was brought out by three other leaders of Opposition parties and myself in a joint statement—you repeated the traditional excuse of landlord bourgeois Governments that they are not starvation deaths but deaths due to gastro-enteritis and cholera. The falsity of this claim has now been proved before the whole world and you were forced to recognize the reality that the entire population of coir workers and fishermen are starving and that they require immediate relief by way of free ration.

The whole sequence of events mentioned above shows that you have no consideration at all for facts brought out

and views expressed by the Opposition; you would recognize facts and make moves only when you are forced by your own colleagues of the ruling Coalition. That is why I have come to the conclusion that no useful purpose will be served by the proposed all-parties' delegation.

Yours sincerely,  
E.M.S. Namboodiripad

## **Massive Bandh in West Bengal on July 27, 1973, and its Significance\***

**Jyoti Basu**

West Bengal has been in the forefront of innumerable movements and struggles including general strikes and bandhs on economic and political issues to protest against the Congress Government's policies and for the fulfilment of their urgent demands. Violence and repression of the Government could not cow the people into submission. The awareness and heightened consciousness of the people have been demonstrated again and again in struggles and elections.

West Bengal was therefore considered by the ruling party a bad and dangerous example to other States. Hence together with violent suppression of all movements, arrests on an unprecedented scale throughout the years, in the general election in 1972 parliamentary democracy was subverted by large-scale rigging and widespread gangsterism with police help.

### **Conditions of Terror**

Since then the CPI(M) and Left forces have been under continuous attacks through the new semi-fascist methods whereby armed hooligans protected by the police carry on their depredations whilst thousands of cadres and followers of Leftist parties and mass organisations are detained without trial or implicated in false cases.

Within a year and a half, 85 people belonging to the Leftist opposition forces have been murdered by

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Congressmen, over 300 trade union offices attacked and many occupied, over 20,000 people thrown out of their homes and areas, a large number of workers and teachers prevented from joining their duties, several Leftist strongholds declared out of bounds for the Leftist parties by the gangsters, making all open work by them impossible in these areas. Added to this is the detention of large numbers of workers of the CPI(M) and other parties.

It was under such conditions of terror and repression that Left parties and mass organisations have been functioning through huge mass mobilisations, local actions, workers and peasants' struggles, industrywise movements and strikes, to overcome panic and build up resistance.

Even now, however, in gangster occupied areas no open work is possible. But there was a marked change in the people's mood and a spirit of protest was rising. The struggles and bandhs in many States of India in this period against Government policies also helped to give added courage to the people.

In this background, the eight Leftist parties decided on intensified movements and actions of various kinds in the districts and also a general strike and hartal by the end of August to protest against the intolerable situation and compel the Government to concede some urgent demands. In view of the prevailing situation and the savage attitude of the Government, a period of preparations and local struggles was considered necessary.

### **Right C.P.'s Call**

But the Right Communist Party, a partner of the Congress party, unilaterally declared a bandh on July 27, 1973, on the question of high prices, food, power shortage, etc. It, therefore, sought the support of the eight Leftist parties and through its trade union centre, the support of the Leftist trade unions.

But the Right Communists expressed their unwillingness to discuss with the Leftist parties the objectives of the strike and the preparations necessary for its success. They,



however, carried on discussions with the Congress and the Government and pinned their hopes on the so-called progressives and democrats in the Congress. This attitude on their part was dictated by their politics and not due to just irresponsibility or lack of seriousness.

They tried by all means even after deciding on a struggle, to plead with the Congress partners for a soft attitude and to this end even tried to mislead and confuse the people with regard to the objective of the bandh by covering up the responsibility of the Congress party and Government for the suffering of the people. They underlined only the crimes of the monopolists, hoarders and blackmarketeers and gave as little prominence as possible to the anti-people policies of the Government.

### **Left Parties' Bandh Call**

It was a pitiable effort which could never confuse or deceive the masses endowed with a rich consciousness and great experience. Moreover it was evident that cobwebs, if any, would be cleared away by the Leftists joining the bandh and the miserable effort to conceal the identity of all those who are responsible for the grave crisis would fail.

Lack of time and preparations were certainly negative features and the lag had to be made up as much as possible but some of the Leftist parties including the CPI(M) were of the view that the opportunity for mass action had to be seized and the situation turned in favour of the people. Opposition to the strike would have harmed the interests of the people and helped the Government. There was no doubt that masses moving into action on an all-State level after such a long time, in face of opposition by the Government and the Congress party, would open up new possibilities of uniting the people for many more massive movements. Above all, a Statewide mass action was long overdue against the Government's policies.

But unfortunately the RSP, SUC and Forward Bloc having little faith in the people and underestimating their

consciousness, gave sole consideration to the Right C.P.'s irresponsible behaviour and ambivalent attitude to the Congress party and in a spiteful spirit decided to oppose the bandh. The CPI(M), RCPI, Workers' Party, Forward Bloc (Marxist) and Biplabi Bangla Congress thereafter gave a separate call for a bandh on July 27. The CITU, 12th July Committee and other mass organisations issued similar calls for the same day.

### **Congress Threats and Repression**

The Congress party and the Government decided to oppose the bandh and to stifle all protests. The Chief Minister made a heroic declaration for public consumption that the bandh would be opposed by democratic means by appealing to the people. But preparations were made by the Government and the Congress party to break the bandh through force and terror.

Circulars were sent out by the Central and State Governments and other authorities threatening the employees with dire consequences unless they joined duty. Full police mobilisation was ordered. The Congress party on the other hand let loose rowdies and volunteers to threaten workers, employees, shopkeepers, teachers, students and others with physical assaults and other kinds of punishment if they participated in the bandh. Large-scale intimidation and terror, with the police standing by, were organised and meetings of Leftist parties including the Right C.P. were broken up in some places. In areas under gangster occupation, open approach to the people was prevented.

Yet separately the CPI(M) and its allies and the Right C.P. worked hard for the bandh in the short time available. Almost the entire monopolist Press was ranged against the bandh. On the organisational plane much weaknesses remained because of time and absence of coordinated efforts. The five parties explained the issues at a rally of 50,000 people in Calcutta on July 25 and appealed to the people to move into action peacefully on the 27th. The Left parties

called for the voluntary participation of lakhs of people and issued leaflets, posters and pamphlets.

On the same day the Chief Minister addressed two meetings in Calcutta to oppose the bandh, the audience being 500 in one and 300 in the other. The realisation of such isolation added to the Government's and the Congress party's determination to intensify coercion.

### **Massive Participation**

On July 27, 1973, the working class, office employees, teachers, students, shopkeepers and their staff and the vast majority of the democratic people responded with their massive participation to protest against the anti-people policies of the Congress Government and against its encouragement to the monopolists, jotdars, hoarders and profiteers. The issues which stood out prominently were the monstrous rise in prices, food scarcity, ration-cut, powershortage, staggering unemployment, eviction of peasants, famine conditions in the villages, lack of yarn supplies, fierce attacks on democracy and absence of rule of law, imprisonment of thousands of workers and supporters of Left parties.

The facts and figures in connection with the bandh are an eloquent testimony of the people's response. The astonishing lies of the Government, All India Radio, and the monopolist Press, all their distortions and jugglery with statistics, cannot conceal the reality of the people's participation and protest. Out of a total of about 32 lakhs of workers and employees in factories, organised industries, cottage and small-scale industries, shops, banks, insurance, mercantile, Central and State Government offices, etc. about 22 lakhs participated in the bandh. Among these were six lakh factory workers out of a total of 8 lakhs (60,000 workers are out of employment due to closures, lockouts and strikes), i.e., about 80 per cent of the active work force on the day.

There was no transactions in the banks, no clearance in exchange banks and the Reserve Bank of India.

In Government offices despite continuous threats and

repression, 50 per cent to 60 per cent of the employees participated in the action. In the headquarters of the State Government in Writers' Buildings over 5000 out of 8000 were absent and the New Secretariat Building where 3000 employees normally work, was practically deserted.

In schools and colleges no classes were held, even in those which were forcibly kept open by Congress volunteers.

Up to 11 A.M. about 80 per cent of the shops and markets were closed throughout the State. Later in some areas, the Congress rowdies forced open some shops and bazars but the shopkeepers showed no keenness to do business nor were there buyers.

### **Police and Gangsters**

Calcutta and the adjacent areas had a unique experience with a heavy concentration of police and Congress gangsters. Most of the State Transport buses were kept running and only a small minority of workers stayed away. In the State Transport organisation Congress rowdies are in control and the CITU union is prevented by physical violence from functioning openly. The vast majority of the tram workers, however, struck work but a small number were run by a few Congress workers under police protection. Local trains also arrived at the Howrah and Sealdah stations.

All these elaborate and demonstrative arrangements were made to break the morale of the people and to prove that there was no response to the call and the situation was normal. But Calcutta, including the commercial and business centres, the main market areas, the railway stations, etc., wore a deserted look. Only an insignificant number of passengers were visible and this was reflected in the negligible income from transport services including the railways. There were practically no taxis, rickshaws, private cars on the streets. The Chief Minister himself, in panic, tried to force drivers of parked taxis to ply but in vain. The Congress rowdies in desperation after 11 A.M. forced open some shops and bazars

in various districts and in Calcutta with the police standing by. The people's indignation and contempt for this show of force were expressed in the near-empty trains, buses, trams and lack of buyers in shops and bazars thus opened. In Calcutta, transport was withdrawn after dusk. Not only shops and bazars. In some factories Congress goondas went to the workers quarters after 11 A.M. and forced some of them at the point of guns into the factories. Also, unlike during earlier general strikes when factories after reporting time in the morning used to be kept closed for the day, the Government this time asked the factories to keep their gates open throughout the day—in an attempt to demonstrate that industrial units remained open though there was no work or production.

Such in short was the glorious response of the people in Calcutta and throughout the State under conditions of terror and intimidation. Congress rowdies by their despicable behaviour and activities embittered large numbers of people not aligned with any political party and even many Congress supporters.

The Right Communists were also not spared and many including women were beaten up by armed Congress volunteers which was reported in their own Press. But no 'progressive' Congressmen came forward to stand by them.

Almost 1500 people belonging to various parties were arrested and there were murderous assaults on individuals. The events in some areas reminded people of the situation on the day of the 1972 general election when armed gangsters took charge of polling booths.

Even after the general strike, rowdyism, physical assaults, preventing workers and teachers from joining duty are being continued by the Congress gangsters with the police looking on.

### **Confidence for Further Struggles**

It was clear on July 27 that the protest of the people had not been smothered and they were not cowed into submission. This action, in keeping with the tradition of West Bengal,

has enthused lakhs of suffering people. It has given them confidence for further struggles based on greater unity.

It may take time for the Right Communists to draw the correct lessons and to realise the true verdict of the people about the Congress Government's policies but even limited actions along with the CPI(M) and other Leftist parties will help in building unity of the people and further exposing their enemies.

The RSP, SUC and Forward Bloc, too, will ponder how their opposition to the bandh gladdened the hearts of Congress leaders and how much they have minimised the fighting spirit of the people. A Forward Bloc worker was murdered in Coochbehar by Congress gangsters as the local Forward Bloc joined the bandh.

Appropriate lessons are being drawn by the Leftist parties and the CITU and other organisations, so that continuous and bold leadership can be given to the people to fight back reaction, resist the heavy burdens and move forward to further struggles. The Congress Government has left no other alternative for the people.

## **Exchange of Letters Between P. Sundarayya and Kim Il Sung on Five-Point Proposal for Reunification of Korea\***

### **Com. Sundarayya's Letter**

Text of the letter from Comrade P. Sundarayya, General Secretary, Communist Party of India (Marxist) to Comrade Kim Il Sung, dated July 20, 1973:

We have read your latest Five-Point Proposal of June 23 on the Reunification of Korea, asking for the removal of the state of military confrontation, easing tension between the North and the South, many-sided collaboration and interchange, convening of Great National Assembly, institution of North-South Confederation and admission to the U.N. under the single name.

We support the efforts of the Workers' Party of Korea under your leadership for the unification of Korea and your struggle for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from South Korea and demanding American imperialists to desist from their acts of aggression against Korea.

We are sure that the Korean people would be able to defeat the manoeuvres of U.S. and Japanese imperialists and intervention in the internal affairs of Korea and achieve reunification of Korea. Once again we assure you of our full support.

With revolutionary greetings,  
Yours comradely,  
P. Sundarayya

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**Comrade Kim Il Sung's Reply  
to Com. Sundarayya**

**Text of the reply to Comrade Sundarayya's letter from Comrade Kim Il Sung, General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, dated Pyongyang August 27, 1973 :**

**Comrade P. Sundarayya,  
General Secretary of the Central Committee,  
Communist Party of India (Marxist)**

I should like to express my deep thanks to you and, through you, the entire members of your Party for sending me a solidarity telegram fully supporting the new proposals for the country's reunification advanced by us on the 23rd of last June.

This support and solidarity of your Party constitute great encouragement to the struggle of our Party and people for the independent and peaceful reunification of the country.

On this occasion I should like to sincerely wish you and your Party new successes in the struggle for independent development of the country and for the victory of the historical cause of the working class through the united strength of all the progressive forces.

**With fraternal greetings,  
Kim Il Sung**



## **Our Pledge to Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad\***

**Promode Dasgupta**

*Text of the speech made by Comrade Promode Dasgupta at the memorial meeting for Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad at Calcutta's Shaheed Minar Maidan on December 22, 1973 :*

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, one of the founders of the Communist Party of India, path-finder of the Communist movement in India and heroic fighter of the Indian freedom struggle, is no more with us. His life came to an end on the morning of December 18, 1973. But the flame of Communism which he lighted in this land has not gone out and it will never go out. That flame lives and will continue to live for us, for the toilers of India.

Here, at this meeting held to pay homage to Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, we declare, the flame of Communism can never be snuffed out, that flame will turn into the blaze of revolution.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad's death has left us in sorrow, in pain, but we are not paralysed by grief. We have gathered here today to pledge to carry out the task which he could not fulfil before he was carried away by death.

The life and struggle of Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad has taught us the lesson that Communists are of a special mould; they are firm in their ideals, they are soldiers in the liberation struggle of the working class, they thirst to imbibe the theory of Marxism-Leninism and are the best tacticians in applying this theory to the concrete conditions of their

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countries. We pledge that Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad's fighting life will for ever remind us of this great lesson.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad had throughout his life held aloft the Red Flag in India and had protected the purity of this flag like the pupil of his eye. Facing all storms and stresses, all sufferings and cruel persecutions of the ruling classes, he did not even for a moment relax his firm hold on the Red Flag. We will never allow that Red Flag to be besmirched; we shall make the message of that Red Flag triumph in our country. With this Red Flag held aloft, we will march forward on the path of liberation of the workers, peasants and the toiling people. We take this pledge in Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad's memory.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, during his whole life, fought for the principle of proletarian internationalism. He gave pride of place to this principle. Because he refused to fall a prey to national chauvinism and make any compromise on proletarian internationalism, during the India-China border conflict, he was branded by the bourgeois rulers and their papers as a "traitor", and was kept in prison under the DIR. Contemptuous of the fierce attacks of the enemy class, he, all his life, propagated proletarian internationalism. In this moment of crisis of the world Communist movement, we take the pledge to keep alive this ideal of proletarian internationalism.

The life and struggle of Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad has taught us that the class struggle has to be fought to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. He has taught us that ministerships through parliamentary elections are not revolution; revolution should transform society, eliminate the landlords and imperialist hold over the economy, power should come in the hands of the toiling people under the leadership of the working class and the dictatorship of the working class established. He has also reminded us that we do not underestimate the importance of parliamentary elections : through these elections, the Party's programme will be propagated and the Party's influence spread. He has also told us

that if we win a majority through any elections in any State we will also form government there; and we will utilise that Government as an instrument of struggle. But if a Communist thinks even for a moment that he has reached his objective because such a ministry has been formed, then he is deviating from the principles of Communism.

This lesson which Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad taught us will guide us in our lives and work—we take this pledge.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad taught us that Communist Parties are revolutionary parties, any Communist Party that deviates from the path of revolution ceases to be a Communist Party. He has shown us with the experience of his life that a party is transformed into a revolutionary party through fierce struggle against revisionism and sectarianism and by rooting out revisionism and sectarianism from the Party. We take the pledge that we will be guided by this lesson taught by Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad.

From his experience of building the Party, Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad repeatedly told us that the Party has to be consolidated still further. He used to say, "Our Party has to be consolidated; discipline has to be still further strengthened; the life of a Party member is that of a soldier; if proper attention is not paid to this, he will be smashed to pieces from the multi-sided attacks." Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, we pledge : we will follow this instruction of yours in letter and spirit, we will still further consolidate the Party organisation and we will build a steeled Party.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad was one of the founders of the All-India Kisan Sabha. Imbibing Lenin's teachings, he taught us to give all our strength to build worker-peasant unity and strengthen that unity. In this memorial meeting today, we take the pledge that we will translate into practice this instruction of Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad fought for building a powerful Communist Party loyal to Marxism-Leninism as a weapon to destroy the British imperialism in India and bourgeois-landlord rule and to establish a People's Democratic State to

build Socialism and Communism in India. The rule of British imperialism has ended in India; but in free India what has been established is a bourgeois-landlord State under big bourgeois leadership. The democratic revolution is still to be completed. Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad immersed himself in the task of completing this democratic revolution since India attained political freedom. But he has not lived to see the fulfilment of this task. The CPI(M) in whose forefront he was, takes the pledge today : Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad, we will go forward, with Bolshevik determination, and fulfil this unfinished task.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad is no more with us; death has taken him away. But the Communist principles for which he fought during his whole life, will ever remain. Communism is the future of Mankind.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad will remain immortal along with them —immortal even while dead.

Comrade Muzaffar Ahmad Zindabad!  
Communism Zindabad!

## **Our Conception of the Indian Revolution\***

**P. Sundarayya**

Marxism-Leninism holds that the fundamental question of any revolution is the question of capture of State power. The State is the coercive apparatus of the economically dominant class at any particular stage. So the stage and strategy of the revolution is determined by the class character of the State, from which class or classes the power is to be captured by which class or classes.

In 1947, the political power was transferred in India to the leaders of the Congress party, ending the political rule of the British and a new State was established. This State is the organ of the class rule of the bourgeoisie and landlords led by the big bourgeoisie.

The Indian big bourgeoisie is in alliance with landlordism and is collaborating with foreign imperialism. It cannot abolish landlordism, both feudal and semi-feudal, including capitalist landlordism and distribute land to the agricultural labourers and eliminate the imperialist economic hold on our country.

If the people's revolutionary movement develops even to the point of overthrowing their rule, even then the big bourgeoisie would not break its alliance with landlordism and foreign imperialists. It would rather surrender to them than give up its alliance and collaboration with them and join the revolutionary forces. The small and medium bourgeoisie when pressed by the big bourgeoisie and the foreign imperialists

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on the one hand and the mighty revolutionary upsurge of the people on the other would join the latter than be with the former.

That is why we hold that the present bourgeois-landlord State led by the big bourgeoisie should be replaced by a new People's Democratic State of workers, peasants, middle classes and non-big bourgeoisie led by the working class. The main blow of the revolution is struck against the big bourgeois-led State, the main direction of its development being liquidation of landlordism and elimination of foreign capital and Indian big bourgeoisie by confiscating all their concerns.

### **Twentysix Years of Independence**

During these 26 years, the Congress party continued in power at the Centre. In spite of all its land reform Acts, concentration of land in the hands of about five per cent of landlord households to the extent of about 40 per cent continues and the number of landless and the rural poor has increased to about 70 per cent of rural households.

In spite of the Congress claim of industrial growth being trebled and a number of key and basic industries developing, it has not yet built a self-reliant industrial base. Imperialist investments and foreign debt, foreign collaboration, have increased many-fold. The Government refuses to confiscate the foreign assets and eliminate its stranglehold.

Monopoly and Big Business houses accumulate enormous assets. The top ten business houses control nearly 10 per cent of the total business assets of the private sector and the Tatas and Birlas increased their assets from Rs. 107 crores in 1951 to Rs. 1389 crores in 1971. Rampant black money to the extent of Rs. 10-15 thousand crores, increasing every year by Rs. 1000-Rs. 1500 crores runs a parallel economy; tax concessions to and tax evasions by Big Business; tremendously increased taxation on all essential commodities of mass consumption, resorting to deficit financing; and we have spiralling prices and all-pervading blackmarketing.

Gallopung unemployment with four million educated

registered unemployed over matric standards, mass illiteracy only 25 per cent of the age group completing elementary education of seventh and eighth standards, inadequate medical facilities, housing, etc., are the lot of our people.

This proves our Party's contention that the State that was ushered in 1947, the bourgeois-landlord State led by the big bourgeoisie, cannot complete any of the tasks of the democratic revolution, the pre-requisite to go over to the Socialist stage of the revolution. So the talk that with the working class in alliance with the national bourgeoisie and the progressive sections of the present-day Congress party, the Indian Revolution can go over to a State of National Democracy as a transitional stage has proved a myth. It is a bankrupt thesis. The State power must be seized by the working class leading a broad People's Democratic Front consisting of workers, peasants, middle classes and small and medium bourgeois sections, overthrowing landlordism and the big bourgeoisie, and smashing the present State and establishing a new State power and State apparatus.

### **Foreign Policy of the Government**

The Indian ruling classes as in the case of many other newly independent countries adopt a policy of non-alignment in their own class interests. Because of the very existence of the world Socialist community, the ruling classes of these countries are in a position to bargain with both the camps, and get favourable terms for their economic development and strengthen their independence against imperialist manoeuvres and pressure. But by their very class nature, they can never break with their collaborationist policies with imperialism and follow a policy of closer and closer friendship with the Socialist world, or a constant foreign policy of anti-imperialism and peace. The history of the last 26 years has once again proved it.

Our Party takes cognizance of the contradictions and conflicts that do exist between the Indian bourgeoisie including the big bourgeoisie and foreign imperialists. We consider

these conflicts will get intensified as the general crisis of the world capitalist system deepens. Our Party strives to utilise every such difference, fissure, conflict and contradiction to isolate the imperialists and strengthen the people's struggle for democratic advance. Without entertaining any *illusion of any strategic unity* or united front with the ruling Congress party, the working class will not hesitate to lend its unstinted support to the Government on all issues of world peace and anti-colonialism, on all economic and political issues of conflict with imperialism, and on all issues which involve questions of strengthening our sovereignty and independent foreign policy.

### **Parliamentary Path**

Certain Left parties advocate, that in the present world context, the capture of power by the people from the bourgeois-landlord State can be effected by obtaining a parliamentary majority on the crest of ever-growing mass movements. They believe in a peaceful path to power and transition to Socialism.

Our Party Programme says, "Our Party strives to achieve the establishment of People's Democracy and Socialist 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."

The latest Chilean tragedy serves us as another historical reminder.

In our country, both in Kerala in 1959 and 1969 and in West Bengal in 1967 and 1970 the Central Government toppled the elected Left Coalition Governments in which the Communists had a prominent position. They have again and again debauched the constitutional provisions to impose their



own rule through the device of Governors and President's rule. In the 1972 election, they resorted to wholesale rigging of the elections in West Bengal. Repressive laws, denying the Left political parties every democratic right of organising masses, denial of civil liberties, resort to preventive detention, declaration and prolongation of the Emergency and Defence of India Act, wholesale driving out of the members and supporters of the Left parties from their strongholds and shooting without trial hundreds of their opponents, this has been the practice of the Congress Government in India. So, the danger to parliamentary democracy comes from the ruling classes.

Yet, our Party "considers that it is of utmost importance that parliamentary and democratic institutions are defended as they afford certain opportunities to the people 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."

Our Party rejects the Naxalite theory that participation in Parliaments is taboo for Communists as it is likely to lead to Parliamentary cretinism. Our Party rejects their theory that boycotting Parliament and preparing for armed revolution by individual armed actions is the way for revolution. It is infantile and leads only to disruption of the revolutionary forces and plays into the hands of the ruling classes. The armed revolution will be possible and will be successful only when the mass of the people are ready to participate and objective conditions in the country are ripe for it and if a conscious and powerful working class party based on Marxism-Leninism is organised. We adhere to the theory of Marxism-Leninism in this regard. Insurrection and revolution is an art to be mastered.

### **Our Perspective Path for Revolution**

After years of discussion and especially analysing the experience of the Telangana movement, even the united Communist Party of India reached certain conclusions as early as in

1951 and they are detailed in the "Statement of Policy". They were reiterated by our Party in its Congress at Cochin in 1968. The main points are :

India's path of revolution cannot be the Russian path. Since India has essentially an agrarian and backward economy, the immense importance of peasant struggle should not be minimised. So political general strike in the cities and in industrial areas is not the main weapon of our revolution and as such, a general strike alone will not be enough to unleash countrywide insurrection leading to the overthrow of the present State.

It cannot be the Chinese path, that of a partisan war leading to the establishment of liberated areas and ultimately to liberation of cities. So the peasant partisan war would not be the main weapon to ensure the victory of the Indian revolution.

China had no unified and good communication system and it had been divided under different imperialist Powers, each having its own spheres of influence and different warlords under their influence at loggerheads with each other and who could not combine and concentrate against the revolutionary bases. But India has a more unified well-organised and far-flung system of communications, so the ruling classes can easily and swiftly concentrate big forces against guerilla forces and bases.

But at the same time, like in China, India is of vast expanses, has a vast peasant population and so will have many features in common with the Chinese revolution.

### **For the Victory of Indian Revolution**

Partisan warfare of the peasants has to be combined with the other major weapon, that of the strikes of the working class, the General Strike and uprisings in cities led by the detachments of the working class. The two basic factors of the revolution are: the partisan war of the peasants and the workers' uprising in the cities.

Here it is necessary to remember firstly, this perspective

should not be confused with immediate reality. This perspective is quite a long way in the future, in spite of acute economic distress and in spite of acute political discontent, and possible big mass struggles and their consequent political effects, because the development of the democratic movement is very uneven, the unity of Left and democratic forces is still to be forged, the organisation and unity of the masses and of the mass organisations, the forging of workers' and peasants' alliance and of People's Front is at a very low level.

Second, partisan war has two stages: one to enforce partial demands and defend them if necessary with arms; the other is for liberation to overthrow the ruling class and make a bid for capture of power. From our experience of the Telangana movement, we drew the lesson that it developed to the stage of partisan liberation struggle against the Nizam, beginning as an ordinary economic struggle against forced labour (*begar*) and against evictions; beginning with demonstrations sought to be suppressed by repression, later the peasants taking up arms to enforce their partial demands and they had to fight to overthrow the Nizam's rule. But after the Indian army intervention, it was no more a struggle against the Nizam, it was a struggle against independent India's Central Government. The Telangana armed struggle should have been carried on for retaining the lands they seized and not for overthrowing Nehru's regime as the situation in the whole country was not ripe at that stage.

The liberation struggle is to be countrywide and cannot be waged only in certain pockets of the country. It must be begun at least in large areas, in different parts of the country which the ruling class cannot suppress and they develop more and more till they succeed.

Third, partisan war should not be confused with individual terrorism as the Naxalites do. Marxism-Leninism considers that individual terrorism undermines the possibility of unleashing partisan struggles of the masses and as such, is harmful to the revolution and should be rejected.

## **The Path to Success**

Our Party considers that the working class and its Party alone can lead the Indian revolution to success.

The working class can achieve its leading role through direct actions *not only for its demands* but also for the demands of all the exploited sections and classes, *especially the peasantry*, and by acting as the foremost champion of the general democratic movement.

The working class can fulfil this task, only when the working class in vital industries get organized in united trade unions and becomes politically conscious of its tasks in relation to our entire people.

The working class relying on agricultural workers and poor peasants, in firm alliance with the middle peasant, winning over the rich peasant must forge worker-peasant alliance as the basis of a united people's front and movement. The working class must come forward and boldly champion the demands of the peasantry and assist the struggles of the peasants through its own actions.

Unfortunately, even in those centres where trade unions are powerful, even round about them, there is practically no peasant movement and where the pockets of peasant movement exist, they are too isolated from working class centres and movement.

Further, the working class and its organised vanguard must work among the other sections, middle classes, especially student and youth, and lead the whole people in battles in towns and rural areas to liberation, to land and bread, to work and peace.

Finally, all this can be achieved only by building a class-conscious well-organised centralised party of the working class as the vanguard detachment of the working class, with deep and indestructible roots among the masses, with iron discipline, imbued with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, correcting its mistakes on the basis of self-criticism and inner-Party democracy, with cadres well-versed to beat back the ruling classes' efforts to destroy the revolutionary forces

and prepared to subordinate their personal interests to the interests of the people and be prepared to sacrifice even their lives for the people's cause.

*(This article was originally written for the Republic Day Souvenir of the Spark Socialist Forum, Nagpur.)*

## **Election Rigged Again in West Bengal\***

**Jyoti Basu**

On February 24, 1974, three by-elections for the Assembly were held in West Bengal in the Chinsura, Gaighata and Belgachia constituencies. The CPI(M) which is a powerful force in these areas did not participate in the elections.

The West Bengal State Committee of the CPI(M) explained how in all the by-elections since the totally rigged General Election in 1972 the same methods were pursued by the Congress party—the taking over of booths by armed gangsters of the ruling party with police help, manipulation of ballot papers, etc., to ensure the victory of its candidates. The CPI(M) came to the conclusion that in the present by-elections, too, “voters will not be able to exercise their franchise freely and rigging will be resorted to” and therefore the elections were not of any importance.

But the Socialist Party and the Congress(O) set up their candidates. There were also dissident ruling Congress candidates. The elections have taken place and even after two years of the rigged General Election and subversion of parliamentary democracy, it has been unmistakably demonstrated that the ruling party has brazenly followed the same methods in the elections in many areas.

On February 24, the non-Congress candidates passed through a horrifying experience and withdrew from the contest in two of the constituencies—Gaighata and Belgachia—after three hours of polling. In some booths even before the

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start of polling ballot boxes were taken charge of by the Congress volunteers and votes cast in favour of the Congress; in many others, ballot papers were grabbed by moving armed hoodlums and votes cast in favour of the Congress; agents of the non-Congress candidates were forced out of the booths at the point of the gun in many areas so that unchallenged impersonation could be resorted to. Congress Ministers, MLAs and leaders were deputed to make their rounds to immobilise the police and protect the rowdies. Neither the Governor nor the Chief Election Officer, nor the Magistrate and police came forward to ensure free and fair elections. They knew what was expected of them in West Bengal where parliamentary democracy had been subverted with the active assistance of the Government of India. The morale of the entire administration has sunk to the lowest depths.

In the present by-elections, as the CPI(M) was not a participant, some of the bourgeois newspapers did not think it necessary to suppress the whole truth and revealed the intimidation, violence and rigging that were resorted to and the refusal of the police to take action against the perpetrators of the crimes. Even in those areas where the postponement of the election had to be ordered, not a single culprit was arrested or any arms seized, according to reports in the Press.

A feeble attempt has been made to propagate that the election was by and large 'peaceful'. But this has deceived nobody in West Bengal because the reports reveal that the elections were entirely one-sided, particularly in the two constituencies where non-Congress candidates withdrew from contest and within the shortest time the maximum votes were cast on behalf of the electorates by groups of Congressmen.

The more the Congress party is becoming the object of ridicule and hatred of the people because of its murderous in-fighting, the intensification of the suffering of the people, the economy being reduced to a shambles, the destruction of the rule of law, the more shamelessly and blatantly it tries to demonstrate its 'popularity' by registering victories for itself in the elections.

In Chinsura constituency alone, the rigging machine did not give the desired result and a dissident Congressman was elected. In Gaighata another farce is being enacted by ordering repoll in 11 booths in a situation where widespread rigging took place.

Following the bitter experience, the Socialist Party has in a Press Conference demanded a public enquiry and related its experience of confrontation with armed gangsters and grabbers of ballot papers, etc.

Sri P.C.Sen, former Chief Minister and leader of the Congress(O), too, has in a letter to the President of India complained of "Violence, rigging and corrupt practices perpetrated by the ruling party in these three by-elections and urged upon him to perform his 'sacred duty' by ordering a comprehensive enquiry by an independent and open judicial commission."

He stated, "I am alarmed because I can foresee the doom of all the high ideals that you and I have cherished in over more than half a century of public life if the present fascist, recklessness of the ruling party continues unbridled. I am apprehensive because as an aged man still active in public life I do not desire to see you go down in history as the person who presided over the liquidation of democracy in India."

The methods pursued in the by-elections have created a sharp reaction among the people and brought further ignominy to the ruling party and the Assembly. The people of West Bengal have never submitted to the dictates of the Congress party and its Government despite the subversion of parliamentary democracy. They have built up movements and struggles in the fields and factories, villages and towns, organised strikes and bandhs on political and economic issues. The democratic people throughout India will more closely stand by the people of West Bengal in their travail the more the truth is revealed to them. The ruling party's advance towards one-party dictatorship and violent suppression of all democratic norms and movements must be stopped by the united efforts of all democratic sections of the people.



## National Protest Day—May 3, 1974 Left Parties' Joint Call\*

*Text of the statement adopted at the joint meeting of political parties, held on April 4 and 5, 1974, in New Delhi. The parties which attended this meeting are:—The Socialist Party, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Communist Party of India, Workers' Party of India, Forward Bloc (Marxist), Biplabi Bangla Congress, Revolutionary Socialist Party and Socialist Unity Centre of India:*

We, the representatives of the Socialist Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Revolutionary Socialist Party, Socialist Unity Centre of India, Workers' Party, Forward Bloc (Marxist), Biplabi Bangla Congress, met on April 4 and 5 and briefly reviewed the present economic and political situation in the country, especially the spiralling prices, growing unemployment, the deteriorating conditions of workers, middle class employees, the agricultural labour and peasant masses, the upsurge of the students and youth and determined struggles of various sections of the working people. We, as a result of this review, have come to the conclusion, to channelize these struggles and effectively combat the anti-people policies of the Government, for the urgently needed changes in its policies, it has become necessary for all the Left and democratic parties and mass organizations of different sections of our people to jointly go into action. We have agreed that May 3,

\*Published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, April 14, 1974. Refer Document under Item No. 50 of this Volume.

1974, be observed as a day of nationwide protest action, simultaneously in all the States, and voice the following agreed popular demands.

The form of action in each State will be decided by the parties participating in this meeting in consultation with such other Left and democratic parties and mass organizations that broadly share the call for action by this meeting and the forms of action may include, demonstrations, dharnas, gheraos and bandhs, depending on the situation in each State and on the basis of consensus arrived at among the Left and democratic parties as well as mass organizations of that State.

The proposed nationwide action will not only highlight the urgent demands including those for changes in Government policies but also the imperative need in the present situation for forging the broadest possible unity in action of the popular forces. There should be a serious effort to draw in all other Left and democratic forces and the suffering masses following other parties.

While fighting the anti-people policies of the Government and for the urgently needed changes in Government policies as well as other measures, the Left and democratic parties participating in this meeting, call upon their supporters and others to see that people's discontent is not misdirected and exploited by Rightist parties, other reactionary forces and the vested interests in whatever garb they may appear.

### POPULAR DEMANDS

#### 1. To Check Spiralling Prices

(a) Immediate State take-over of the wholesale trade, free from bureaucratism and corruption, in wheat, rice, coarse grains, pulses, sugar, edible oils, kerosene, cloth, matches and essential drugs.

(b) Compulsory procurement of all the marketable surplus of foodgrains from the producers, exempting the small and medium producers, as well as taking over stocks of the other essential commodities.

(c) Distribution of all these essential commodities through

fair price shops, co-operative and retail shops, all under the supervision of people's committees, at fixed prices within the reach of the common people.

(d) Supply of fertilizers, diesel, seeds and other essential inputs to the peasants at fixed and fair prices giving priority to small peasants.

(e) Wide disparities in price that exist now between industrial and agricultural goods should be narrowed down.

(f) Dehoarding of hidden stocks of whoesalers and landlords, and exemplary punishment for hoarders, blackmarketeers, speculators and adulterators.

(g) Demonetisation of currency notes of Rs. 100 and higher denominations and other measures to unearth black money.

Reduction of taxes and levies on all essential commodities of mass consumption, and upward revision of the same on luxury goods and on affluent sections.

Imposition of capital levy and clubbing of agricultural and non-agricultural income for the purpose of income tax;

Ceiling on income and urban property.

(h) Immediate nationalization, free from bureaucratism and corruption, of sugar, textiles, drugs, jute and cement industries, plantations and foreign capital.

## **2. Workers and Employees**

(a) Establishment of a democratic industrial relations system including unconditional recognition of trade unions by secret ballot.

(b) Need-based minimum wage, full neutralization of the rising cost of living and bonus, to all workmen and employees of Government and non-Government sectors including local bodies.

## **3. Agricultural Workers and Peasants**

(a) Radical land reforms to abolish landlordism in whatever form it exists and distribution of land to the agricultural workers and poor peasants free through statutory popular

committees, priority being given to Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.

(b) Adequate statutory minimum wages and social security for the agricultural workers;

Free allotment of house-sites and provision for cheap houses for agricultural workers;

Cancellation of debts of agricultural workers and peasants.

(c) Remunerative prices for peasants for their agricultural produce; reduction of tax and debt burden on the peasantry;

Provision of cheap credit, irrigation facilities, electricity and other inputs for the peasants.

#### **4. Ending Unemployment**

Speedy expansion of employment opportunities by radical land reforms and by rapid industrialization, implementation of irrigation and rural electrification schemes, provision for drinking water in all villages; implementation of free and compulsory primary education up to the age of 14 and eradication of illiteracy.

Immediate steps to be taken to overcome power shortage and for re-opening of closed factories, mines and establishments, to avoid lay-offs and to reabsorb all those workers retrenched or laid-off.

Provision for employment or unemployment relief.

#### **5. Against Corruption**

Corruption in public life should be combated and ended.

#### **6. End Repression**

End Emergency and scrap the Defence of India Rules and Maintenance of Internal Security Act and other preventive detention laws. Release all those thousands of young militants, and other political prisoners, who are kept in jails without trials or as under-trials for prolonged periods. Stop atrocities on prisoners in police or in jail custody.

Restore full civil liberties.

## **7. Resolution on Railwaymen's Demands**

This meeting is of the considered opinion that all efforts should be made to bring about a negotiated settlement and if the Government refuses to arrive at such negotiated settlement and the railwaymen go on strike on account of that, the participating parties will give full support to the just, democratic, industrial action of the railwaymen.

This meeting also demands that the Government of India immediately carry out its agreement and reduce the working hour of the loco running staff to ten hours, and avert their call for work to rule.

**Note:** While the representatives of the Socialist Unity Centre of India have generally agreed with the above demands they wanted to record that their party stood not only for State take-over of wholesale trade of these essential commodities mentioned above but also the retail trade as well.

In so far as the agricultural workers are concerned, the representatives of the SUCI were of the opinion that instead of the land being distributed to them, the agricultural workers should be provided with jobs throughout the year and statutory minimum wage guaranteed. However, the SUCI representatives stood for the distribution of land to the poor and landless peasants with which there was no disagreement.

## **Wages of Opportunism\***

### **Role of Right Communist Leaders in Kerala**

The all-India stand of the Right Communist Party of full support to the strike of railwaymen—its leaders are in the Co-ordination Committee and Action Committee, its M.P.s supported the no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha against the Indira Gandhi Government on the question of the railway strike and it is a signatory to the call for the all-India general strike on May 15, 1974, in support of the striking railwaymen—does not seem to be binding on the Right Communist leaders of Kerala.

The following letter, dated May 5, 1974, from Comrade M. K. Krishnan, member of the Lok Sabha and Secretary of Palghat District Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), to Right Communist Chief Minister C. Achutha Menon exposes the repressive measures which his Government has taken to suppress the railway strike;

Dear Mr. Achutha Menon,

I am enclosing a true copy of the order of detention under Section 3 (1) (a) (iii) of MISA of the District Magistrate, Palghat, No. 13955/74(a) dated 2.5.74, served on Comrade P. Padmanadhan Nair, S/O Kunhan Nair, Shoranur. Though this is supposed to prevent the person from acting in a manner prejudicial to the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community, from the fact that a copy of the order has been given among others to the Divisional

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Superintendent, Southern Railway, Olavakkot, it is evident that the action is connected with the impending railway strike. Similar orders have been served on two other leaders of our Party, namely Comrades M.S. Gopalakrishnan and C.B. Kunhappa besides a number of leaders of railwaymen.

Now certain pertinent questions arise as to your Government's attitude to the railway strike. You are well aware that the leaders of your party are members of the Co-ordination Committee of Railwaymen, which is leading the railway struggle and decided upon the strike, and if their utterances are to be accepted, you as a member of that party are bound to support the struggle by all possible measures. It is now becoming evident that you are not only not supporting the railway struggle but are using the entire machinery of your Government to suppress the struggle.

I would, in this connection, like to recall to your memory a similar situation which arose in 1968 when a Government headed by Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad and in which your party was also a partner, was asked by the Central Government to take steps to suppress the then one-day strike of Central Government employees. The then Government, a coalition of a number of parties including yours, had taken a united and bold stand and had flatly refused to obey the Central directive to arrest the leaders of the Central Government employees whatever be the consequences. This was all the more evident from the fact that four Ministers including your partyman, Sri T. V. Thomas, jointly addressed a meeting in Putharikandam Maidan openly defying the Central directive. In short, the then United Front Government was acting as an instrument of struggle by various exploited employees and workers to achieve their just demands.

In contrast, the present Government headed by you and eulogised by your party day in and day out as the only progressive Government in the country, is going out of the way to suppress the just struggle of the railwaymen. Apart from the orders served on railway leaders and leaders of our Party by the various District Magistrates, your Government

has also directed the village staff under you to act as black legs during the strike.

I would, therefore, request you to take a bold stand similar to the one taken in 1968 and to support the just struggle of the railwaymen and other Central Government employees in conformity with your party's declared objectives, and to release all the arrested leaders forthwith.



## **The Railway Workers' Historic Strike\***

### **Role of "Progressive Congressmen" and the Soviet Leadership**

**P. Sundarayya**

The biggest working class struggle in post-independence India, the strike of nearly two million railway workers, has already lasted for two weeks. Its significance lies not only because it is in the most crucial sector of the Indian economy, but also it is the first ever united railway workers' struggle on an all-India basis, with the support of all political parties, all central trade union organizations, except of course, the ruling Congress party and its pocket organization, the INTUC, etc. It has lasted for such a prolonged period, in face of terrific repression, more than 30,000 railway workers arrested, more than 10,000 workers served with dismissal orders, their earned wages for the month preceding the strike withheld to starve them into submission, their womenfolk and children attacked and beaten in their quarters and large numbers of them being thrown out of their quarters. The CRP and all other police forces of the State and Central Governments and even the Army have occupied all key railway centres and stations, and trains are being run by the Territorial Army battalions recruited specifically for such blacklegging purposes and army engineering corps.

Radio, Television, the Railway Board and Railway Ministry spokesmen, hour after hour, carry on lying propaganda of the "large" number of trains, goods wagons, tons of coal, petrol and other essential goods being carried, the daily improving situation and near-normalcy they have been achieving

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everyday, during the last 15 days. But even the big bourgeois Press has to call this propaganda bluff, by their own accounts of railway trains and goods trains not running and by their photographs of deserted stations, empty railway yards, etc. Gradually, the spokesmen of businessmen are admitting the disastrous effect this prolonged strike of railway workers is having on the Indian economy, the slowing down of whole of industrial production, the accumulation of even the goods produced and the growing possibility of the whole economy coming to a half if the strike is further continued.

### **Central Issue**

The determined struggle of railway workers to achieve their absolute minimum demands to eke out a bare subsistence in the background of ever-galloping prices and inflation and the ferocious attempt of the ruling classes headed by Smt. Indira Gandhi, not to concede any of their substantial demands, has become the central issue of the present Indian political situation. Every political party, every democratic group or individual, or every 'progressive' will be tested by his actions in this critical situation, whether he is with the railway workers and thus on the side of the working class and the toiling masses of India, or whether he is with the Congress party, the party of the big bourgeoisie and landlord classes and abetting their ferocious crimes against the people.

The issue is simple and clear. The railway workers are demanding that they be treated as (i) industrial workers, (ii) be paid a month's bonus, (iii) pending a need-based minimum wage and job evaluation, immediately parity of wages and emoluments with those employed in public sector industries, like HMT, HEL, Steel, etc., (iv) supply of essential commodities at controlled prices, (v) eight-hour day, and (vi) no victimisation.

### **Just Demands**

The Government tries to mislead the general public and alienate their sympathy and support to the railway workers by

propagating that the railway workers are already better paid and that it would cost another 400 to 500 crores of rupees per annum, if their demands are to be conceded. It is necessary to constantly repudiate this mischievous propaganda of the Government and to rally the masses behind the just demands of the working class and other toiling masses.

The revised food basket of the Third Pay Commission has reduced the nutrition quality by eliminating all meat, fish and eggs, and cutting the quantity of sugar, edible oils and milk by one third from the minimum balanced dietary standards fixed by Dr. Aykroid and accepted by the 15th Labour Conference and the Government itself as far ago as 1955; but has increased the quantity of the cereals and pulses to nearly 600 grams. A diet based on only cereals and pulses with just 40 gms. of oils, one-third kg. of vegetables and 50 gms. each of salt and of condiments per adult per day, even with a calory content of 2700, at best may be subsistence food but in no case can be termed as minimum healthy food. But even this subsistence food for a family of two adults and two children, at the prevailing open market prices, costs about Rs. 300 per month.

If clothing 16.5 metres per head, house-rent and other miscellaneous expenditure as per the standards prescribed by this Commission itself are taken into account at the prevailing prices and not at assumed fictitious prices the minimum pay packet will have to be Rs. 450.

The public sector worker is being paid today, with DA an amount of Rs. 325-350 as minimum emolument. The railway worker is not demanding that he be paid Rs. 450, but that his present pay packet be raised by, say, about Rs. 100 a month, to make it at best on a par with the minimum emolument of public sector employees which would enable him to get his minimum subsistence.

If the Government is not prepared immediately to pay this much, is it prepared to accept it in principle and raise immediately the pay packet by a certain amount and the rest within a fixed period, both to be agreed upon during negotiations?

## **Hypocrisy, Demagogy**

The Government wants to fool the people by comparing the lot of the unemployed, of the lower-paid sections of the toiling masses and Smt. Indira Gandhi poses rhetorically, "When we are getting less and less, how could we pay more and more". This is sheer hypocrisy and the cheapest demagogy! But she has not taken a single step to give full employment or even to pay unemployment benefit or relief.

Why has she not compared and contrasted the lot of the crores of unemployed rural and urban poor and of the middle classes to that of the landlords, big industrialists, wholesale traders and big officers, Ministers, etc.?

Why has she then increased the foodgrain prices by Rs.30 per quintal and filled the pockets of landlords, big traders and blackmarketeers and profiteers to the extent of Rs.1500 crores over that of last year and forced the masses to purchase the most essential foodgrains at rates of more than Rs. two-three per kg. in every part of the country?

Why has she increased the prices of sugar, of edible oils, clothing, essential life-saving drugs, kerosene and filled the pockets of a few thousand big manufacturers and wholesale traders to the tune of more than a thousand crores of rupees a year at the cost of crores of people?

Why has she increased the postal rates, bus fares, rail fares, prices of washing soap and every essential commodity by increased taxation? Why has she reduced the income-tax on millionaires and billionaires, and been allowing the foreign imperialists to loot our people and take away from our country hundreds of crores every year?

It is because she, representing the rapacious greedy big bourgeoisie and landlords, is out to defend the profits of these handful of worst exploiters in our country, in the background of growing economic malaise, the result of the capitalist path which these ruling classes have been adopting during the last three decades and which the Congress party, the political party of these classes, had been defending all through!

### **Representative of Vested Interests**

Our Party has always been warning that the Indira Gandhi Congress equally represents the same big bourgeoisie and landlord classes as the Syndicate, Swatantra and Jana Sangh represent. There are tactical and policy differences between them, as to how best to serve the interests of these rapacious exploiting classes. The line adopted by the Indira Gandhi leadership to give certain small concessions with plenty of empty promises, without attacking the vested interests would not solve the problem. The alternative for the people, for all democratic forces, is not to join hands with either of these two centres of the ruling classes, but forge a united democratic front of all Left and democratic forces on an agreed minimum charter of people's demands and actions.

With the extreme deterioration of the economic situation in the country, the result of persisting in the same old policies, Smt. Indira Gandhi is finding it impossible to give any real concessions to meet even partially the pressing needs of the toiling masses without radically attacking the vested interests. So she has started adopting the economic policies of the Syndicate and Jana Sangh and is resorting to blatant repression on countrywide scale, to suppress the fighting working class, the middle classes and other toiling sections.

As such, the present-day policies of Smt. Indira Gandhi are nothing but the naked expression of the brutal face of the big bourgeoisie and landlords and Smt. Indira Gandhi has now become the leader of all the reactionaries in our country. She has entered into electoral alliances with the Shiv Sena and other worst reactionary disruptive and communal forces in the country. Her Government has become the fountainhead of the reactionary policies being pursued in practice.

### **"Progressive" Congressmen— Where are They?**

The Right Communists joined hands with Indira Gandhi Congress and toppled the U. F. Governments in Kerala and

West Bengal. They had been supporting Indira Gandhi in all her brutal and ferocious efforts to suppress the CPI(M) and other Left forces allied with it both in West Bengal and Kerala. All this on the basis of their pet theory that there are progressive Congressmen with whom they want to forge a united front to fight the reactionaries, both inside the Congress and outside. According to them Smt. Indira Gandhi is the real "progressive leader" in the Congress, who is giving battle to the Right reactionary forces!

We do not want to go into the history of all these five years. We hoped when the leaders of the Right C.P. agreed to join hands with other Left parties to observe May 3 as All-India Protest Action Day against the anti-people policies of the Government and join in the common struggle of the railway workers' strike action, that they would start disentangling themselves from the bonds with the Congress with which they have shackled themselves.

We welcome the forthright speeches of their leaders in Parliament denouncing the Government's treacherous arrests of railwaymen and their leaders, and the ferocious attacks on the railwaymen, their women and children. We are happy that larger numbers of their leading cadres and members are fighting shoulder to shoulder with the other Left and democratic forces and are in the thick of the railwaymen's struggle. But how do they explain their Chief Minister in Kerala allowing MISA being used against the striking railway workers and their leaders?

We want to know from them where their "progressive Congressmen" are in this heroic struggle of the railway workers. This is a crucial battle of the Indian working class and toiling masses. A victory in this struggle will call a decisive halt to the headlong reactionary drive of Smt. Indira Gandhi and to make the ruling classes think twice before rushing on madly in their disastrous course. A defeat will be a heavy blow not only for the railway workers and for the rest of the working class but also for all our people, and especially to the Left and democratic forces.

## **Champions of Government**

But in this crucial struggle we find no "progressive" Congressman raising his voice against the Government's brutal repression, but on the other hand almost all of them have become champions of the Government in all its cruel and brutal terror measures to suppress the struggle. The "progressive" Labour Minister, one of the leading members of the dissolved "Socialist Forum", calmly pockets his pride and Socialism, and continues to serve the Indira Gandhi Government as its Labour Minister! He is not even prepared to take that elementary step which Sri V. V. Giri took in 1953, resigning his Labour Ministership, on a comparatively far less crucial issue, the Bank Tribunal Award. How are we to explain the same Sri Giri who has now become President of the Indian Union, does not think of even resigning his useless post from where he cannot stop the brutal suppression of the railway workers' historic struggle except in terms of the dire straits of the ruling classes of not affording even such moral protest from those whom they have elevated to these honorific posts?

Will the leadership of the Right Communists even now give up their policy of alliance with the Indira Gandhi Government? It will not hinder "any progressive Congressman" if he is interested, not merely in empty talk but if he really wants, from joining hands with the Left and democratic forces, in defence of the toiling masses.

## **Queer Position of Soviet Leaders**

Everybody knows that it is Smt. Indira Gandhi as the head of the Government and the leader of the Congress that has firmly taken the position of no concession to the railway workers, no bonus and no parity of wages! It is not some other reactionary forces in the Congress, or in the Government or the Railway Board or the bureaucracy that are responsible for this determined anti-working class stand. She is serving loyally the exploiting classes, the big bourgeoisie, the landlords and profiteers.

But the Soviet leadership wants to turn a blind eye to this reality. It gives up Marxist-Leninist class analysis. The Soviet commentators in Pravda refer to Right reaction asking the Government "for tough measures" and they stress the danger from the camp of Right reactionaries. But they refuse to pin down the real criminal, Smt. Indira Gandhi, who is out to suppress the railway workers' struggle. Even though they have to quote approvingly the Right Communist leaders' words, "the demands of railway workers reflect the demands of the entire working class for restructuring wages at the expense of monopolists and kulaks", in fact, they want to screen her and find an alibi for all her reactionary policies.

The Soviet leadership does not seem to realise the great harm it is doing to the Indian working class and the toiling masses of India, and the Socialist and democratic cause in India, by hiding the reality of the Indian situation from their own people. If they think by their projecting the so-called progressive character of Smt. Indira Gandhi and her Government, in terms bordering on sycophancy, and chauvinistic urges of the ruling classes, they can keep the Indira Gandhi Government on their side and on their terms, they are living in a fool's paradise.

Our working class and the democratic forces should be mature enough not to be misled by these advices of these great Socialist leaders but to pin down the real enemies in our country and develop our class battles to final victory.



## **Nine Parties' Convention in West Bengal Held on August 20, 1974 in Calcutta\***

A State Convention was held in Calcutta on August 20 under the auspices of the nine Left parties in West Bengal. From all the districts a large number of delegates representing the parties attended the Convention that was presided over by Makhan Pal, RSP leader.

In an appeal to the people the Convention urged upon them that the only way to survival against the all-pervasive onslaught on their lives and livelihood by the Congress regime was in developing wide and united struggles against the riggers' junta. All-out organized struggle is the imperative today in the teeth of the bestial repression let loose. The Convention also appealed to all sections of the people and the mass organizations to consciously build up strong organizations without which the battle cannot be fought decisively.

Speaking on behalf of the CPI(M), Comrade Jyoti Basu emphasised that the whys and wherefores of the movement must clearly be brought home to the people—demands must be explained and the enemy identified. The countless men and women must be mobilised irrespective of their political affiliations. The countrywide Left unity that was built up in the context of the railway strike must be cemented and widened and to its fullest.

Comrade Basu said that within a few days central trade

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\*Report published in 'PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY', Calcutta, September 1, 1974.

union organizations would discuss in Delhi proposals for struggles in the States against the Congress Governments. We hope that an all-India leadership, too, would develop.

The Congress raj, too, is not sitting idle. It is resorting to the shadiest tactics to disrupt the people's unity. Speaking on July 16 at the Howrah Maidan, the Prime Minister had said that "millions had died in the Bengal famine of 1943 but there were no riots, not a hair on the heads of the British rulers was touched—this is the Indian tradition". Comrade Basu said this was what the Prime Minister was demanding, starve yes, but starve in silence. We refuse to accept this. We refuse to accept the loot by hoarders and price-racketeers. We refuse to accept the consequent miseries of the masses as inevitable. This shall not pass—the tide of mass protest and struggle must put an end to it.

The Convention was also addressed by Biman Mitra (Socialist Party), Makhan Pal (RSP), Sukomal Dasgupta (SUC), Bhakti Mondal (Forward Bloc), Jyoti Bhattacharya (Workers' Party), Sudhin Kumar (RCPI), Ram Chatterjee (FB-M) and Rabi Datta (Biplabi Bangla Congress).

## The Struggle for Defending Democracy What does it Signify ?\*

Promode Dasgupta

The semi-fascist terror in West Bengal is of enormous significance from the point of the revolutionary movement of our country. The ruling classes took recourse to this violent path when, faced with the growing democratic movement, they found that they had failed through political methods to contain the advance of the people and the democratic camp as well as the growing role of our Party in it.

Tremendous impetus was given to the struggles of the toiling people at all levels by the two United Front Governments in West Bengal which functioned as "instruments of struggle". The class struggle, manifested in the seizure of *benami* and Government vested land in the countryside in particular, had struck terror in the ruling classes. Such a situation did not arise in any other State of India where non-Congress Governments were formed, except in West Bengal and Kerala. Despite non-Congress Governments having been in office in these States, the united fronts formed there were of a different political character. In fact, the class character of these non-Congress Governments was hardly any different from that of the Congress Governments. Consequently, mass struggles could not develop in those States in the same way as in West Bengal and Kerala. In West Bengal, on the other hand, the guarantee for a massive development of the struggles of workers, peasants and other toiling people lay in the united front of the Left and democratic parties and in

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the role our Party played in it. Confronted with such a situation, the ruling classes and the Congress party took to conspiratorial methods to topple the second United Front Government and unleash semi-fascist terror.

### **Barbaric Campaign of Terror**

Then began a barbaric campaign of murders, arrests, detentions without trial, terror of the police, the CRP and the goonda gangs, and of negation of every democratic right. Manoeuvres at sowing discord between the Left and democratic parties in the United Front also began at the same time.

What the semi-fascist terror aimed at achieving mainly was to throttle the growing mass movements, terrorise and demoralise the people, isolate the vanguard force, the organisers and leaders of mass movements from the people, and finally liquidate them. While on the one hand, this recourse to fascist actions epitomises the political weakness of the ruling classes—in that they could not but go this way because of their growing isolation from the people and their failure to dupe the people afresh, on the other hand, it signifies the growing strength and challenge of the mass movement and class struggle.

It was in the midst of this atmosphere of terror that the people of West Bengal took the struggle forward. Even when in the 1971 elections, the Indira Gandhi Congress applied its news tactics and duped the people—however temporarily—with the slogan of “garibi hatao” to obtain huge majorities in the Lok Sabha and various State Assemblies, the Congress suffered a defeat in West Bengal. And despite the disunity among the Left and democratic forces in the election struggle, our Party was able to emerge as the single largest party.

The Congress had not the ghost of a chance of winning the 1972 elections in this background particularly because unity could be forged of the Left and democratic parties to fight the elections.

### **Momentous Turning Point**

That election marked the momentous turning point in the political struggles in our country. The sordid chapter that was added to the history of parliamentary democracy in the largest democratic (!) country in the world has no other parallel. The Congress engineered its "victory" through terror and rigging of the elections, completely negating the popular verdict. It proved what we have been repeating time and again about parliamentary democracy—that threats to it come from the ruling classes and not from Communists. The ruling classes discard parliamentary democracy like tattered clothes when they no longer can depend on it for the protection of their class interests. This move of the ruling classes against democracy at the time of the last elections in West Bengal portends the future evil intent of the ruling classes.

The significance of this semi-fascist terror and rigging of elections in West Bengal, thus, is not restricted to that State alone, but to the whole of the country. It is, therefore, necessary to explain the real import of these events in West Bengal to the people elsewhere. Because, even though repression and general manipulations in elections are practised in the other States, too,—these are common practices in a bourgeois landlord State—the ruling classes have not yet had to go the West Bengal way in these States as their class rule does not face as much challenge on account of the comparative weakness of the popular movements, particularly those of the workers and peasants. But the situation in West Bengal is entirely different and the difference between the repression and electoral manipulations practised in the other States and in West Bengal is fundamental.

But, as the the Political Resolution of the Madurai Congress of our Party has pointed out : "For the working class and its party, the CPI(M), it will be suicidal to neglect this emergent aspect of the bourgeois-landlord rule in West Bengal and forget that it is the shape of things to come wherever the masses seriously challenge the ruling classes." The situation in the whole country has not reached that stage and uneven

development of mass struggles still is a feature. Still, as the Madurai-Congress directive points out, the matter demands immediate attention.

The Indira Gandhi Government is increasingly taking recourse to repression to defend itself from the countrywide agitation and discontent particularly at the present moment. Gujarat, Bihar, Maharashtra and Assam bear its testimony. The Government declared a virtual war on the railway workers' strike and used all the armed wings including the police, the CRP, the Army, the BSF and the Territorial Army. The mass arrests, threats and intimidation, harassment, police terror, use of Black Acts, tortures in the railway colonies, attacks on women—all this added up to surpass all earlier records of repression. These events prove that not only in West Bengal but wherever struggles of workers, peasants and the toiling masses develop in the country even for the most minimum demands, the ruling classes will confront them with the same ferocity.

It is in this background of the growing danger throughout the country that the struggle for defending democracy has assumed pivotal importance among all mass struggles. The Political Resolution of the Madurai Congress has correctly given the call to develop this struggle on an all-India plane.

Authoritarianism, meanwhile, has made its appearance in West Bengal with its hideous face. Even those who swear by the Constitution and are unflinching believers in the parliamentary way as well as others, too, find that Constitutional rights, even the right to vote, are not safe anywhere in the country under Congress rule. Our Party, in order to resist the establishment of one-party authoritarian rule, persistently warned that the attacks on us now presage the attacks in future on the entire democratic movement. Happenings all over the country are proving the correctness of this warning, others are also beginning to realise it. Our Party will have to devote all its energies to unite all the democratic forces in the struggle for defending democracy at this momentous hour in our history.

### **Ninth Congress' Call**

Once we are able to grasp the way the ruling party intends to proceed, after making short work of democracy behind the facade of our country being the 'largest democracy in the world', it becomes imperative for us to give the call and develop struggles to safeguard the present parliamentary (bourgeois) democracy and the restricted democratic rights it confers. The Political Resolution of the Ninth (Madurai) Congress declared : "The centralisation of all authority in the hands of one person in the ruling party leads to authoritarian tendencies which directly helps the one-party trend" (Para 118). In that light, the Resolution gave the call : "It is necessary therefore for all democratic and Left parties, all democratic groups and individuals to come together to battle against the rise of fascist trends, of one-party rule and protect the civil liberties and democratic rights of the people. It is necessary for all the democratic forces to come together and take stock of the situation following the election to pronounce their verdict on the methods pursued by the ruling party in the elections and enlighten public opinion on the crucial happenings in West Bengal" (Para 118).

The basic teaching of our Party's Programme— that the threat to parliamentary democracy does not come from Communists, the ruling classes are the enemies of democracy—is also being proved by the events in West Bengal. It is incumbent on us to explain its significance to the masses with all our energy. The clearer and more enriched the understanding of the masses, the more increasingly will forces rally in defence of democracy. Even those who have immense confidence in parliamentary democracy, those who generally follow the ruling party, will actively oppose this conspiracy to butcher democracy. The camp of defence of democracy will get further strengthened with the rallying of new forces.

Through their life's experience, the people of West Bengal are seeing that it is not their voting right alone that is being snatched away, arrests, raids, threats and intimidation

are also increasingly taking place. Attacks are being organised against Left political and trade union activities. Thousands have had to leave their places of residence and work. Organized terror stalks educational institutions. Papers which dare expose the nefarious activities of the Congress are being attacked, as are cultural groups. Activities of anti-social elements pampered by the ruling party are threatening the life itself of the common man. One can no longer freely decide on one's actions on days when general strikes are called. Forcible exactions of monetary contributions go on. But people are getting more vocal against this barbaric move to obliterate the democratic conscience, self-respect and civil liberties.

In this situation, the more we are able to forcefully raise the demand for the assertion of democratic rights, the stronger will the struggle become for according due respect to the general democratic conscience and values, democratic practices and rights of the people. We shall gain partial successes through the struggle and through it will the demand for the necessity of restoration of the democratic order find a stronger voice.

### **People Protest Against Terror**

In West Bengal, we have already seen how the small shop-owners and shop employees express their resentment over the forcible opening of shops on the days of general strikes and how in many a cases they had confronted the ruling party. They had come forward to do this from a general understanding of democracy and civil liberties. The people are becoming more vocal against anti-social activities and persecution and intimidation of Leftist activists. Protests are being heard from the midst of terror. The demand for allowing unrestricted political and trade union activities is getting stronger. The student community is raising the demand for the holding of free elections to the students' unions and in protest against Chhatra Parishad gangsterism. And wherever free and fair elections to students' unions are held, the SFI is coming out victorious.



All this proves the strength that the demand for safeguarding democracy will muster once the widest section of the people are united, will help us in marching forward with firm steps. It is possible to partially, if not entirely, restore the democratic rights and gain more strength on the basis of these rights and go forward to our destination.

What will be the destination of this struggle? Can only the restoration of free and fair elections, which is one of the demands, be the ultimate aim of the struggle for safeguarding democracy? We shall surely fruitfully utilise it when it is achieved. We know which side the popular verdict will go to in a free and fair election. But will the ruling classes reconcile themselves to that situation? Future events alone will show.

The aims and perspectives of the struggle for defending democracy are not restricted within the bounds of realisation of the demands for free and fair elections and restoration of parliamentary bourgeois democratic rights. We are opposing and are also calling on the people to resist the trampling underfoot of the existing parliamentary democratic rights by the ruling classes when we are demanding the holding of an honest election, end to terror, restoration of civil liberties, withdrawal of the Black Acts and the Emergency as well as the CRP and other armed minions, release of prisoners, etc.

It is the duty of Communists to resist the conspiracy of the demon of authoritarianism with all their might when it strives to strike even at bourgeois democracy. This struggle will be extended further, and will strengthen our struggle for real democracy by uniting the whole people.

### **Experience—The Best Teacher**

Practical experience of life is the best teacher, and the principal determining factor of each and every struggle is the practical experience of the people. If we are able to play our role properly in the struggle against the attacks the ruling party has launched on ordinary democratic rights and values including elections, against its all-out attacks on democracy,

the widest sections of even the politically backward people—even those ordinary people following the Congress— will come into the struggle. The unity in the camp for defending democracy will be extended, its strength increased and consciousness enriched with this rallying of forces.

The people will strive to go forward in the way they desire, the ruling classes will obstruct it. They will try to scuttle all the aspirations of the people through violence in the interests of a handful of exploiters. But they will fail. The united might of the people will march onward to victory. That is the law of history.

The people will realise through their real-life experience that this problem will never be fully resolved and the danger to democracy will increase as long as the present order of things and Congress class rule continue. The struggle for defending democracy will then assume a new significance in the light of this experience.

The people will then realise why it is necessary to change the present political power, to end the bourgeois-landlord class rule. The necessity for winning real democracy will then become inevitable. At the same time, suffering from the crisis of the country's economy, which is tottering as a result of the worldwide crisis of the capitalist system the people will desire a change. The struggle for defending democracy will take strides toward its ultimate goal through the resultant political upheaval.

Those who today have come forward to join the struggle for defence of democracy, implied by a general democratic consciousness and a sense of democratic right, will support that struggle, even though a section might remain neutral.

Naturally, there will be a difference in the practical application of the slogan of defence of democracy according to the situation obtaining and the level of the struggle on an all-India scale. The character of the struggle, too, will naturally differ. The struggle that will develop on the slogan of "Save Democracy" will vary in different situations according to the strength obtaining there. The objective sig-

nificance of the slogan will also change as the struggle develops, the character of the struggle will also undergo a change and it will develop with newer and stronger elements.

### **Form of Movement Will Vary**

At the moment, the practical form of the struggle in different States of India on the slogan of "Save Democracy" should be at the propaganda level. It will not be possible to go beyond that now in most of the States. On the other hand, this slogan will have practical application through mass rallies, demonstrations and protests in those States where the camp of democratic struggle is relatively stronger. We have seen popular discontent assuming organised shape in the recent general strikes and hartals. A sense of resistance to terror has also awakened in the people. Here in West Bengal, the struggle has moved forward from the level of propaganda and assumed the forms of agitation and movement. Again, when in the days to come, the struggle that will be built up through the widest mobilisation of the people for real democracy will also have the "Save Democracy" slogan before it, and as the people's slogan, it will muster immense strength and do away with all resistance.

That struggle, too, will have an all-India perspective. It is not enough for the struggle to succeed in West Bengal alone, it is impossible to inflict the final defeat on bourgeois landlord rule without a countrywide mass struggle. Here the most difficult factor is the unequal development of the mass movements and political consciousness in the country as a whole. We have made advances in a few States such as West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, but are lagging behind in most of the other States.

### **New Possibilities Opened Up**

But possibilities have been opened up of building up mass movements by the havoc wrought by the economic crisis and the resultant complications in the political situation.

Our Party will have to give correct leadership in this situation. We will be able to solve the problem of unequal development of the movement if we can correctly guide the struggle for safeguarding democracy without flinching from the political aims of the working class. On the one hand, we have to quickly consolidate and develop the movement in the backward States for lending active support to the movement in the advance States in the new situation fraught with immense possibilities, and *vice versa*. The people of the States where the democratic movements are weak, will also be able to advance much more quickly and be enriched with far more developed consciousness on the waves of the all embracing struggle, if the mass movement in West Bengal attains a higher stage and can open up the way to fundamentally resolve the problem of the struggle for democracy.

With the diversity and unequal development in such a vast country as ours, the struggle for liberation will not develop with the same strength everywhere, though it will inevitably have to attain an all-India character and strength under the leadership of the working class. That strength will have to be attained through a difficult, arduous and long struggle. There is no short-cut. But the advance detachments should not mark time in the name of bringing forward the weaker movements and building up the same strength all over the country. They have to assume the difficult responsibility of providing the proper leadership at the proper time if the political developments make it possible and the objective situation demands the starting of such a struggle. In our success in providing such a leadership will the obstacles posed by the unequal development of struggle and political consciousness be removed and we will be able to advance towards the goal of the final liberation of our people.

[Translated from the original article in Bengali, from *GANASHAKTI*, August 15, 1974.]

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