

DOCUMENTS OF
THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT
IN INDIA

VOL. XIX
(1980-1981)

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Vol. 19

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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
Congress (R)	—Ruling Congress
Congress (O)	—Congress (Organisation)
AITUC	—All India Trade Union Congress
INTUC	—Indian National Trade Union Congress
AIKS	—All India Kisan Sabha
CKC	—Central Kisan Council of All India Kisan Sabha
WFTU	—World Federation of Trade Unions
AISF	—All India Students' Federation
SFI	—Students Federation of India

Introductory Note

DYFI	—Democratic Youth Federation of India
UF	—United Front
RSS	—Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha
SP	—Socialist Party
JP	—Janata Party
FB	—Forward Bloc
RSP	—Revolutionary Socialist Party
EMS	—E.M.S. Namboodiripad
BTR	—B. T. Ranadive
PS	—P. Sundarayya
PR	—P. Ramamurti
MB	—M. Basavapunnaiiah

This Volume (Volume No. XIX) covers the period 1980-81 and includes important documents which will throw light on several political developments in India of far-reaching consequences.

The first document of this Volume is the Election Manifesto of CPI(M) for 1980 Lok Sabha elections. Our Party highlighted the main theme of this election battle as a fight for democracy against authoritarian and dictatorial rule. It was stated in the Election Manifesto:

“Once again, the battle is between the forces of democracy and forces of dictatorship. The forces of authoritarian dictatorship represented by Indira Gandhi are again in the field with their Emergency kit.”

It was also pointed out in the Election Manifesto:

“The truncated RSS-Jana Sangha-dominated Janata with its anti-democratic communal and casteist ideology is another reactionary challenge that faces the people.”

We also stated clearly in our Election Manifesto:

“It became clear that over the months the Janata Party got growingly estranged from the people and relied more and more on dictatorial and authoritarian measures to bolster itself.”

“The instrument forged by the people in the last elections to fight the authoritarian forces collapsed.”

In the midst of this political situation Smt. Indira Gandhi and her party came back to power through this Lok Sabha election in

1980 and the Janata Party was practically routed. But, the Left political parties, particularly, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and its allies retained their strength in this election in the States like West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura where they were strong.

The results and political implication of the Lok Sabha elections of 1980 were thoroughly analysed by the Central Committee of our Party and these were duly published in a number of documents, now given in this Volume. The victory of Smt. Indira Gandhi in the Lok Sabha election of 1980 was the initiation to set up again her dictatorial regime and the Central Committee of our Party repeatedly warned the people against it and gave a call for the broadest mass mobilisation against this danger. In the statement issued by the Central Committee of our Party following its meeting held in New Delhi on March 14-16, 1980, it was categorically stated:

“The dissolution of the Assemblies in nine States and imposition of President’s rule on them are an integral part of the drive to establish one-party dictatorship not only at the Centre but in the States as well. It has to be seen not separately from, but along with, the well-organised campaign unleashed by the Congress(I) against the Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala and for further centralisation of powers in the Union Government.”

“The C.C. noted with concern the public pronouncements and threats made by some Union Ministers, as well as several letters written by Union Ministers, including the Prime Minister, to the Chief Ministers of States, all of which show an attitude of discrimination against all non-Congress(I) Governments. These official pronouncements of Union Ministers as well as the campaign unleashed by the Congress(I) in the States are in the opinion of the Central Committee, a demonstration of the Congress(I)’s intolerance towards all non-Congress(I) State Governments—the dissolution of the

nine State Assemblies, as also the whole-sale defections organised in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka, being the first shot fired in this direction.”

The anti-democratic and authoritarian tendency of the old Indira Gandhi’s regime during National Emergency were seen in full measure after she was re-installed in power in 1980 and the rigging of poll in Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency in June 1981 to defeat Hemabati Nandan Bahuguna clearly confirmed it. Our Party consistently carried on campaign to mobilise the people against this anti-democratic, anti-people authoritarian policies and measures of Smt. Indira Gandhi’s regime and a number of important documents including statements and communiques as well as resolutions of the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee of the CPI(M) on it are included in this Volume.

Sreemati Indira Gandhi concentrated her attack on the CPI(M) and had spread various canards against Marxism. Our Party consistently fought against this campaign.

This Volume also includes documents of our Party on the situation prevailing at that time in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and the role our Party played to meet the political exigencies. The General Secretary of our Party in a statement dated October 20, 1981 demanded fresh election in Kerala in order that real representatives of the people could form the Government in the State and run it in the interest of the people.

Of the 9 States where Assembly Elections were held Smt. Indira Gandhi’s Congress faced miserable defeat in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tripura and these victories substantially strengthened the move of our Party to build Left and Democratic unity as a sure basis to fight against authoritarian and dictatorial rule of Sreemati Indira Gandhi.

During this period we lost one of our outstanding Comrades, A. Balasubramaniam, a member of the Polit Bureau of our Party.

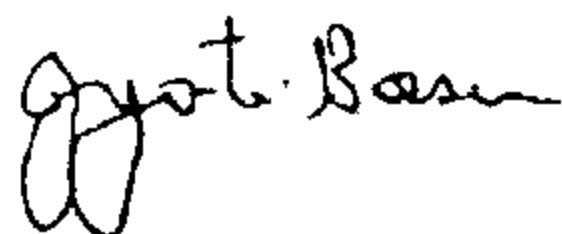
The sad demise of Com. Soong Ching Ling, one of the Vice-Presidents of the People’s Republic of China took place during this period. She was the widow of Dr. Sun Yat Sen and a great

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leader of the Chinese people who whole-heartedly worked with the Communist Party of China since 1949 and consistently discharged her patriotic duties to the Chinese people.

The failure of the experiment of the Janata Party was a turning point in Indian politics and while it again gave rise to authoritarian regime, it also revealed the danger posed by old RSS-dominated Jana Sangha which reappeared as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) following collapse of the Janata Government.

We have given 92 political documents in this Volume and we are certain those who want to make a serious study of the major political developments of this period, will find the documents included in this Volume as most useful.



(JYOTI BASU)
Chief Editor

May 8, 1998

Foreword

In the background of the fight against authoritarianism represented by the Congress, the instrument which was forged by different political forces, *viz.*, the Janata Party, got a thumping victory in the 1977 elections. The Janata Party government played a positive role in breaking the authoritarian framework. However, within two and a half years of its existence the government exhausted further possibilities of consolidating itself. The different forces that had come together to form the Janata Party, once again started pulling in different directions. The issue of dual membership, of both the Janata Party and the RSS, was a major issue. This issue remained unresolved with the members of the erstwhile Jan Sangh refusing to oblige others on this score. At the same time, the followers of the erstwhile Jan Sangh and the Congress(O) began taking a rightward posture in foreign policy matters and trying to placate US imperialism. In the realm of economic policies, there was no difference between the earlier policies followed by the Congress Party and that of the Janata Party. The conflict between the various combinations representing the Congress(O) and the Jan Sangh, CFD of Jagjivan Ram, and the Lok Dal of Charan Singh finally brought down the government. The Congress(O) and the Jan Sangh combination were gradually strengthening their hold over the government.

We had already taken note of this trend in the 10th Congress at Jullundur and had started demarcating ourselves with these policies. Therefore, it was not difficult for our Party to vote against the government. Eventually the Charan Singh Government was sworn in office with the support of the Congress(I). However, before it could face the Lok Sabha, the Congress withdrew support, leading

to general elections. In these elections, the CPI(M), some other Left and democratic parties appealed to the people to support the formation headed by the Janata(S) and the Congress(S) which was opposed to the Congress(I) on the one side and the RSS-Jan Sangh-dominated Janata Party on the other.

Barring West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala, the Congress(I) achieved decisive victory with two-thirds majority but the other two bourgeois-landlord combinations were virtually routed as no viable alternative to the Congress(I) could be presented before the electorate in other States in the January 1980 Lok Sabha poll.

On poll verdict and post-election situation the Polit Bureau of our Party said, "The vote for the Congress(I) is an expression of the people's protest against the bankrupt policies of the Janata regime. Our Party was repeatedly warning the Janata Government that its anti-popular policies were supplying ammunition to the Congress(I) and offering it an opportunity to re-establish itself. But these warnings went unheeded. The election results show how the Janata Party and all its constituents have been thoroughly isolated from the people during the last three years. It is obvious that in the States also, the Janata leaders were ignoring the people and feathering their own nests. The Congress(I) was the largest bourgeois-landlord party spread all over India to exploit the situation and misled the people into believing that it was only the viable force capable of administering the Central Government".

Our Party warned that "the return to power of the Congress(I) with the huge majority is again likely to lead to consequences harmful for the people's cause. The overwhelming majority may be interpreted as a licence for arbitrary and autocratic rule".

Outlining the tasks ahead the Party called upon the Left parties to strengthen their unity and their hold over the people as only the consistent Left forces, which included CPI after a long break, in alliance with other democratic forces, could save the situation. They must also bend all their efforts to build the unity of Left and democratic forces. A broad united front in defence of democracy and people's livelihood was the prime task of the hour.

Coming immediately in the wake of the sweeping success of the Congress(I) in the Lok Sabha elections, the victory of the Left and

democratic alliance headed by CPI(M) in Kerala in the Assembly elections administered a much needed rebuff to the authoritarian forces which were engaged, by the time, to topple all non-Congress(I) State Governments and establish one-party rule in all the States. The defeat of Congress(I) alliance and spectacular victory of CPI(M)-led Left and democratic alliance inspired the disappointed democratic forces to pick up the gauntlet and organise unified battles against authoritarian forces ruling at the Centre.

Another welcome development, though belated and after causing immense damage, was the decision of the Janata Party National Executive by a majority vote to bar party members from taking part in the day-to-day work of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

It came about at a time when nine non-Congress(I) State Governments had already been dismissed and constant threats were being held out against the remaining three—the CPI(M)-led governments in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura; the drive towards an authoritarian set-up was all-too-evident. The decision of the Janata National Executive exposed the RSS elements and their design which prompted them to launch their own party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, which was nothing but the camouflaged Jan Sangh.

The absence of viable alternative made possible the victory of Congress(I) in the State Assemblies on the basis of very low polling. Where such an alternative was there, as in Tamil Nadu, the people voted for the combination of AIADMK-CPI-CPI(M) and others which inflicted a crushing defeat on the Congress(I) and its DMK ally.

The tirades against Left Front Ministries had become more and more strident after the Congress(I) came to power in January 1980 with the Central ministers engaging themselves in conspiracies one after another. The Prime Minister also had added her voice to these tirades which were enough to incite her followers in West Bengal and Tripura to create law and order problems. The real reason was that the Left Front Government had been functioning as the champion of the people throwing its full weight on the side of the poor and the people in general. All this were rebuffed by the people of West Bengal with massive protest rallies and demonstrations.

Elsewhere, the swift anti-people measures of the Congress(I) Government were inviting wide movements. Various Kisan organisations joining hands to form a Central Kisan Coordination Committee organised a mammoth rally at Boat Club on March 26, 1981 unparalleled in the history of post-independence India and this was a pointer as well as a warning to the ruling class represented by Congress(I). Followed were the working class actions culminating to a one-day all-India strike on January 19, 1982 called by the National Convention Against Price-Rise and Anti-Labour policies of the government. The Convention was unique in the sense that except Congress(I) unions, most of the central trade unions and national federations joined it.

While united resistance was developing to defeat the efforts of the ruling classes to throw the burdens of the economic crisis on the common man, the reactionary divisive, communal and separatist forces found it easy to exploit the backward sentiments of the people to pursue their game, and all-out actions of various forms had been sparked off in different parts of the country endangering the unity and integrity of India seriously.

In the North-Eastern region, utilising the genuine grievances of the people of Assam and other States of the region, separatist movements had developed. Imperialist agencies were active to utilise some of the Christian missions to pursue their nefarious game of destabilisation.

It was of significance that the RSS, Jamait-e-Islami, certain Christian missions and sections of the Akali leadership opposing each other diametrically, had started talking on the same wave length. The old slogan of Hindu nation and Hindu Rashtra, Sikh nation and Khalistan and Muslim nation had been revived with the logical destination of separatism. All these divergent forces were complementing and supplementing each other. These intensified activities required to be seen in the light of developments in other developing countries in Asia, where after disrupting Arab unity, the imperialist forces were trying to instigate religious fundamentalists to create a wedge between the people of various countries. One can ignore these theories, slogans and the imperialist

machinations thereby only at his own peril. After the split in the Janata Party, the BJP, the new name for the old Jan Sangh, had adopted a new pose declaring that it stood for Gandhian Socialism. In fact, under the garb of many utopian and absurd slogans, they try, on the one hand, to mislead the public opinion, and to conceal the fact that RSS is the real base of the BJP, and BJP leaders can never afford to sever link with it.

Imperialist agencies were giving all aid to all this conspiracy of destabilisation. It was as a part of this game that a dastardly riot was organised in Tripura in the middle of June 1980. To add fuel to the fire, the reactionary "Amra Bangalee", a front organisation of the notorious Anand Marg, was aggressively campaigning for Bangalistan, an openly anti-tribal slogan. The agitation in Gujarat, on the totally unjustifiable demand for scrapping of reservation in education and in jobs for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, had been turned into veritable caste war resulting in a large number of casualties. It was of even more concern that this anti-reservation agitation spread to Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Despite formal denials, it was known to all that RSS was active in Gujarat agitation and in the communal riots, no matter what crocodile tears were shed for the weaker sections and Muslims in their resolutions meant for public consumption. In Bombay, the chauvinist Shiv Sena went on a rampage attacking and destroying shops and houses belonging to Malayalees and Kanarese with the pernicious slogan of "sons of the soil", nurtured by reactionary elements including many Congress(I) leaders and Chief Ministers. Shiv Sena was a vociferous supporter of Emergency and had allied with the Congress(I) for long. Caste and communal riots were repeating themselves with the connivance of the political leaders of the ruling party and the BJP and the top echelons of the administration. The slogan of Khalistan raised by the Dal-Khalsa, followed by a series of violent incidents of sabotage and even hijacking of an Indian Airlines Boeing plane to Pakistan, was all being patronised by imperialist agencies who were using the soil of Pakistan. The major faction of the Akalis were openly advocating the slogan of Sikh nationhood, which is connected inseparably with

the slogan of Khalistan. Various religious leaders and fanatics had been consistently encouraged by the ruling party. In Kashmir, militant outfits were mushrooming to demand separation. Where the Left and democratic forces are not strong enough to lead the masses on correct lines, reactionary elements are able to draw them into casteist, parochial, communal and other disrupting channels, and sabotage the struggles that should be fought unitedly against the anti-people policies of the bourgeois-landlord rulers—an assertion which is still, after 16-18 years, equally relevant.

International developments of serious concern were taking place in this period with the US imperialists pursuing their plans for global domination using various agencies. Though it had received a rebuff by the fall of Shah regime in Iran, US imperialism was trying to grip the oil region and was making Pakistan its military base under the excuse of helping Afghan "freedom fighters". Defying the demand of the Arab world, of world public opinion and of all UN resolutions, Israel formally annexed occupied Arab territory—Golan Heights of Syria, West Bank of Jordan, etc., it was because of support they had been receiving from the US imperialists. The proclamation of Arab Gulf as "a zone of US vital interests", development of rapid deployment force by Pentagon for intervention in various parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America were causing concern among the peace-loving people of the world. The support of the national liberation movement and the developing countries by the former Soviet Union was treated by US imperialism as expansionism allegedly "threatening the vital interests" of USA and with this spurious plea resorted to expand NATO outside NATO areas. The USA has all along been looking upon non-Socialist countries as part of its invisible empire and any Leftward shift in the alignment of forces within the third world countries used to be regarded as a threat to their security.

The situation in the Socialist Poland was a serious international development in this period. The Polish "Solidarity" trade union leadership, which was demanding workers' rights at the initial stage in early 1980, had slipped into the hands of a confirmed counter-revolutionary band which was openly acting as a tool of imperialism

to plunge Poland into a civil war and dismantle socialist regime. The whole imperialist Press and other powerful mass media of the bourgeoisie, big or small, were harnessed to malign Socialist regimes and the erstwhile Soviet Union depicting them as enemies of democracy and workers' rights and interests. The bourgeois Press, the world over, had taken recourse to anti-Communist and anti-Soviet slander-mill to put out the shop-soiled lie concertedly that Communists are against democracy. The solidarity leaders, openly aided and abetted by imperialists, particularly the US imperialists, and the Church were out to bring about the collapse of Polish society by exploiting the discontent over genuine grievances. The Government patiently dealt with the situation, giving many a relief, accepting many a demand knowing that there was genuine cause for discontent and avoided all repression to restore confidence among the people. All except naive and blind admit that the subversion was engineered by the imperialists and their henchmen in Poland exploiting the political-ideological blunders continuing since long and the consequent economic setbacks. Polish experience, however, showed that the power and safety of the Socialist Revolution was compromised by blatant violations of Leninist norms in the functioning of the Government and the proletarian party. The subsequent events and setbacks in USSR and East European countries vindicate this more clearly. The imperialists took full advantage of it to subvert and dismantle those societies in collusion with the respective counter-revolutionaries.

On the contrary, the Socialist Cuba has been fighting heroically against all the blockades, designs and conspiracies of the US imperialism, a shining example of defending Socialist revolution firmly overcoming all the inconceivable odds.

It was heartening for all countries that People's China which had committed grave mistakes and distortions in the decade-long "Cultural Revolution", was engaged in the task of restoring Leninist norms and the Chinese leadership was embarking upon modernisation maintaining the Socialist base. The CPI(M) welcomed this development while calling for change in their

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erroneous evaluation of contemporary world and world balance of forces which caused immense harm to the world revolutionary movement. The Central Committee of our Party extending its greetings in September 1981, emphasised that, "The differences, disputes and divisions in the world camp of anti-imperialists and Socialist forces should not be allowed to be exploited by the imperialists to their advantage. The diabolical war plans of crisis-ridden imperialism shall not be allowed to fructify under the false cries of Soviet aggression and expansion".

Such national and international developments and our stand on all this are provided in this Volume.

Harkishan Singh Surjeet

(Harkishan Singh Surjeet)

General Secretary

Communist Party of India (Marxist)

May 22, 1998

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Election Manifesto Of CPI(M) For 1980 Lok Sabha Elections*

The call for parliamentary election comes when our people are passing through most intense sufferings due to floods and drought, due to high prices and inflation, unemployment and loss of jobs.

The CPI(M) expresses its deep sympathy with millions of our people who are victims of drought, people who are victims of floods, all our countrymen who are passing through indescribable misery. The CPI(M) promises to do everything to ensure that all the resources of the administration are used for the relief of our suffering brothers and sisters.

The coming elections call on the misery-stricken people to give a challenging reply to all those who have heaped nothing but suffering on them through their policies. It calls upon them to assert their will and to pack off those who broke every plighted word, who violated their mandate, or who suppressed all their liberties and democratic rights to help the vested interests.

Democracy Vs Dictatorship

Once again, the battle is between the forces of democracy and forces of dictatorship. The forces of authoritarian dictatorship represented by Indira Gandhi are again in the field with their emergency kit.

The truncated RSS-Jana Sangha-dominated Janata with its anti-democratic communal and casteist ideology is another reactionary challenge that faces the people.

*Published as a booklet and also published as a supplement to "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY".

The menace of the Congress (I), that repository of dictatorial ambitions, continues to be the main authoritarian danger and has to be fought.

The Congress (I) is exploiting the discontent arising out of the anti-popular policies of the Janata Government and is making a claim for popular vote, promising stability and fulfilment of people's demands.

Record Of Indira Regime

But what has been the record of Indira Gandhi during more than a decade of her regime? Which demands of the people did she fulfil? What kind of stability did she offer to the people, to the hutment dwellers, to the common people? Didn't her class policies bring ruin to the country and allow the rich to grow richer?

The growth rate of food production was 1.85 per cent per annum in the period 1967-77 which was significantly lower than in the earlier period.

Overall rate of growth in agricultural output has been only 2.13 per cent in the same decade.

The growth rate in the industrial sector has averaged only 4.3 per cent per annum in the recent past.

The overall growth rate averaged between 3.8 per cent to 3.5 per cent per annum.

Following the capitalist path, keeping the pre-capitalist land relations intact, Indira Gandhi imposed a tortuously slow growth rate on the country spreading misery all round.

The 20-Point Programme Hoax

Indira Gandhi indulges in glib talk about serving the rural masses. She is intent on resurrecting her 20-point programme, with its supposed preference for the rural poor to befool the people.

But in the rural areas, under her regime, in 1971-72, the poorest ten per cent of the households owned only 0.1 per cent and the richest ten per cent owned more than half the total rural assets.

She fooled the people by her talk about land distribution. She justified assault on fundamental rights and declaration of the Emergency as means to implement her 20-point programme,

measures for implementing the Directive Principles of the Constitution.

How much did the peasants gain? In July 1977, i.e., after the Emergency regime had its full sway, the (fraudulently) estimated surplus land area was 5.32 million acres, the area declared surplus was 4.04 million, the area taken over by the Government was 2.10 million and the area actually distributed was only 1.29 million acres.

And it is known that a major part of the actually distributed land was virtually uncultivable.

Did not Indira's Government fraudulently manipulate the figure of surplus land when sample surveys had estimated it at not less than 40 million acres?

The Congress(I) and Indira Gandhi shed tears over the miserable lot of the agricultural workers. But did not the Indira regime worsen their lot instead of improving it?

The latest paper of the Planning Commission reveals that the real earnings of an agricultural worker were Rs. 1.43 in 1960-61; they sank to Rs. 1.27 in 1967-68; after seven years of Indira's regime in 1974-75, the wage dropped to Rs. 1.17. During the Emergency it was Rs. 1.5—16 paise less than in 1961-62.

This is the grand march of Garibi Hatao under the Indira regime.

More Below The Poverty Line

Further exploits of the Garibi Hatao brigade? Already in 1972, under Indira's regime, the percentage of those living below the poverty line, i.e., with per capita living expenditure of less than Rs. 20 in rural areas and less than Rs. 30 in urban areas was 44.57 per cent in the rural areas and 51.34 per cent in urban areas. By the end of the Emergency the percentage of those living below this poverty line is estimated to have risen to 70 per cent.

What part of the 20-point programme has been fulfilled?

Land distribution turned out to be a cruel joke. The house-site distribution programme turned out to be another hoax, since the overwhelming number of distributed sites remained unoccupied because they were sites which got flooded during the rains or were submerged under tanks. The debt cancellation programme

and the release of bonded labourers programme shared the same fate. Tens of thousands of bonded labourers and slaves exist in India today.

The promise of supplying cheap cloth to the people also ended up in smoke.

While the number of those below the poverty line was increasing the number of those with enormous wealth increased under the Indira rule.

Six per cent of landowners owned more than 30 per cent of the land in the rural areas.

The assets of 20 Big Business houses were Rs. 2430 crores in 1969. They rose to Rs. 3059 crores in 1972—an increase of 25 per cent. They further rose to Rs. 4465 crores in 1975—a further increase of 45 per cent.

Two of the 20 Big Business houses control assets of the order of Rs. 2139.5 crores, i.e., 40 per cent of the total assets of top business houses.

Between 1972 and 1977, the assets of the Tatas increased from Rs. 641.93 crores to Rs. 1069.28 crores, the assets of the Birla increased from Rs. 589.40 crores to Rs. 1070.20 crores. The years of the Emergency have been years of misery and destitution for the people.

Two years before the clamping down of the Emergency, the people were the victims of the worst type of inflation with prices rising by 30 per cent in the year.

When the Indira Government decided to move against inflation, it again hit the people by impounding the dearness allowance and wage increases under the Compulsory Deposit Scheme, reduced D.A. and bonus. Heavy tax burdens were heaped upon the people year after year.

During the years of the Indira regime, unemployment exceeded one crore from 45 lakhs a decade before.

Never before since Independence was the common man so much haunted by high prices, the robbery of the market, loss of jobs and wages as during the Indira regime.

To crown it all, the country became increasingly dependent on foreign loans from imperialist countries and had to pay debt servicing charges and was compelled to export at the cost of the needs of the people.

The Emergency Regime

No previous regime has committed so many crimes against the common people as the Indira Gandhi Government during the six years from 1971 to 1977. The policies of exploitation and repression culminated in the final infamy of the rule of Emergency and the reactionary constitutional amendments depriving the people of all rights and liberties.

At one blow, by banning meetings, strikes, demonstrations and agitations, workers employees, agricultural workers, peasants, teachers, students and professors were rendered helpless in their daily struggle before the landlords, monopolists, capitalists, the Government and other authorities. The nation was converted into a nation of suppressed people.

Tens of thousands of people were wantonly arrested and tortured in jails. People were murdered in cold blood in police custody. Inhuman methods of torture were devised to extort confessions. The case of Rajan of Kerala murdered by the police is known to all. But besides this, there were hundreds who had to undergo barbarous torture at the hands of Indira's police. Indira had arbitrarily introduced terror methods in West Bengal in 1972 and more than a thousand of our comrades were murdered by hooligans and Intelligence Branch men. During the Emergency the bureaucracy was given power over the life of the citizens and it used it to torture, maim and kill the people.

What has been the role of the Indira Congress during the last two and a half years? Has the leadership including Indira Gandhi ever expressed regret for imposing the Emergency? Have they ever expressed repentance for the foul misdeeds of the period—the jailings, harassment, tortures, and murders of innocent people? Have they at all repudiated the compulsory sterilisation of Muslims and others enforced through police firing and terror by the Sanjay gang? Have they admitted that they violated and subverted the Indian Constitution by enacting the 42nd Constitution Amendment Act?

Let there be no complacency about it. Let it be known that freedom of the Press was secured only after defeating Indira Gandhi at the polls; the power of the courts was restored only after

her rout in the elections. The legality of the strike, bonus, the withdrawal, of the CDS, right to hold meetings, all were secured only after the removal of the hated Indira rule.

Indira Gandhi demagogically thunders against the USA and the CIA. But is it not a fact that during her Prime Ministership the Congress received money from the CIA, on two occasions to fight the Communists in the elections.

Last Two Years' Record

What has the Congress(I) done for the people during the last two years? What is this record of her Andhra Pradesh Ministry? Has land been distributed to the people? Has anything been done to guarantee work to the rural population, of land to the landless.

Under the Congress(I) regime in Andhra Pradesh, atrocities on Harijans continue as before. The landlords continue to oppress them under Chenna Reddy's rule. This Ministry has, besides, created a new record in corruption and jobbery.

Indira talks every time about her concern for Harijans. Why is her Ministry not doing anything to end the atrocities against Harijans?

This Ministry, besides, shows that it has not given up the Emergency methods. Under it murderous assaults are made on CPI(M) members, with the police playing the role of spectators. No person expresses more verbal concern for the Muslims affected by riots, for minority rights. Did she not shoot down scores of Muslim men and women during the Emergency? And did she not openly support Vinoba's demand for banning cow slaughter to earn the praise of Hindu communalists, though the demand had every likelihood of leading to huge communal riots?

During the last two and a half years, people all over India suffered under high prices, unemployment, low wages, starvation. What did Indira Gandhi do to help them except only beating her own drum? Did her organisation oppose the illegalisation of strikes in U.P., Madhya Pradesh? Did her organisation oppose the Janata Government for refusing bonus to the railway workers? Did she oppose deficit financing, the source of inflation? Did she oppose World Bank loans which mortgage our economy to

foreign multinationals? Has she suggested any concrete remedy to transfer the burdens of the crisis from the poor to the rich? She had done nothing except seeking electoral advantage for herself from the policies of the Janata Government.

Reject This Treacherous Force

The people cannot trust this treacherous force of Indira Gandhi, out to seek political domination of its junta—and enslave the people. Let the people know that the Sanjay-Bansi Lal gang is again controlling the Congress (I). Once again, Sanjay is playing a dominant role in the distribution of tickets, ensuring the return of this entire gang.

Many people associated with Indira are involved in big scandals concerning money, illegal deals and blackmail. Press reports talk about fantastic sums of money collected by some for purposes of election—obviously money is going to play a big role in the coming struggle. Only a few months ago, a former U.S. Ambassador to India announced that he had given money to the Congress led by Indira on two occasions to fight elections against the Communists.

There is no evil that is not associated with the Congress (I).

The Congress (I), representing the main danger of authoritarianism, and terror, of subversion of the Constitution, must be defeated at all cost.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) calls upon all Left and democratic forces in the country to rally together at this critical juncture in the struggle against the forces of dictatorship represented by Indira Gandhi.

The Janata Party Today

Can the people vote for the Janata Party again? What a miserable spectacle it presents today. A Party which was returned to the Lok Sabha with a thumping majority, a party in whom the people had put their hopes for advance, just collapsed in two and a half years. Why?

The Janata Government fell because the Janata Party disintegrated, its unity collapsed.

The Janata leadership failed to fulfil the hopes of the people; it set itself on a course opposed to their aspirations and brought about the disintegration of the organisation.

Immediately after taking the reins of power the Janata Government took steps to restore democracy, lifted censorship, re-established freedom of the Press and took other measures to restore the rights of the individual and strengthen the rights of the citizen. Its Constitution Amendment Bill, in spite of several shortcomings, was also directed towards doing away with some of the mischiefs of the 42nd Constitution Amendment Act. It did not, however, muster courage to propose the removal of preventive detention from the Constitution. It made efforts to delay the withdrawal of the hated MISA, that notorious symbol of the Emergency rule; but under pressure it finally did remove MISA from the Statute Book.

The Janata Government mustered courage to pass the Special Courts Act to book those including Indira Gandhi who had committed crimes and acted illegally during the Emergency.

The Janata Government took some steps to sanction some of the urgent demands of the people. It abolished the CDS; it ordered reinstatement of victimised railway employees and the restoration of bonus though on an annual basis.

The New Phase

But this phase of Janata Party policy did not last long. It was rapidly replaced by another one. The struggle against authoritarianism slackened. Repression in economic struggles became the order of the day. Some of the Janata Governments in the States started enacting measures similar to the MISA. The Central Government through Morarji also expressed its intention to reintroduce legislation for preventive detention.

The police, CRP and CISF agitation was brutally crushed in a thoroughly dictatorial style reminiscent of the Emergency days and its callous justification on the floor of Parliament meant that the Janata leadership had abandoned the last claim to defend democracy.

The issuance of the two anti-working class Ordinances on the eve of the Parliament session displayed an authoritarian contempt for Parliament born out of an absolute majority.

It became clear that over the months the Janata Party got growingly estranged from the people and relied more and more on dictatorial and authoritarian measures to bolster itself.

The instrument forged by the people in the last elections to fight the authoritarian forces collapsed.

On The Economic Front

Equally striking was the retreat on the economic front.

Representing the same class interests as the Congress, the Janata Party pursued the same economic policies ruining the lives of the people. In relation to the crisis, the Janata Party pursued policies dictated by the class interests of the bourgeois-landlord combine.

Deficit financing, high taxation on the ordinary man, and foreign aid continued to be the main sources of raising finances.

The Janata Government made boastful claims about holding the price line while prices continued to be at the high level reached during the Emergency.

The first budget of the Janata Government provided for deficit financing of Rs. 1000 crores.

The second budget while giving concessions to Big Business in the name of incentives, imposed heavy taxation on all commodities of common consumption amounting to Rs. 500 crores and provided for deficit financing for Rs. 1000 crores.

The 1979-80 budget again relied on deficit financing of more than Rs. 1000 crores.

The result is continually rising prices taking the necessaries of life like tea, sugar, milk, vegetables, oil, pulses, beyond the reach of the common man.

Today, the annual rate of inflation has reached 20 per cent. Things have reached the same level as they did during the years preceding the Emergency.

The Janata Party in its Election Manifesto promised abolition of landlordism and land distribution. The very first policy

announcement of the Janata Government showed that it did not want to go beyond the 'limits' set by Congress legislations. The new Government accepted the fraudulent surplus estimated under Congress rule by the landlord-bureaucratic combination. It came out with the same proposals that have been chewed over and over by the Congress.

Contrast this with the performance of the West Bengal Ministry headed by the CPI(M) where the utmost has been done for the peasant within the limits of the present Constitution, by breaking the resistance of the landlords. Why could not the Janata Government do what the West Bengal Ministry could achieve? Because the Janata Party had a strong landlord lobby controlling the party.

The Janata Government broke its plighted word to other sections as well. In its Election Manifesto, it accepted bonus as deferred wage but it refused to grant it to the railway workers and other Central and State Government employees. Its bonus statement constituted an open repudiation of its electoral promise.

It imposed a reactionary incomes and wages policy—the Boothalingam Committee report—on the workers and employees, a policy which was directly contradictory to what it had stated in its Election Manifesto.

It attacked the bonus agreement with the employees of the LIC as the Congress Government did and pursued dilatory tactics when its game was upset by the Supreme Court. It looks upon the employees as high-wage islands—as the Indira regime did—and is intent on reducing their DA and other emoluments.

In the public sector as elsewhere it sought to follow a policy of wage-freeze—or nominal wage increase, and a policy of cut in DA to reduce the wage earnings of the workers.

Its State Governments have introduced draconian rules to crush the movements of their employees and prescribed barbarous punishments for so-called illegal strikes. The Janata Government at the Centre issued an Ordinance to crush the RBI employees' strike, and another to withhold the repayment of CDS amounts.

It introduced the notorious Industrial Relations Bill and the Companion Bill on teachers and hospital staff to stifle the trade

union movement and refused to withdraw them despite the united opposition of the trade union organisations. Strikes were banned in the States ruled by the Janata Party while lock-outs increased. The managements were given a free hand to curb the workers.

Under its rule, the big traders were fleecing the people freely and without hindrance. Immediate relief to the people, so far as prices of necessary of life, was possible had the Janata Party embarked upon nationalisation of wholesale trade in these commodities and taken possession of available stocks.

Planning Dismantled

The Janata Party Government has virtually dismantled all planning in the name of rolling plan.

The Janata Party Government like the previous Congress Government, believed in greater aid from the World Bank and accepted its prescription—greater freedom to the private sector; more concessions and invitations to multinationals; less role to the public sector; reliance on exports; liberalisation of competitive imports; acceptance of global tenders in India for Government projects; joint concerns with Western monopolists in India and outside, in Third World countries.

How is it that the results of Janata Party's policies are the same as those of the Indira Congress? Because both parties have accepted the capitalist path of development for the Indian economy.

What is the capitalist path? It bases itself on maintaining the pre-capitalist land relations which obstruct the rapid development of the economy.

It bases itself on the private sector and private profit in industry and subordinates the public sector to the profiteering needs of the private sector.

It relies on loans from Western capitalist countries which mortgage the economy of the country and impose a slow rate of growth. The capitalist path increasingly narrows the home market and leads to economic crisis, growing poverty of the people and accumulation of wealth and resources by a few big capitalists and landlords.

The various plans of the Congress and the Janata Governments are based on these postulates and inevitably produce poverty for the people and concentration of wealth in the hands of a few monopolists.

The Janata Government indulged in glib talk about decentralisation. But it refused to expand the powers of the States and grant autonomy to the States though this was urgently necessary in the interest of the unity of the country and democracy. The Janata Party also carried out a policy of surreptitious imposition of Hindi on the non-Hindi regions thus disrupting the unity of the country.

No wonder, the last two years heaped suffering upon suffering on the people. The very electoral victory of the people against dictatorship now became a weapon of imposing misery on them.

Almost from its inception, people witnessed the sordid spectacle of inner-fight, fight amongst the top leaders of the party, bringing the administration and implementation of policies to a standstill. People groaned under high prices, unemployment, atrocities on Harijans, massacre of Muslims—but the Janata leaders had no time to deal with them. They were callously busy settling accounts with each other.

RSS-Jana Sangh Takes Over

This was reflection of a development inimical to democracy, secularism and the unity of the country. The most well-organised constituent of the Janata Party, the Jana Sangh-RSS combine with its anti-democratic and authoritarian ideology of Hindu chauvinism began to take control of the party and the Governments, isolating the Socialists and other supporters of secularism and easing out its former BLD partner.

The RSS-Jana Sangh combine, out for grabbing power, started open disintegration of the Janata Party. Its members worked against Janata Ministries in States not dominated by the Jana Sangh.

They tried to topple the Ram Naresh Yadav Ministry in U.P., and joined hands with the Congress(I) to vote against their own Ministry; they again joined hands with the Congress(I) to topple

the Karpoori Thakur Ministry in Bihar; they again toppled the Devi Lal Ministry in Haryana which was not under their domination. And by easing out other sections the RSS-Jana Sangh combine was preparing to take exclusive control of the Central Government keeping Morarji Desai as a figure-head.

The dominating influence of RSS ideology was seen in the leadership's stand on the Aligarh and Jamshedpur riots.

The RSS leader in Aligarh was directly involved in the murderous riots but the leadership gave a clean bill to the organisation and suppressed the report made by a Janata leader which exposed the local RSS leader.

A RSS MLA was actually involved in the Jamshedpur riots but no steps were taken against him.

The same callous attitude was revealed in relation to atrocities on Harijans which went on increasing without being punished. These happenings led to the loss of confidence of the minorities in the Government.

Reject The Janata Party

What was the meaning of the RSS-Jana Sangh attempts to monopolise State and organisational power? Behind the facade of Janata, this reactionary group was taking over the Governmental machinery to run it along anti-democratic, communal and authoritarian lines. A communal outlook can never be democratic.

The RSS-Jana Sangh combine does not only represent a communal outlook; it represents the feudal caste outlook of orthodoxy; economic inequality; the domination of upper castes over land; the monopolisation of jobs by the higher castes; the concentration of ruling power in the higher castes of Hindu society. In the struggle between the privileged and downtrodden castes the combine identifies itself with the former. It is because of this that atrocities against the Harijans have increased under the Janata regime. This means a complete authoritarian outlook.

The RSS-Jana Sangh combine, besides, is opposed to the democratic demand of more powers for the States and stands for greater centralisation.

The combine stands for imposing Hindi as the national language on the non-Hindi regions.

The combine believes in free enterprise and is opposed to the growth of the public sector.

The present Janata is not the Janata for which the people voted enthusiastically in 1977 to defeat the authoritarian forces of Indira Gandhi. It is a Jana Sangh-RSS dominated organisation acting under the facade provided by Sri Jagjivan Ram and some former Socialist leaders. It has not got the courage to disown the RSS casteist, communal and anti-democratic ideology.

Along with the Congress (I), this Janata must be rejected at the polls decisively and without hesitation.

Shocking Corruption And Jobbery

Nothing has shocked the conscience of the common man more than the corruption stories at the top of society. Never before did the people witness such a sordid spectacle of venality and misuse of official power to protect family interests as during the Indira regime.

The Shah Commission uncovered some of the scandals. The report of the Gupta Commission on Maruti affairs has further exposed to the people the deep recesses of corruption and jobbery associated with Indira's regime.

The son of the Prime Minister was given all privileges. Interests of the Defence department were disregarded. Licence was given though the conditions of the licence were not fulfilled. Huge bank loans were given and officials who were unwilling to sanction such loans were threatened with victimisation.

Both mother and son assured the people that the car would be indigenous. But Sanjay fitted a smuggled German engine into the car, and passed it off as indigenously produced.

And in all this, Indira, according to the Commission, directly or indirectly misused her official power to promote her son's interests. Officials who would not do her bidding were harassed. Parliament was given misleading information. The entire regime is revealed as a cesspool of corruption.

But corruption invaded the Janata Party also. Kanti Desai's exploits were related on the floor of the Rajya Sabha. And Morarji took the same partisan attitude towards his son as Indira did.

Some Janata Chief Ministers have been accused of corruption by their party members. Another's son is accused of using blackmarket money.

This all-pervading corruption runs through the entire administration, weighs on the common man and acts as an additional source of heavy illegal taxation. Following the Chief Ministers, every official wants to have his cut. Neither of the two big bourgeois-landlord parties can give a clean administration to the people.

The CPI(M) calls upon the people to wage a relentless war against corruption, for a clean and fair administration. It calls upon them to defeat the two parties whose regimes have been corrupt to the core.

Crisis Of Education

As under the Congress regime, under the Janata Government also, colleges and universities are closed for months; university campuses are occupied by the police; students and teachers alike are humiliated and arrested. Thousands of students are unable to take their annual examinations. Results of examinations are postponed for months. Favouritism runs rampant in marking the students in examinations.

The educational system is in the throes of a deep crisis. Thirty years of Congress rule and similar policies followed by the Janata Government in education have led to a situation where the whole system is reaching a State of collapse. A democratic and scientific educational system affording equal opportunities to the common people remains a distant goal. Even the Constitutional directive to provide universal compulsory education for all children up to 14 years is nowhere near attainment. The content of education is irrelevant to the needs of the toiling people and the country's development. While the bulk of the children who enrol for primary education drop out due to poverty before completing the primary stage, even those who complete secondary school are sought to be

deprived of access to higher education. Unable to provide employment to the educated millions, in recent years Government is drastically curtailing enrolment in higher education. In the last two years efforts have been made by Hindu communal elements to introduce anti-secular ideas in the teaching syllabi.

The CPI(M) stands for a complete overhaul of the educational system, doing away with elitist colonial legacies like public schools, introduction of the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction at all levels of education and revision of the syllabus at all levels to make it genuinely scientific and secular and vocation-oriented. The CPI(M) stands opposed to the policies of the Congress and the Janata of restricting university education which is nothing but a class measure to stifle discontent. The educational apparatus must be continuously expanded to meet the rising expectations of the millions to acquire secondary and higher education. For this the first step is to strengthen primary education and, secondly, ensure free education up to the secondary stage. The CPI(M) would also ensure a democratic language policy by scrapping the three-language formula. The CPI(M) stands for democratisation of education by making education once again a State subject, removing it from the Concurrent List. It would also strive to remove the stranglehold of the private vested interests in educational institutions by involving people's representatives and democratic organisations of teachers, students and employees in the running of these bodies.

The Three Combinations

The split in the Janata Party has led to the formation of the Janata(S). Democratic and secular elements in the former Janata Party took up the fight against the RSS domination and its ideology and demanded an end to dual membership. These forces had to quit the Janata Party which had gone under the influence of the RSS-Jana Sangh combine.

Another section finding that their organisation and the Government were being captured by the RSS-Jana Sangh depriving them of their share of power also took up the fight against RSS domination.

These together formed the Janata(S).

The revolt of the secular democratic elements inside the Janata Party and certain parallel developments within the Congress (including the revolt of Devraj Urs and other elements inside the Congress(I) itself) have created a new situation in which there are three instead of two major parties or combinations of parties, which are contending for power and seeking the support of the electorate in the forthcoming election to the Seventh Lok Sabha.

On the one hand is the Congress(I) whose leaders do not conceal their determination to bring the Emergency regime back, claiming that only a strong Government can bring stability to the country which had been brought to chaos and instability by the Janata rule.

On the other is the Janata Party which, though still containing such secular democratic forces as the former Socialists, the Congress(O), and the CFD headed by Jagjivan Ram, is under the iron grip of the RSS-Jana Sangh combine.

Opposed to both is the combination of the elements from the former Congress Party who are opposed to Indira and the forces opposed to the RSS-Jana Sangh combine from the Janata Party who are today known as the Janata(S).

Support Janata(S)-Congress Combination

The CPI(M) has no hesitation to choose, appeal to the people to choose, the formation headed by the Janata(S) and the Congress which is electorally ranged against the authoritarian Congress(I) and the RSS-Jana Sangh-dominated Janata. It is happy to note that several other Left and democratic parties are adopting the same position and putting their weight in favour of this formation with a view to defeating the other two.

The CPI(M) is conscious of the class limitations of this political formation. Many of those who are in its leadership were part and parcel of either the former authoritarian Congress regime or of the subsequent Janata regime. Their record as executors of Congress and Janata policies should make every Left-minded individual, group, organisation and party wary of the policies that are likely to be pursued by this political formation when it is voted into power.

The CPI(M), however, takes note of the fact that these leaders are today ranged against the two evil forces of authoritarianism represented by the Congress(I) and communalism represented by the RSS-Jana Sangh combine, which the people must defeat at all cost.

It would, therefore, be in the interests of the Left movement, the organised movements of the working people, to help this political formation win the electoral contest and form a Government. Such an outcome of the election will be a heavy blow struck simultaneously against authoritarianism and communalism.

Record Of Left Front Governments

The CPI(M) is proud to put before the people the record of its West Bengal and Tripura Ministries. Let anyone compare and contrast the achievements of these two Ministries with the Janata and Congress Ministries and draw the lesson.

In West Bengal, since the inception of the Ministry, democratic rights of the people have been fully restored. Police intervention in mass struggles was stopped. Right to strike is fully ensured. The bonus struggle of the workers, the struggle for wage revision was directly helped by the Ministry acting in the interest of the people. The resistance of the big jute barons was broken and wage-rise secured for the workers. The West Bengal Ministry responded to the demands of the State Government employees, rescinded all victimisation measures extending over a decade, provided for restoration of jobs with payment of pay arrears and granted recognition to the employees' union.

Outstanding has been the achievement of the Ministry on the agrarian front, where legislation has been passed and loyally implemented to protect the peasant against the depredations of the landlord, to secure his title to the land.

The Land Holding Bill, 1979, recently passed by the Left Front Government of West Bengal, is another bold step towards radical land reform. By this Bill, the feudal rent system is being replaced by a more rational and equitable system of levy on landholding based on fertility of soil, type of crop produced, proximity to the marketing centre and other advantages of the landholding.

Landholdings up to a value of Rs. 50,000 are exempted. Thus all the small and marginal holdings numbering about 45 lakhs out of a total 52 lakhs of holdings will be exempted from any levy. The remaining seven lakhs holdings will have to pay levy on a progressively higher rate for higher slabs. The wealth accumulated by the richer section of the peasantry will thus be ploughed back for national development.

The immense faith generated in the peasant masses is now manifested in a huge rise in the membership of the Kisan Sabha.

The Congress and the Janata Governments believe in suppressing mass organisations for their own safety. The CPI(M)-led Ministry considers it its duty to help and promote the building of mass organisations to defend the interests of the downtrodden.

Is there any State where the food for work programme has been implemented with so much benefit to the rural masses? Is there any other State which, faced with unprecedented floods, could reach relief materials to every affected area in the shortest possible time? This was accomplished because the State Government employees were inspired to work day and night for the affected people. No wonder the panchayat elections gave a thumping victory to the West Bengal Left alliance—an expression of the peasants' mighty confidence in the CPI(M).

In the State of West Bengal thanks to the policies pursued by our Party—policies of fighting the vested interests, defending the masses, expanding democratic rights—the forces of authoritarianism led by the Congress(I) have been isolated and their strength crippled. The forces of communalism have been checked from the beginning.

The CPI(M)-led Left Ministry stands as the bastion of anti-authoritarian forces, of anti-communal forces, of the interests of the masses and their rights and liberties.

Long-Standing Tribal Demand Satisfied

The same proud record our Party claims in Tripura where our Ministry has to work in the most difficult situation. The Tripura Ministry has met the long-standing demand of the oppressed tribals—the demand for an Autonomous Tribal District. The

Ministry would have liked to go much further but the present Constitution would not permit it.

No previous Ministry could dare think of granting this demand. And now the Janata, the Congress and others are rousing Bengali chauvinism to fight the Tripura Ministry.

The Tripura Ministry has taken a series of measures for the relief of the tribals, for the restoration of their lands, for education and jobs for them.

While implementing its election pledges, the Left Front Government in Tripura has given highest priority to allotment of Government khas land to the landless agriculturists; the small and marginal farmers do not have to pay any land revenue; all Government and private debts have been written off, education has been made free for all up to Class XII; the re-organised co-operative societies have largely replaced the village moneylenders and unscrupulous middlemen; in fighting the recent unprecedented drought, the elected panchayats have been given powers and funds to launch a massive food for work programme offering employment to more than a lakh of distressed rural unemployed people.

Above all, people have given the fullest democratic rights, at all levels; police intervention in mass struggles has been ended; this is why the masses could successfully fight the menace of Bengali chauvinism (the Amra Bangalee movement) and separatist tribal disruption (of the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti) and other types of conspiracies hatched from time to time by the reactionary circles of the vested interests.

Task Of Left Forces

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) calls upon all the Left and democratic parties and forces—the PWP, the CPI, RSP, Forward Bloc, the Socialists who have left the Janata and the Socialists in the Janata, Republican Party of India, Akali Dal, AIADMK and others—to work together with a single will to defeat the forces of authoritarianism led by the Congress(I) and the forces of communalism led by the Janata Party. •

It is their common task to mobilise all the forces opposed to these two reactionary parties, it is their duty towards democracy to

help the Janata(S)-Congress combination to defeat the two reactionary forces.

The CPI(M) appeals to the Janata(S)-Congress combination to avoid mutual conflicts so that the anti-authoritarian, anti-communal vote is not split.

It is the special task of the Left forces and Left parties in the country to spearhead this battle, to unite the anti-authoritarian and anti-communal vote and ensure the defeat of the Congress(I) and Janata.

Strengthen Left And Democratic Forces

The vital battle for democracy will be definitely won with a powerful mandate, if the Left and democratic forces stand together, overcome all other considerations and present a solid opposition to the authoritarian and communal reactionaries.

Though the Left and democratic forces are not strong enough to offer a viable alternative at this stage, it is absolutely essential that their candidates win the election in large numbers, that their strength inside the Lok Sabha increases substantially and their influence over the people is strengthened.

Without this, the post-election battle for democracy and against dictatorship cannot be carried on effectively. Without this the new Parliament will lack the real strength and power to resist the onslaught of reaction.

The CPI(M), hence, urges the Janata(S)-Congress combination to understand the vital role of the Left forces in the elections and make it easy for them to carry on the common battle. It should do nothing to impair the strength of the common struggle against the forces of reaction.

The CPI(M), therefore, calls upon the people to vote for its candidates in all States. The CPI(M) has distinguished itself as the most consistent fighter against authoritarianism, against communalism; it has, through its Ministries and mass struggle, proved itself to be the most consistent fighter against the vested interests and in defence of the interests of the masses. The CPI(M) spearheads the Left forces, the opposition to the dark forces of authoritarianism and communalism. Success of its candidates

means success for the most consistent force fighting the two evils, defending the cause of the people and democracy.

The CPI(M) calls upon the people to vote for the candidates of the Left and democratic parties in all States. The CPI(M) calls upon the people to bring complete victory to the candidates of the Left alliance in West Bengal and Tripura.

The elections must provide a massive mandate for the Left and democratic forces.

Assurance To People

The CPI(M) congratulates our people on the struggles they have waged during the last two years in defence of their interests. In these struggles the rural masses, the working class, the employees, the students, the teachers, professors, doctors and nurses have braved repression, humiliation and imprisonment. But the indomitable will of our peoples, of our working class, could not be suppressed. These struggles have advanced the cause of democracy and obstructed the ruling party's progress towards authoritarianism.

But nothing can match the sufferings of the Harijans—the killings, burnings of houses and raping of women. Nothing can also match the sufferings of Muslims during communal riots when a campaign of murder and pillage is launched against them with the administration abetting the wave of crimes. The courageous fight put up by the Harijans and Muslims constitutes a piece of glorious resistance.

The CPI(M) assures the people that it will continue to fight against these tyrannies inside and outside Parliament.

Programme For Advance

The CPI(M) firmly believes that the problems of poverty and unemployment cannot be solved without socialisation of the means of production; without abolition of all exploiters and establishment of Socialism.

Democracy cannot be defended, authoritarianism cannot be fought without removing the stranglehold of the vested interests on our economy and ensuring living conditions for the people.

Secularism cannot be defended, communalism cannot be fought without assuring economic rights of our people.

Without attacking the freedom of exploitation of the multinationals, the big capitalists and landlords, the country cannot march forward nor save itself from dictatorship. The CPI(M) puts forward the following programme before the people:

(1) Total dismantling of the authoritarian framework introduced in the Constitution during the Emergency; deletion of the existing provision in the Constitution for preventive detention; President's power to declare Emergency to operate only in case of an outbreak of war; right to recall and proportional representation to be provided in the Constitution; voting age to be brought down to eighteen years.

(2) Basic changes in the Constitution to eliminate the grip of the big bourgeois-landlord classes over the State and the power of the bureaucracy; provision to keep fundamental rights of the people beyond the mischief of the Government or the ruling party; complete guarantee of freedom of the Press.

(3) Inclusion of the right to work as a fundamental right in the Constitution.

(4) New constitutional provisions to expand the powers of the State and guarantee their autonomy. Residuary powers to be with the States. Articles 356-360 of the Constitution dealing with President's rule in the States to be deleted. Drastic reduction of the Concurrent List.

(5) For planned and independent development of the national economy free from dependence on imperialist aid; increased role for public ownership.

(6) For a consistent struggle against domination of the World Bank; against invitations to multinationals and other policies which lead to economic dependence of the country, for nationalisation of foreign monopoly concerns, immediate moratorium on foreign debt payments.

(7) For nationalisation of Indian monopoly concerns.

(8) For a just and equitable incomes-and-wages policy based on provision of minimum conditions like need-based wage to the mass of people and reduction of the monstrous disparity

in incomes of the big capitalists and landlords and the mass of people.

(9) Against inflation, deficit financing and heavy taxation and high prices; for drastic reduction of prices of necessities and their guaranteed distribution; nationalisation of wholesale trade in necessities.

(10) For abolition of landlordism; for enactment of radical land reforms ensuring land to the agricultural labourers and to the poor peasants gratis; for anti-eviction measures; guaranteed fair prices for the peasants' produce; supply of cheap credit and subsidised inputs to the mass of the peasantry.

(11) For guaranteed fair wage for the agricultural labourers; allotment of free house-sites for the agricultural labourers and the rural poor and cancellation of their debts and liberal provision for cheap and consumption loans; for adequate educational facilities for them.

(12) For a massive plan for full employment to the rural unemployed, and pending it, unemployment relief.

(13) For need-based minimum wage for the working class; for bonus for all; against wage-freeze, lock-outs, lay-offs, and closure of mills; for taking over all closed mills and concerns for full trade unions rights; for full democratic rights to the Central and State Government employees; abolition of the police verification system; against all anti-working-class legislations; for full employment, and pending employment, relief to the unemployed; against introduction of automation and other measures aggravating unemployment.

(14) For immediate introduction of free education up to the secondary stage in all States. Provision of hostel facilities and full scholarships for all needy students; right of students to participate in the management of educational institutions and academic bodies for thorough-going reforms.

(15) For radical changes in educational making it democratic, secular and scientific.

(16) For drastic steps against those who indulge in outrages against the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; for immediate steps to put an end to the economic and social

oppression of these people by landlords, contractors, traders, and restoration of land seized from them.

(17) For reservation of job and educational facilities to Harijans, tribals backward castes; Harijan converts to Buddhism and other religions should not be deprived of these facilities.

(18) For safeguarding the rights of Muslim minorities; against any discrimination in employment in Government services and in educational institutions and against Urdu.

(19) Equality of all Indian languages; against imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi-speaking people; Recognition of Urdu as a second State language in States where a sizeable section of the people speak Urdu; inclusion of Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

(20) Equal status for women in society; job and other opportunities for them; guarantee of equal wages in agriculture, industry and services, and effective implementation of legislations in this regard; equal rights with men in such matters as inheritance of property, enforcement of marriage and divorce laws; removal of ban on married woman in certain types of jobs; adequate health and maternity services, especially in tea gardens; creches to help working mothers.

(21) Steps to counter the spreading of decadent culture, pornographic literature, etc., with its dehumanising effect on the youth especially, leading to vicious crimes and anti-social activities; all necessary measures to foster democratic and progressive literature, art and culture.

(22) Contiguous areas with a sizeable tribal population should be declared as Scheduled areas and there should be constitutional provisions for conferring regional autonomy in such compact tribal areas so that there may be regional Governments within the State concerned to look after the economic, political, cultural and linguistic development of the tribal Adivasis, and full economic assistance may be provided for removing their backwardness.

(23) Ending of the indiscriminate import of foreign technology, especially from the multinationals, much to the detriment of indigenous research and development, educational infrastructure and design and engineering capability; all encouragement

to scientists and research workers to develop indigenous technology.

Foreign Policy

(24) The CPI(M) considers that the policy of non-alignment should be considered as an integral part of the struggle for freedom, peace, democracy and Socialism. A foreign policy based on anti-imperialism and friendship with the Socialist countries strengthens our national independence and serves our national interests. The CPI(M) expresses full solidarity with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and stands for the recognition of the Heng Samrin Government in Kampuchea. The CPI(M) stands for consistent support to the Third World countries in their struggle against imperialism and for national liberation.

The CPI(M) stands for consistent support to the Arab people in their struggle against Israeli aggression: and for the right of the people of Palestine to have their own State. It lends full support to the freedom struggle of the African people against imperialism, apartheid and racial domination. It supports the heroic struggle of the people of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa.

The CPI(M) demands strengthening of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and calls for normalisation of relations with People's China and friendly and closer ties. It stands for friendly relations with India's neighbours—Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka and others—and supports the peoples of these countries in their struggle for democracy.

The Janata Government continued to uphold the Treaty of Friendship with the USSR and was prepared to restore normal and friendly relations with People's China. At the same time, by inserting a fallacious and opportunist slogan of "genuine non-alignment", the Janata Government raised suspicions about its real intention.

Praising the Janata Government and offering it more economic aid and extolling its pragmatism, the US imperialists attempted to enmesh India in an anti-national derogatory agreement on nuclear progress and use of nuclear devices for peaceful purposes. The unilateral declaration by Janata Prime Minister Morarji Desai

surrendering the use of nuclear explosion for peaceful purposes compromised national honour and interests and exposed the tilt of "genuine" non-alignment. On issues like the Israeli-Egypt agreement and compromise, the Janata Government took a position inconsistent with national interests and opposition to imperialism.

The CPI(M) calls upon the people to lend their full support to this programme. The CPI(M) calls upon all Left and democratic forces to endorse the programme and make it a rallying point for the widest electoral upsurge against dictatorship and communal reactionaries.

The people cannot march forward, the country cannot advance without a transformatory programme of this kind, and its implementation.

The CPI(M) assures that its members chosen by the people will fight for the above programme, remain faithful to them and continue to battle for their interests whatever the opposition from the vested interests.

Polit Bureau Statement on Afghanistan Foil the Game of U.S. Imperialists*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press on January 1, 1980:

It is with deep concern that the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) views the attitude of the country's Caretaker Government and leaders of political parties like the Congress (I) and Janata to the developments in Afghanistan during the last few days.

When the Afghan people, led by the People's Democratic Party and with the support of the revolutionary elements in the defence forces, overthrew the tyrannical Daoud regime in April 1978, and set up a new people's democratic regime in Afghanistan, India was among the first to welcome the new revolution and recognise the new Government.

The new regime has since then been exerting efforts to change the face of the old feudal and pre-feudal Afghanistan. It embarked on far-reaching land reforms abolishing landlordism and giving land to the cultivator, and took other measures for the benefit of the people.

All this had met with resistance from the reactionaries in the country who were not prepared to give up the privileges they had enjoyed for long. These elements organised counter-revolutionary armed activities against the new regime with the full backing mainly of the U.S. imperialists and the military dictatorship of Pakistan. These elements were being trained in camps in Pakistan and armed and set back to carry on their counter-revolutionary activities inside Afghanistan. U.S. military experts had visited

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 6, 1980.

Pakistan and even some areas of Afghanistan to oversee the training and activities of the counter-revolutionaries. A leader of these elements had also visited the United States to step up the plot to overthrow the people's democratic regime.

This was virtual imperialist aggression on Afghanistan with internal counter-revolutionaries as their tools. It is in this situation that the Government in Kabul, to defend the gains of the April revolution, territorial integrity, national independence, and maintaining peace and security, invoked the Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union of December 5, 1978, and approached the Soviet Union with the insistent request for urgent political, moral and economic aid, including military aid.

The Soviet Union, as has been made clear from Moscow, responded to this request of the Government of Afghanistan both in accordance with the Treaty of Friendship and Article 51 of the U. N. Charter. And the Soviet Union has also made it clear that its help to Afghanistan is to rebuff the aggressors and the counter-revolutionaries supported by them and not directed against any of Afghanistan's neighbours which are also the Soviet Union's neighbours.

To come in opposition to this Soviet help to Afghanistan is to give an alibi to the U.S. imperialists and the Pakistani military dictatorship.

The USA has already lifted the ban on sending arms to Pakistan and over a hundred million dollars worth of aggressive weapons and equipment are to be immediately despatched to Pakistan. This comes in the wake of the feverish U.S. imperialist preparation in the whole of the Gulf and West Asian region with massive increase of naval forces, getting ready the instant intervention force, etc.

This is a time when the non-alignment movement and India, as a part of it, have to come out in the strongest opposition to the U.S. imperialists and their henchmen. The Caretaker Government which rightly points out that U.S. arms to Pakistan pose a threat to India, instead of opposing the entire U.S. game in the region, has come out against the Soviet aid to Afghanistan, thus weakening its

own hands in the struggle against the USA equipping Pakistan with more and more arms.

Indira Gandhi has thoroughly exposed herself. Not only has she disapproved of the Soviet support to Afghanistan, she has taken just this occasion to come out against the Iranian people in their struggle against U.S. imperialism even going to the extent of opposing the trial of the deposed Shah who has committed monstrous crimes against the Iranian People. What value can be attached to Smt. Gandhi's constant talk against the CIA and U.S. imperialism.

The Polit Bureau calls on the people to be fully conscious of the manoeuvres and machinations of U.S. imperialism in the region, which also threaten our country, and come out in full opposition to it. The P.B. also called on them to be aware that those who are making the Soviet Union the target of their attack are screening the U.S. imperialists and are ignoring the danger to our country from U.S. imperialism and its henchmen.

The people of Afghanistan and their people's democratic regime are striving their utmost to extend the gains of the April revolution and prevent the reactionaries from staging a come-back. They deserve all our solidarity and support at this hour.

On Poll Verdict and Post-Election Situation*

**Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M)
on January 10, 1980**

The decisive victory of the Congress (I) has surprised all as it was believed that none of the bourgeois-landlord parties would get a majority. This success is due to the growing isolation and disintegration of the oppositional bourgeois-landlord parties.

In contrast stands the rout of the Congress (I) in West Bengal and Tripura. The CPI(M) warmly congratulates the people of West Bengal and Tripura, the Left parties and our Party cadres on this massive defeat inflicted on the forces of authoritarianism. The West Bengal Left alliance headed by our Party has stood as a bastion of anti-authoritarianism and anti-communal forces.

The CPI(M) congratulates the people of Kerala, the democratic alliance and our Party, in their success in wresting a majority of the parliamentary seats from the Congress (I).

The Congress (I) and its allies have not only secured a two-thirds majority in the new Lok Sabha, but the other two bourgeois-landlord formations which made a bid for power at the Centre are virtually routed. Except in States such as West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura no viable alternative to the Congress (I) could be presented before the electorate in any other State. The Indira Congress exploited this situation fully and was able to swing the electorate in its favour in most of the States and regions, securing a massive majority in the new Lok Sabha.

The massive Congress (I) victory was made possible by the organisational collapse of rival bourgeois-landlord parties who

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Refer Document under Item No. 21 of this Volume covering Elections Reviews by the Central Committee of CPI(M).

lost their credibility with the people because of their unending internal squabbles. The Janata Party, before and during the elections, failed to concentrate on the authoritarian danger and concentrated on fighting the defectors, though in the initial stages, it took important steps to restore democratic norms. The economic sufferings imposed on the people during the Janata rule went on increasing with each Janata budget. The people were victims of high prices which placed the essential necessities of life like sugar, vegetables, onions, beyond the reach of the common man. The prices showed a further spurt during the five months of the Caretaker Government. There was no relief for the suffering people. On the other hand repressive measures were taken against them when they protested. The Janata regime with its incompetence in the day-to-day administration was unable to protect the citizens from anti-social elements. Dacoities, train robberies, gangster attacks on people went on mounting. In those conditions Indira Gandhi's promise of stable Government was bound to swing the people who were daily witnessing the spectacle of Janata leaders fighting each other.

The swing towards the Congress (I) was facilitated by the Janata Party in many other ways. The Janata Party leadership growingly succumbing to the RSS-Jana Sangh outlook, isolated itself from the Muslim minority and the Harijans against whom landlord attacks went on increasing. The flaunting of Jagjivan Ram's name could not deceive the people. Sizable sections of the Muslim minority went over to the Congress (I) after the experience of the Aligarh and Jamshedpur riots. And so also the Harijans who had started moving away from the Janata as early as the 1977 Assembly elections. The RSS-Jana Sangh Hindu chauvinist outlook further created a revulsion in the minds of the progressive intelligentsia. The Left and Socialist elements in the Janata should realise that a democratic party cannot be built on the basis of abandonment of secularism.

Not only the Janata but the Congress-Lok Dal parties also facilitated the victory of Indira Gandhi. Instead of firm unity to

fight authoritarianism, they started fighting amongst themselves. The people failed to see in them a viable force capable of running the Central Government. Unprincipled floor-crossings, petty and factional squabbles, exaggerated claims for seats and above all a callous attitude towards the sufferings of the people during the five months of the Caretaker Government doomed the combination to failure. The situation was further impaired by the policy statements, especially in relation to the working class and the employees, emanating from Lok Dal leaders.

The vote for the Congress (I) is an expression of the people's protest against the bankrupt policies of the Janata regime. Our Party, its representatives including the Chief Ministers of West Bengal and Tripura and leaders of our Party in Parliament, were repeatedly warning the Janata Government that its anti-popular policies were suppling ammunition to the Congress (I) and offering it an opportunity to re-establish itself among the people. But these warnings went unheeded.

The election results show how the Janata Party and all its constituents have been thoroughly isolated from the people during the last three years. Their debacle is all the more striking in States where they controlled the State Governments and where they could have directly served the interests of the people. It is obvious that in the States also the Janata leaders were ignoring the people and feathering their own nests. The Congress (I) as the largest bourgeois-landlord party spread all over India was able to exploit the situation and mislead the people into believing that it was the only viable force capable of effectively administering the Central Government. The big bourgeois Press also helped the party to build this image. The Left and democratic forces being weak except in three States were not in a position to make a bid for forming the Central Government. The swing is, therefore, again towards the Congress (I) from other bourgeois-landlord organisations.

The victory of the Congress (I) by no means constitutes an endorsement of the Emergency policies or the misdeeds of the

Emergency regime. Though almost all the principal perpetrators of excesses are returned to Parliament, the vote displays mainly a repudiation of the Janata. In voting to get rid of the Janata, the electorate has unwittingly played into the hands of a party whose leadership has neither shed its authoritarian outlook nor given assurances about its future behaviour.

The electoral victory might encourage the forces of authoritarianism again to attempt at re-establishing the one-party monopoly rule at the Centre and the States, a monopoly rule that plagued the country for full three decades. The worst economic crisis, with its rising prices and growing mass distress will be exploited by the Indira Congress regime to ruthlessly enforce anti-working class and anti-people policies—all under the false pretext of restoring law and order and ensuring a stable Government at the Centre. All the Opposition parties, especially the Left and democratic forces, which have been carrying on the uncompromising struggle against the forces of authoritarianism and dictatorship, must awaken to the new dangerous developments and redouble their efforts in the struggle to defend democracy and secularism.

The CPI(M) warns the people that the return to power of the Congress (I) with the huge majority is again likely to lead to consequences harmful for the people's cause. The overwhelming majority may be interpreted as a licence for arbitrary and autocratic rule. The ascendance of the caucus and its henchmen in the party increases the danger.

Today the nation once again stands at the crossroads. The question is once more posed—will the Government elected with massive mandate be kept on the path of democracy, observing all the democratic norms and treating the confidence of the people as a sacred trust or will it treat the electoral mandate a licence for arbitrary behaviour as in 1971? The danger can be arrested only if the people, the democratic parties remain vigilant and actively fight every attack on the democratic rights of the people.

The present election itself shows that when the people have a proper alternative before them they refuse to give a mandate to the Indira Congress. In Kerala the democratic alliance could secure a majority of the seats. In West Bengal and Tripura the Indira Congress is routed. Why this big difference? In the three States the Left forces are strong. The Left and democratic forces unitedly faced the Congress (I) and Janata. The people gave the confidence to an alternative force committed to defend democracy and defend people's livelihood.

The lessons of West Bengal are most striking. Here our Party heading the Left Front Ministry had the major responsibility of guiding the administration. Whereas in the Janata-ruled States, the ruling party because of its incompetence, selfishness and callous behaviour towards the people, got isolated, handing over the masses once again to the Congress (I), in West Bengal deeper ties were forged with the people leading to further isolation of the authoritarian forces. This was rendered possible because democratic rights were not only kept unimpaired but were actually expanded by actively associating the people with the elected panchayats and enforcing tenancy rights, implementing land reforms and carrying out exemplary relief work during the floods and the food-for-work programme through the elected panchayats, the weight of the Government was thrown on the side of the havenots and immediate relief was given to broad sections of the people.

In Tripura, the Left Front Government restored and expanded the democratic rights of the people, restored to the tribal people the land that had been alienated from them, enacted the legislation for the setting up of the District Autonomous Council for the compact tribal areas, distributed land to the landless, effectively implemented the food-for-work and cloth programme.

It is no wonder then that people should give such a sweeping victory to the Left alliance despite the fact that they had to put up with lots of difficulties.

The CPI(M) calls upon the Left parties to strengthen their unity and their hold over the people as only the consistent Left forces in

alliance with other democratic forces can save the situation. The unity of the Left forces including the CPI has already created a favourable situation for further advance.

It is more than ever necessary to strengthen the unity of the Left and democratic forces and present a broad united front in defence of democracy and people's livelihood. All Left parties while strengthening their unity must bend all their efforts to build the unity of Left and democratic forces.

The CPI(M) calls upon all democratic parties and elements in Parliament to combine and carry on a patient fight on behalf of the masses and their rights. The very massive majority of the ruling party demands unity of the Opposition forces to defend democracy.

The CPI(M) also considers it urgently necessary that all mass organisations are strengthened and united actions developed to defend the interests of the people.

The issue of Centre-State relations, of ensuring more powers to the States, has assumed urgency. The Emergency witnessed the overcentralisation of power at the Centre. The CPI(M) calls upon all parties to defeat attempts to erode the powers of the States, topple State Ministries and reduce the State Governments to the status of feudatories of the Centre. All parties must resist fresh attempts to curtail the powers of the States.

The CPI(M) also wishes to stress the serious threat to the unity of the country created by the activities of chauvinist forces helped by reactionary foreign agencies. Even the election to the Lok Sabha could not be conducted in Assam and partly also in Meghalaya. This serious danger has to be eliminated and the unity of the people and the country safeguarded by the Left and democratic forces.

It is futile to think that the massive victory of the Congress (I) can offer stability to the people. The Congress won a huge majority in 1971 and the Janata a similar majority in 1977. But neither could offer stability to the people. The CPI(M) warns that no basic problem of the people can be solved despite the massive majority of the Congress (I). The economic crisis, high prices,

unemployment are problems solution to which require a different class policy. The very people who voted for the Congress (I) will soon find themselves in conflict with its policies. The sufferings of the masses are likely to lead to widespread protests. The struggle for democracy and livelihood will growingly merge together. Let there be no wavering, no hesitation, to pick up the challenge and continue the battle for defending democracy against the onslaught of authoritarianism.

The Kerala Assembly election is coming in the wake of the Lok Sabha election. Once again, the people of Kerala are being given the opportunity to rebuff the attempt of the authoritarian forces to stage a come-back in the State. The CPI(M) calls upon the people of Kerala to defeat the forces of the Indira Congress alliance in the coming election. The democratic alliance must mobilise all its fighting forces to secure a complete victory for the alliance and ensure the formation of a Government led by it. Another rebuff to the Indira forces in Kerala will be a big victory for the anti-authoritarian forces all over the country.

Polit Bureau Statement On Assam*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its grave concern over the prolonged crisis in Assam which is witnessing an internecine strife undermining the unity and integrity of the country. Because of this people of Assam could not exercise their franchise and election for the Lok Sabha could not be held. This is the first time since independence that an entire State was prevented from going to the polls along with the rest of the country.

A genuinely felt grievance of the people of Assam about the influx of foreign immigrants has been exploited to undermine national unity and rouse the worst feelings of local chauvinism. The agitation for removing the names of foreigners from the electoral rolls is now directed against the Muslim minority, and other Indian citizens—Bengalis, Biharis, etc., settled in Assam. This is an open repudiation of Indian citizenship, and denial of the right of vote to non-Assamese citizens. Earlier in Assam and many other States there was agitation for reserving jobs for Assamese only, for 'sons of the soil'. Now it seems franchise is to be exercised only by the local people, marking an end of India's unity.

The P.B. calls upon all thinking people, all parties to come forward to meet this grave challenge to the unity of our country and explain to the people of Assam and other states, the dangerous implication of the present agitation. At the same time all parties should prevail on the Central Government to take effective steps against further immigration, and allay the genuine fears of the people of Assam. The removal of names and revision of rolls should

take place according to the legal procedure and all arbitrary pressures should be eschewed. It is the responsibility of the Government and the democratic movement and parties in Assam to assure the Muslim minority, the Bengalis and Biharis that their rights as Indian citizens will remain unimpaired. Without this there is no India, no democracy.

The CPI(M) warns all that the present agitation in Assam is being exploited by the enemies of our people, the imperialists and their agency the CIA who are out to disrupt the unity of our country. The Project Brahmaputra Circular constitutes a standing witness to the nefarious plan of the CIA for dismemberment of the country.

The CPI(M) warns that delay in tackling the situation will prove extremely injurious. Already Meghalaya is getting affected with the same disease and there is every danger that the entire belt of border States may get affected posing a serious threat to India's integrity. It should be remembered that these are sensitive areas where important agencies have been operating for a long time to drive a wedge between the people here and the rest of India.

The P.B. congratulates our Party comrades in Assam, and other democratic and Left parties who continue to uphold the banner of national unity and protect minorities, at grave risk to themselves.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 20, 1980.

Central Committee Resolution On Assam*

Adopted in its Meeting held in New Delhi
on January 27-30, 1980

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its grave concern at the prolonged crisis in Assam which has continued unabated since August 1979, causing untold sufferings to the people of the State and creating serious problems for the entire country, shaking the very basis of its unity and national integrity.

The C.C. takes note of the genuine grievances of the people of Assam regarding the influx of foreign nationals and their anxiety that this may threaten their political and cultural identity as a nationality. The worsening economic situation, high prices, non-availability of jobs in view of Assam's backwardness, and the keen competition for jobs among different sections of the people had already raised social tensions to a high pitch. These problems needed to be tackled by the Government of India for finding a solution in the interests of the people of Assam and the country as a whole. This the Government of India failed to do.

The C.C. notes with concern that this failure has been exploited to divert the passions roused in the people to the path of regional extremism, undermining national unity and disrupting the entire democratic movement in the State.

The agitation, starting with the demand of removal of names of foreign nationals from the electoral rolls, under the circumstances, gradually turned into unbridled attacks on linguistic and religious minorities—Bengalees, Beharis, Nepalese and Muslims in particular. Earlier there were agitations for reserving jobs for "sons of the soil", now the demand is to restrict the franchise only

to local people. This marks a grave threat to India's unity. This demand for denial of franchise to lakhs of eligible citizens of the minority communities and groups soon culminated in large scale violence against them in the course of which scores of innocent people have already lost their lives, villages have been burnt down and over 18,000 people have been uprooted from their hearth and home in a part of just one district.

These assaults on the rights, property and lives of the minorities hit directly at the very root of our democracy. It is not merely strangulation of minority rights. The removal of lakhs of names from the voters' list in an utterly unlawful and arbitrary manner, the systematic attacks on political parties which are in disagreement with the agitation, the continuous violence against the activists and supporters of the CPI(M), SFI and trade unions, particularly those under the influence of the CITU, show beyond doubt that the agitation is diverted against the advancing Left and democratic movement.

It is a matter of serious anxiety that the Hindu chauvinists and the RSS are helping the spread of anti-minority feelings.

The boycott of the Lok Sabha election resulted in the enforced isolation of the democratic forces in Assam from those in the rest of the country at a crucial time and thus brought grist to the mill of those raising secessionist demands in the North-Eastern region. This has now been followed up by direct action for stopping the refining and supply of oil to the rest of the country, disrupting the entire road transport system and supply of essential commodities in the entire region. These activities, if allowed to continue will provide a further impetus to the secessionist demand, raised time and again in the North-Eastern region.

The C.C. cannot but take serious note, in this context, of the machinations of imperialist agencies, mainly the CIA of the United States, to incite separatist movements in the North-Eastern region, and to rouse anti-Indian feelings through the Church and other agencies, in order to secure a base for their conspiracy against India. They geared up their sinister activities, following the advance made by the Left and democratic forces in West Bengal and Tripura, as the U.S. State Department's secret circular on a so-called "Project Brahmaputra" has itself revealed.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 10, 1980.

The current agitation in Assam endangers, above all, the future of the people of Assam themselves and creates an extremely complicated problem for the country as a whole.

All this constitutes a grave challenge to the unity of the country and national integration.

The C.C. calls upon all right-thinking people and all parties to rise to meet this challenge, and go to the aid of the people of Assam at this hour of grave difficulty for them, so that a solution may expeditiously be worked out for allaying the fears of the Assamese people by such measures as sealing the border to prevent infiltration by foreign nationals and dealing with the question of foreign nationals by lawful and constitutional means, safeguarding linguistic minorities in Assam.

The C.C. urges upon the Government of India to move urgently to restore peace and amity in Assam and take concrete measures to solve the problems now plaguing the people of that State. Any further delay in dealing with these problems will spell disaster and provide valuable time to the enemies of the country to spread the contagion to the entire region. The partial boycott of the election in Meghalaya, followed by atrocities on the minorities causing loss of life and property, portends the danger that lurks behind these developments.

The C.C. appeals to all parties, which hold the unity and integrity of the country to be the foundation of our progress, to rise to defend the same from the assault of the disruptive forces in the North-Eastern region.

The C.C. condemns the violence against the Party and attacks on the activists and supporters of the Party and mass organisations led by it. Anti-communism, as well as these terroristic attacks on the Party, is being resorted to in order to silence all opposition to anti-democratic and disruptive policies and to cover up the real aims behind the current agitation in Assam. The C.C. greets Party members and members and cadres of CITU unions, the SFI, Kisan Sabha and the DYF, who, amidst terror, are resolutely defending the democratic rights of the people, the integrity of the country and the unity of all democratic forces irrespective of the community and nationality to which they belong, and the rights of the religious and linguistic minorities.

The C.C. places on record its deep sense of sorrow at the lives that have been lost in this senseless campaign, and extends its deep sympathy to all those who have suffered losses of property and bereavement in Assam.

The C.C. hopes and trusts that the people of Assam helped by the united effort of all the democratic forces in the State and outside, would be able to overcome the ordeal through which the State is passing at present.

Lok Sabha Elections And After*

Statement Dated February 1, 1980 Issued by The
Central Committee of CPI(M) in New Delhi

The following is the text of the statement of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) after its meeting in New Delhi from January 27 to 30, 1980:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) sends its warm greetings to the people of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala, the cadres of the Left and democratic parties and our own Party in the three States for having inflicted a massive defeat on the forces of authoritarianism and rabid communalism in the elections to the Seventh Lok Sabha. The people of Kerala, the Left and Democratic Front and our own Party cadres in the State have added to it the achievement of a new alignment of forces in the State, making it possible for the victory in the Assembly elections, followed by the formation of a Left and democratic Government in the State.

The Central Committee greets the people in the rest of the country who voted for the CPI(M), other Left parties and all other anti-authoritarian and secular forces. Though the seats won have not been large in number, the sizable vote polled against the authoritarian forces is a guarantee that the advance of authoritarianism can be checkmated.

The electoral victories in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, and the existence of the three State Governments headed by the CPI(M), make it clear that the advance of the forces of authoritarianism, as seen in the victory of the Congress(I) in the rest of the country, can be resisted if the forces of the Left act unitedly to mobilise all the authoritarian forces.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 10, 1980. Refer Document under item No. 3 of this Volume.

The C.C. expresses its sense of appreciation of the positive attitude adopted by the leadership of the CPI in facilitating the realignment of political forces in the direction of Left and democratic unity. It also appreciates the helpful attitude adopted by the leaders of the Congress, the Kerala Congress, the RSP and the All-India Muslim League in Kerala with whose cooperation the CPI(M) in Kerala was able to give a crushing defeat to the Congress(I).

Underestimation

While expressing satisfaction at those positive features of the results of the Lok Sabha and Kerala Assembly elections, the C.C. expresses its grave concern at the overall results of the Lok Sabha elections. The landslide victory secured by the Congress(I) and the defeat of the Janata, the Lok Dal and the Congress in the Lok Sabha elections have gone far beyond the worst fears of the democratic forces.

It is obvious that the CPI(M) along with other Left and democratic forces, underestimated the extent of isolation of the Janata Government and its successors Lok Dal-Congress Caretaker Government resulting from the anti-people policies pursued by them. Underestimated also was the capacity of the Congress(I) to take full advantage of the mistakes and failings of its opponents. The C.C. assures all Party members, and the people generally, that it will draw the necessary lessons from this.

The C.C. hopes that the leaderships, ranks and followers of the Janata Party, the Lok Dal, the Congress and all other anti-authoritarian parties would also draw lessons from the election results. It appeals particularly to the leaders of the Janata, the Lok Dal and the Congress to undertake a serious re-examination of the policies pursued by and the performance of their Governments and organisational leaderships.

Warnings

The C.C. recalls, in this connection, that the CPI(M) had repeatedly drawn the attention of the leaders of the Janata Party and its Government to the enormous harm done to the cause of the

anti-authoritarian struggle by the anti-people policies pursued by them. The C.C. had also warned that communal riots in many places, particularly in Aligarh and Jamshedpur, in which the involvement of the RSS-Jana Sangh was widely known, and the growing atrocities on Harijans by upper-caste landlords were alienating the Janata Party from the minority and the Scheduled Castes. Added to this was the unseemly scramble for power by leaders of the party which disgusted the people. These warnings, however, went unheeded. The result was seen in the voting where the minority, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who had given their massive support to the Janata Party in 1977, by and large, now swung to the Congress(I). Considerable sections of the democratic masses were also disillusioned and were carried away by the central slogan of the Congress(I) regarding its capacity to solve the immediate problems of the people and to provide a stable Government.

Sharp Contrast

The record of the two Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Tripura is in sharp contrast to the anti-people performance of and internal in-fights among the leaders of the Janata and Lok Dal Governments in other States. That is why, while the people in the two Left Front-led States plumped for the Left Front candidates, those in the Janata or Lok Dal-led States swung to the Congress(I).

The C.C., however, desires to point out that it is not too late even now for the Janata, the Lok Dal and other opposition parties to make a new beginning if only they draw lessons from and correct the serious mistakes of the past. Though the Congress(I) secured only 42.5 per cent of the votes polled, the absence of a democratic electoral system based on proportional representation enabled it to secure two-thirds of the seats and claim a massive electoral victory. The fact is that the combined vote of the Janata, the Lok Dal and the Congress alone—not to speak of the combined vote of all the opposition parties—in some States is much more than the Congress(I) vote, though the seats secured are disproportionately low. The question before these parties, therefore, is whether they

will rectify the mistakes which led to the disastrous result of the Lok Sabha elections; whether they would abandon the anti-people policies which led to their isolation from the people, and whether they will give up the factional wranglings among their leaders, unify themselves and unite with all to fight the authoritarian forces.

Great Menace

The C.C. is of the view that not only the result of the election but the developments of the post-election fortnight, too, sharply underline the great menace that looms before the people. The formation of the new Government headed by Indira Gandhi is not an ordinary change of Government but the return to key positions of a large number of those who were instrumental in the Emergency crimes. Many of them have been returned to Parliament. Increasing numbers of bureaucrats notorious for Emergency crimes are once again being given key posts, even over the heads of many of their seniors. The notorious caucus has become active in Parliament and is showing intolerance to the Opposition. These caucusmen in Parliament and their lieutenants in the States have started making insistent demands for the toppling of State Governments and the dissolution of such State Legislatures that will not toe the Congress(I) line. The unseemly spectacle of purchasing Legislators wholesale has started. Officers who were active in the investigation of crimes committed by the caucusmen during the Emergency regime are being persecuted, arrested and otherwise harassed.

All this should be clear warning that, unless the anti-authoritarian forces unitedly resist, the present regime is likely to develop into authoritarianism.

Resistance

The C.C., however, holds that there is every possibility for developing such united resistance. The very emergence of the authoritarian threat has already unleashed the forces of resistance. The Opposition is trying to unite itself in both the Houses of Parliament in resistance to the authoritarian moves of the Government. Opposition to the move for toppling the

non-Congress(I) Governments in States and for the dissolution of Legislatures brought together the Chief Ministers of non-Congress(I) States who jointly protested against these moves. Realisation is in general growing that the attacks on democracy which are being mounted in the wake of the Lok Sabha elections should be resisted. These are bound to develop further, since the very people who plumped for the Congress(I) in preference to the Janata and its successor Caretaker Government would come out against the Congress(I) if it takes its electoral victory as a mandate for the revival of the dictatorial regime that was thrown out of power in 1977.

Moreover, disillusionment is bound to develop among vast sections of the people who have voted for the Congress(I) in the hope of finding solutions to their burning problems and having a stable Government. Not only will these problems not be solved but they will get further accentuated. It is in the very nature of the class policies of the Congress(I) that its Government will be unable to find democratic solutions to problems like price-rise, unemployment, wages and incomes, pauperisation of the peasantry and so on. Those who have voted for the Congress(I) will more and more join hands with the other sections of the people to resist the policies of the Congress(I) Government.

The drive towards authoritarianism is thus integrally connected with anti-people class policies and attacks on the working class and other sections of the working people. It is, therefore, the duty of the mass organisations committed to defend their lives and liberties against authoritarianism, to link up their own struggles for the economic demands with the struggle for the preservation and extension of democracy. The C.C. appeals to all the trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and other mass organisations to forge unity among themselves as well as with the rest of the democratic movement for the economic as well as political demands of all sections of the people.

Task of Left

It is the responsibility of the CPI(M) and other Left parties to unitedly give leadership to the struggles of various sections of the

people that will develop in the coming days. It should also be their responsibility to jointly project these struggles in the forum of Parliament. A good beginning in this direction has already been made by the setting up of the Coordination Committee of the Left parties represented in Parliament to coordinate their activities in both the Houses of Parliament. The C.C. hopes that united leadership to struggles and this coordinated work in Parliament and outside will further strengthen the unity of the Left.

It is also the responsibility of the CPI(M) and other Left parties to establish close cooperation between themselves and other opposition parties and groups in Parliament to continue the resistance to the authoritarian forces. In the new post-elections situation, it has become all the more urgent and necessary to build the broadest unity of all anti-authoritarian forces to defend the democratic rights of the people from dictatorial onslaughts.

In this context, the three State Governments headed by the CPI(M) have a very crucial role to play. They have to so conduct themselves as to further strengthen the Left and democratic forces within their respective States, project the Left and democratic alternative to the rest of the country to mobilise more and more sections of the people to this alternative. While having no hesitation to extend cooperation to the Central Government on issues of common interest, they should firmly resist all anti-people policies, all attacks on States' autonomy. These attacks are directed to make every State Government a feudatory of the Centre and should be jointly resisted by all the non-Congress(I) Governments by mobilising the people throughout the country for safeguarding the autonomy of the States in a federal polity.

Organisation

The C.C. directs all the State, district and lower committees of the Party to undertake the task of further strengthening the unity of the Left and democratic parties, the fighting organisations of the working people, unity which was forged in the course of the struggle against authoritarianism. This growing unity is the sure guarantee

that all the potential forces of struggle against authoritarianism can be rallied and unified.

The C.C. reminds all members and friends of the Party that discharging these tasks requires the further strengthening and consolidation of the Party organisation on the general lines laid down by the Salkia Plenum of the Party held over a year ago.

New Offensive To Set Up Dictatorship*

**Statement Dated February 18, 1980
Issued by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M)
in New Delhi**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement on the dissolution of nine State Assemblies and imposition of President's rule in those States:

The summary dissolution of nine State Legislative Assemblies and the imposition of President's rule on these States by the Congress Government headed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi within five weeks of her assuming power, completely confirm the fears of the people that neither Mrs. Gandhi nor her Party has drawn any lessons from the traumatic experiences of the Emergency regime and its rout at the polls in March 1977. All the ingenious arguments that are being marshalled in defence of the dissolution of duly-elected and functioning State Assemblies, will not hide the ugly truth that Mrs. Gandhi and her party are immediately interested in stalling the opposition parties from electing Rajya Sabha Members from these States in the forthcoming biennial elections. It is to be seriously noted that Mrs. Gandhi's Government has shown scant respect to the verdict of the Rajya Sabha through its amendment to the Presidential Address, disapproving the move of dissolution of State Assemblies and State Governments held by different opposition parties. This dissolution of nine Assemblies, by a stroke of the pen, is the first biggest onslaught against the forces of the democratic opposition and an un-concealed drive towards setting up of one-party monopoly and authoritarian rule, both at the Centre and in the States. Thus a new offensive to set up a

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 24, 1980.

dictatorship has been unleashed. It is for the people, democratic forces and all the opposition parties, groups and individuals to accept the challenge and defeat it.

The 30 days' performance of the new Congress Government at the Centre leaves no doubt in the minds of the people that it has taken its electoral victory as people's endorsement of the Emergency rule and all the misdeeds under it. The speedy rehabilitation of the entire Emergency outfit, the outright withdrawal of cases from law courts, the penalisation of officers who were doing their duty, as nakedly seen in the arrest and harassment of Mr. N. K. Singh, Deputy Inspector General of the Central Bureau of Investigations, who happened to be the Chief Investigator in the "Kissa-Kursi-Ka" case and the emergence of the "caucus" and its doubly enhanced activities—all these highlight the danger from the authoritarian forces and their renewed drive towards dictatorship.

The P.B. of the CPI(M) denounces these policies and measures of the new Congress (I) regime as highly undemocratic. It calls upon all opposition parties and groups to close their ranks and fight unitedly to beat back this new offensive by the Congress (I) and to defend democracy, States' autonomy and the unity of the Indian Union.

The P.B. condemns the unashamed pronouncements of the RSS leader, Balasaheb Dcoras, advocating cooperation with and support to the Congress (I) regime, contrary to the tall claims made by the RSS leaders that they were the front-rank fighters against the Emergency regime in 1975-77. It calls upon the Janata leaders who are pledged to fight for a secular and democratic set-up of the State in our country to settle the dispute of "dual membership" in their party—a dispute that had played a major role in undermining and disrupting the unity of the party.

The P.B. appeals to the people, workers, peasants, middle classes and all Left and democratic forces in the country, to unite and fight the new growing menace of authoritarianism and one-party monopoly rule at the hands of the Congress Government headed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

Greetings To Bangladesh C.P. Congress*

Cabled Message of Greetings from The Communist Party of India (Marxist) to The Communist Party of Bangladesh on February 26, 1980

Central Committee,
Communist Party of Bangladesh,
21/2 Purana Paltan, Dacca

Extend revolutionary greetings of Communist Party of India (Marxist) to your Third Congress. We are confident your Congress will strengthen solidarity between our two movements against U.S. imperialism for safeguarding independence, peace and security and your own struggle for democracy in Bangladesh.

E. M. S. Namboodiripad
General Secretary

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 2, 1980.

Review On Current Situation*

Made by the Polit Bureau of CPI(M) in Its Meeting
Held in New Delhi on February 25-26, 1980

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi on February 25 and 26, 1980. It reviewed the main developments in the country during the four weeks that have elapsed since the last meeting of the Central Committee.

The P.B. noted with satisfaction that the Opposition raised its voice unitedly against the move of the Central Government to dissolve several of the State Governments and Legislatures that are not under the control of the Congress (I). Although this was not sufficient to prevent the Central Government from taking the undemocratic step, the very fact of the common stand of the opposition parties and democratic forces is an encouraging feature of the situation. The P.B. hopes that this will be carried forward and strengthened in the mid-term elections to the State Assemblies due to take place shortly.

The P.B. takes this opportunity to appeal to all the anti-authoritarian forces to draw proper lessons from the results of the by-elections to the Lok Sabha that took place on February 24. These by-elections are another confirmation of the lesson that was taught by the January election. The Central Committee of our Party had warned the Lok Dal, the Congress and the Janata that they would not be able to play their role in the struggle against authoritarianism unless they undertook a serious re-examination of the policies pursued by and the performance of their Governments and organisational leaderships. Especially necessary is it to disown the communal and obscurantist outlook of the RSS-Jana Sangh which growingly undermined the unity of the anti-authoritarian forces. The offer of friendship to

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 2, 1980.

Indira Gandhi made by RSS Chief Balasaheb Deoras demands clarification from the Janata Party. Is this party serious in fighting Indira Gandhi or are its members free to support the Congress (I)? The people will not be satisfied unless the dual membership issue is solved.

The P.B. deplors that, although the Lok Dal, the Janata and the Congress agreed to have a common candidate to fight the by-elections against the Congress (I), they were unable to rouse the people and generate enthusiasm for a determined struggle against authoritarianism. Hence the low percentage of vote in all the constituencies except in Serampore where the Left Front was able to rouse the people and improve on its 1977 record. The P.B. thanks the voters as well as cadres of the Left parties in West Bengal for proving once again that authoritarianism can be effectively fought if only the Left and democratic forces forge their unity.

The victory of the Congress (I) in four of the five Lok Sabha constituencies where by-elections were held, should not dishearten the anti-authoritarian forces. The overall situation is such that if the anti-authoritarian forces combine against the growing trend towards authoritarianism and pull their full weight, they can show better results in the mid-term elections that are in the offing. The CPI(M) would do its best to ensure that the Congress (I) is denied the benefit of vote-splitting on the part of the anti-authoritarian forces.

Having considered reports of the political situation as it is developing in the various States, and after exchange of views on the lines along which the struggle against authoritarianism is to be concretised in relation to the forthcoming elections, the P.B. decided to place its tentative proposals before the Central Committee which is being convened to meet in Delhi on March 14, 15 and 16. It is hoped that, by that time, more exchanges will take place among the various anti-authoritarian parties and organisations on how to forge electoral unity.

The P.B. is of the view that, if the Assembly elections in the nine States are to be free and fair, the voters' lists should be brought up to date with reference to January 1980 and the complaints regarding large-scale omissions from the lists should

be removed. It takes exception to the demand made by some Congress (I) M.Ps. that elections should be hastily conducted without proper revision of the voters' lists. It condemns the joint statement of these M.Ps. directed against the Election Commissioner which is nothing but a blatant attempt to blackmail into submission a statutory authority which should be above party politics.

At the same time, the P.B. is of the opinion that the revision of voters' lists undertaken by the Chief Election Commissioner would be fruitful only if enumerators are appointed in sufficient numbers and asked to undertake door-to-door enumeration. Whatever work can be undertaken by political parties cannot replace, but only supplement the work which should be basically carried out by the enumerators. Sufficient time should be given to the enumerators to do their work and to the candidates, political parties and others interested to do the work, to raise complaints and objections to the lists as prepared by the enumerators.

The P.B. expresses grave concern over the economic situation that is rapidly worsening. The prices of essential commodities are not showing any fall. In fact, there is a worsening in several cases such as sugar. The main responsibility for this rests on the Central Government which is pursuing the same incorrect policies. Furthermore, although nearly a month and a half have elapsed since the Government assumed charge, it has not yet applied its mind to any of these policies. Many of the economic Ministries are now going without a responsible political head. The Planning Commission, too, has for all practical purposes been put in abeyance, indicating the absence of any economic policies. This, in the view of the P.B., is utter irresponsibility on the part of the ruling party.

The acute economic situation and especially the high inflationary prices demand a rational and democratic relationship between the States and the Centre.

At present the price fixation of commodities, including food-grains, and control over expansion of currency and credit and their restrictions, are all the responsibility of the Central Government. The State Governments have absolutely no say in all this.

It is necessary that all democratic forces explain to the people this weakness in our Constitution and place the Centre's policies as the main cause of popular suffering. While demanding immediate relief for the people, the progressive forces must demand that the States should have an effective share in deciding all-India policies regarding price fixation, expansion of credit, etc. It is urgently necessary to take over stocks of essential commodities and organise their distribution with popular support and supervision.

Instead, the Central Government makes it appear that prices can be brought under control by a free use of the Preventive Detention Act against the traders. The fact is that the Indira Government is not prepared to change the basic policy of passing the burdens of the economic crisis to the people by means of high prices and an enforced lower living standard.

With the happenings across the border and the feverish arming of Pakistan, every one would like the Centre to be strong with increased capacity to defend the country and resist new pressures on its foreign policy. But the Centre cannot be strong unless it is backed by strong constituents at the base, by the units feeling a sense of participation in deciding the basic economic policies.

Politically, too, there are several serious problems for which the Central Government is unable to find solutions. The situation in Assam is going from bad to worse, the agitators refusing to accept any solution considered reasonable by all the political parties. The P.B. demands that the Prime Minister personally intervene in the situation and, in consultation with all parties, find a solution for the problem.

The P.B. calls upon all units and members of the Party to develop, in cooperation with other democratic parties and organisations, as wide a movement as possible for the realisation of such immediate demands as those which concern price-increases, attacks on democracy and States' autonomy, the solution of problems in Assam and Meghalaya, etc. It is hoped that other democratic parties and organisations will realise the urgency and importance of such wide mass mobilisation for developing the unity of the anti-authoritarian forces.

Call For Broadest Mass Mobilisation*

Given by the Central Committee of CPI(M) in a statement dated March 17, 1980 issued in New Delhi

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi on March 14, 15 and 16, 1980 and considered the current political situation. The forthcoming mid-term elections to nine State Assemblies should, in the C.C.'s opinion, be considered as part of the continuing struggle against authoritarianism which has once again raised its head.

The dissolution of the Assemblies in nine States and imposition of President's rule on them are an integral part of the drive to establish one-party dictatorship not only at the Centre but in the States as well. It has to be seen not separately from, but along with, the well-organised campaign unleashed by the Congress(I) against the Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala and for further centralisation of powers in the Union Government.

Discrimination And Intolerance

The C.C. noted with concern the public pronouncements and threats made by some Union Ministers, as well as several letters written by Union Ministers, including the Prime Minister, to the Chief Ministers of States, all of which show an attitude of discrimination against all non-Congress(I) Governments. These official pronouncements of Union Ministers as well as the campaign unleashed by the Congress(I) in the three States are in the opinion of the Central Committee, a demonstration of the Congress(I)'s intolerance towards all non-Congress(I) State Governments—the dissolution of the nine State Assemblies, as also the wholesale defections organised in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka, being the first shot fired in this direction.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 23, 1980.

The demand that law and order, a State subject, should be brought under the Concurrent List, that the State Governments should follow the policies and programmes dictated by the Centre in violation of the promises and pledges given to the electorate by different State Governments and the political parties running them, the insistence on accepting and implementing the Preventive Detention Act as per the Centre's orders, etc., demonstrate the drive of the central Congress(I) leaders against States' autonomy and the federal provisions of India's Constitution. The C.C. calls on all those who cherish the unity of the Indian Union and desire to uphold the due and legitimate rights of the States to raise their voice of protest against this drive.

Feverish Drive

In this connection, the C.C. cannot but note the speedy rehabilitation that is going on of the entire Emergency outfit, the appointment to crucial positions of elements of this outfit, the penalisation of officers who were doing their duty, the pressure that is being sought to be exerted on the Election Commission, and the proposal to dismiss or transfer Governors so as to place trusted men in States considered to be difficult. As against this feverish drive, the Government has no time to apply its mind to policy questions. Many of the crucial Ministries, including the important economic ones, are still vacant, a new Planning Commission is still to be named. There is a total absence of any economic policy, leading to an accentuation of all the problems affecting the people, especially rising prices and non-availability of necessities.

The Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura have repeatedly made it clear that they stand for normal and smooth Centre-State relations. They have also made it clear that they will have to honour the electoral pledges and promises they have given to the people in implementing the policies and programmes in the States' sphere. But the spokesmen of the Congress(I) and its Government at the Centre have been campaigning that the State Governments will have to carry out the Congress Party's

policies and dictates, no matter which political party or parties constitute these State Governments. It is inherent in the federal features of the Indian Constitution and the existence of different political parties that Governments of different political complexions exist at the Centre and in the States. The country's Constitution and its democratic set-up cannot be defended if these realities are not recognised and proper relations are not maintained between the Union Government and the State Governments. The Congress(I), instead, is making a drive towards one-party monopoly rule and dictatorship.

Struggle Against Authoritarianism

The C.C., therefore, decides to do everything in its power to transform the ensuing electoral struggle in the nine States into a serious political struggle in order to mobilise the widest public opinion against these authoritarian trends of the Congress(I) and the Central Government it runs, and to defeat these trends and reverse these policies. The C.C. appeals to all Opposition political parties, who are interested in the struggle against the authoritarian forces led by the Congress(I), to sort out the deep differences and divisions that are plaguing them now to offer united opposition to the Congress(I) and its aim of sweeping the polls in all these nine States. An electoral understanding and adjustment between the Opposition parties, based on the realistic assessment of the strength of these parties and the urgent needs of the struggle to bar the drive of the authoritarian forces, is direly needed in the prevailing political situation in the country.

Pledge To Work For Unity

In this connection, the C.C. notes with concern the deplorable role of the RSS-Jana Sangh constituent of the Janata Party which is disrupting the unity of that party with an unending tussle over the issue of dual membership on the one hand, and offers of co-operation and support to the authoritarian Congress(I) by the top leadership of the RSS on the other. The CPI(M) pledges to work for the unity of Left parties and groups, for the unity of

Left and democratic forces, for the unity of all anti-authoritarian forces, while strengthening and consolidating its own class and mass political base.

Issues of Importance

The C.C. holds that while the electoral struggle in the nine States is of burning importance for the present, united mass actions are required on several issues which are of as much importance as the elections. The Congress(I) Government, in its more than two months of rule, has totally failed to tackle any of the problems harassing the people, the situation, in fact, has rapidly deteriorated in this period. Prices of necessities continue to rise, the price of sugar particularly reaching unimaginable heights, diesel, kerosene, cement, etc., are just not available except in the blackmarket, the railway transportation system continues to be in doldrums disrupting the movement of essential commodities, especially coal leading to chaos in power generation. The 30 years of Congress rule and the three years of Janata and Lok Dal-Congress rule have so accentuated all the economic and political problems that only united mass actions by all the Left and democratic political parties, class and mass organisations and individuals interested in the democratic progress of the people, will give some immediate relief to the people.

The economy of the country, for instance, is in a complete shambles not merely because, as is claimed by the Congress(I) leaders, the Janata and Lok Dal leaders mismanaged the affairs of the nation for three years, but because of the class policies pursued by the Congress for thirty years and by the Janata-Lok Dal regimes for three years. The CPI(M), along with other Left and democratic forces, has consistently pointed out that the capitalist path of development pursued by the ruling classes would make the economy sink deeper and deeper into the crisis. Demagogic slogans such as Socialist pattern of society, bigger and bolder Five-Year Plans, Garibi Hatao, 20-Point Programme, Gandhian Plan, etc., have all failed in their declared objectives and accentuated the crisis of the economy because they were all

based on tightening the grip of the Indian ruling classes and foreign monopolies on the economy. Only a complete reversal of these policies will help the country to get out of the crisis.

For Remoulding Planning

The C.C. recalls that the Left and democratic movement has consistently called for a reversal of these class policies. It appeals to the radical-minded intellectuals, in collaboration with the fighting organisations of the working people as well as Left and democratic political parties, to spell out the lines along which the planning process can be remoulded. The Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala, together with such skeleton planning organisations as they have in their States, can play an important role in this respect.

The Assam Agitation

Politically, too, the situation in the country is so serious that the very Congress(I) leaders who talk of "strong Centre" are unable to grapple with the problem posed in the North-Eastern region in general, Assam and Meghalaya in particular. While everyone should recognise the genuineness of the grievances given expression to by the various ethnic groups in the North-Eastern region, it is a matter of concern, following the failure of the Union Government to solve this problem, that a movement has arisen which is a challenge to the very concept of India's unity and integrity and of Indian citizenship.

While endorsing the appeal issued by all the national political parties and parties represented in the Assam Legislature for the withdrawal of the current agitation in Assam, the C.C. holds that 1971 should be taken as the cut-off date for determining who are actually foreign nationals. The C.C. assures all concerned that the CPI(M) will do all it can to help find such a solution to the Assam problem as would help the detection of foreign nationals, but at the same time protect all Indian citizens including those who, for various reasons, have to live and work in Assam.

The C.C. appeals to the leaders of the movement to respond to the appeal of political parties and withdraw the agitation which

has led to sufferings not only to the people of neighbouring States and other States in the region but also the people of Assam itself.

Distinct Problems

The C.C. is of the view that the various ethnic groups that inhabit the North-Eastern region have their own distinct problems which cannot be successfully solved unless the Union Government and the national political parties consider these ethnic groups as growing nationalities with their own individual identity and desiring maximum autonomy for their respective States within the federal Indian Union. This, however, is incompatible with the concept of a "strong unitary State of India" which is unfortunately shared not only by the Congress(I) but certain other political parties as well. The C.C. notes in this context that the RSS-Jana Sangh leadership which claims to stand for a "strong unitary Indian Union" does, in practice, extend its support to the chauvinist demands voiced by certain elements in the Assam agitation. The C.C. appeals to all those who are interested in the solution of such problems to ponder over the result of the policy adopted by them so far.

The C.C., at the same time, appeals to these ethnic groups not to fall a prey to slogans of secessionism and independence raised by reactionary forces and supported by imperialist agencies. Their problems can be solved only as part of the mainstream of the democratic movement of the country in the common struggle against the ruling classes and all those who stand to deny them their legitimate aspirations.

Atrocities And Riots

The C.C. notes the declaration made by the Prime Minister regarding the reactivation of the National Integration Council. Atrocities on Harijans and weaker sections as in Pipra, Parasbigha, Narainpur, continue. Attacks on the Christian minority are taking place in Bihar. Against such atrocities and gruesome communal riots as in Aligarh and Jamshedpur, what is required is effective action to prevent such incidents and to quell

them speedily once they break out. Convening of the National Integration Council, whose record is one of discussions without any follow-up action, cannot replace the effective action that is required. The C.C. also wishes to point out that these problems cannot be solved unless the masses are roused against caste domination and communalism, unless the Government takes measures to ensure land and minimum wages to the agricultural workers, and the exploitation of religion for partisan political purposes is eschewed.

The C.C. also wishes to point out the serious threats to the country due to the aggressive activities of U.S. imperialism. Following the Soviet assistance to the People's Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, which foiled the U.S. designs on that country, the U.S. rulers are planning to heavily arm Pakistan. The C.C. demands that, to face this situation effectively, the Government of India should rebuff U.S. imperialism and vigorously pursue the policy of non-alignment and anti-imperialism.

Broadest Mass Mobilisation

The solution of everyone of these problems is incompatible with the policy of hostility adopted by the Congress(I) leaders towards political parties other than their own, particularly to the Left and democratic forces as well as to State Governments formed by other political parties. They are also incompatible with the concept of a "strong Centre" which can ride roughshod over the States.

In this situation it is the urgent task of the Left and democratic forces to build the broadest mass mobilisation to resist the attempts to re-establish an authoritarian regime, to defend the powers of the States and fight for States' autonomy, to defend the three Left-oriented Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura; against the sky-rocketing prices and non-availability of essential commodities; for the economic and political demands of various sections of the people.

The C.C. calls on all units and members of the Party to realise the urgency and importance of such wide mobilisation and, in co-operation with other democratic parties and various mass organisations, organise conventions, seminars, conferences demonstrations, etc., to rally public opinion around the policies and demands for which the Left and democratic movement stands.

Protests Against Arrests In Jammu & Kashmir*

Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M)

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press on April 2, 1980:

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) vehemently protests against the arrests of members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) including Mohammed Yusuf, Secretary of the Jammu & Kashmir Organising Committee of the Party, as also members and leaders of the CPI by the Sheikh Abdullah Government on March 31, 1980.

The reason given that the arrested persons were planning to indulge in violence on the occasion of the first anniversary of the hanging of Bhutto will not deceive anyone. The Sheikh Abdullah Government should have remembered that it had detained Mohammed Yusuf after the demonstrations last year in protest against the hanging of Bhutto but that the Supreme Court had held his detention illegal.

It is not a secret that the Jamaat-e-Islami has infiltrated the J. & K. administration and has strong links with the National Conference and it is on the basis of reports concocted by this rabidly communal organisation that the attack has been launched against the CPI(M) and the CPI.

Our Party will defend forever its right to express its protest on any issue, but it does not indulge in activities like arson and loot.

The Polit Bureau demands the immediate release of all the arrested comrades belonging to the CPI(M) and CPI.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 13, 1980.

Polit Bureau On Current Situation*

Communique Dated April 12, 1980
Issued in New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which met on April 9 and 10, 1980 in New Delhi expressed its grave concern at the worsening international climate with the U.S. imperialists whipping up the cold war, endangering detente and world peace. The hysteria that is sought to be worked up against the USSR over the Afghan issue, the brazen threat issued by President Carter that force will be used against Iran if its Government and people did not submit to U.S. dictates, the open encouragement of Israel's aggressive activities against Lebanon and the Arab world, and the threats that are hurled at India that they would heavily arm the militarist regime of Pakistan—all speak eloquently of the dangers that the U.S. imperialists are posing to peace and stability in this entire region including the Indian sub-continent.

Resistance to U.S. Pressure

The Polit Bureau noted with satisfaction that Iran, Afghanistan, India and the peoples of various other countries have refused to knuckle under the U.S. pressures, and are resisting them with the full sympathy and co-operation of the USSR, most of the Socialist States and all the anti-imperialist forces throughout the world. The recent visits of the Prime Minister of Vietnam, the Foreign Ministers of Cuba and Czechoslovakia and the head of the great Palestinian Liberation Organisation, Yasser Arafat, and the exchange of views between them and the Indian leaders have helped the anti-imperialist forces to demonstrate their opposition to the

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 20, 1980.

manoeuvres of U.S. imperialism. It is a pity that the Congress (I) Government is dragging its feet in according recognition to the new Kampuchean regime, a recognition that was promised in the election manifesto of the ruling party.

The P.B. regretted that the action of the Government in the matter of solving the problem of shortages of essential commodities and rise in prices has been contrary to the expectations roused among the people by the pledges made by the Congress (I) leaders during the election campaign. The talk of using the Preventive Detention Act against the hoarders and blackmarketeers cannot hide the reality of not seizing stocks hoarded by the profiteering anti-social elements. It is well-known that huge stocks are lying with the hoarders and blackmarketeers and that the Central Government should use the powers in order to procure stocks and supply them to the State Governments. This alone will enable all the State Governments, particularly those like West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala who have a well-organised system of public distribution, to make adequate quantities available in time and at cheap rates. The proceedings of the Governors' and Chief Ministers' Conference revealed that the Union Government has failed in discharging this elementary responsibility which lies at the root of the problem of shortages and prices.

Prices and Scarcity

The P.B. noted that the very Central Government and the leaders of the ruling Congress (I) Party who have failed in this respect are accusing the Left Front Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and the Left and Democratic Front Government of Kerala for not extending cooperation to the Centre by way of using the Preventive Detention Act. It is well-known that the three Governments who have expressed their opposition to the use of the Preventive Detention Act have not hesitated in organising a dehoarding drive, and to use all the powers under the Essential Commodities and other existing Acts for this purpose. They have assured the Centre that they will further strengthen and streamline the existing system of public distribution which can play a positive role in bringing the prices down if only sufficient supplies are provided in time and at reasonable prices.

The utter failure of the Government has created a situation in which far from bringing the prices down as was promised by the Congress (I) during its election campaign, the prices of many essential commodities are still going up. No end is in sight for the steady deterioration of the life and standard of the common mass of the people in face of the growing shortages and rising prices. The P.B. calls upon all the Left parties, all the mass organisations and all other political and social organisations interested in the solution of the problems of the people to organise a countrywide campaign for such democratic policies as will curb the activities of the blackmarketeers, hoarders and profiteers.

Law and Order

The P.B. reviewed the Chief Ministers' Conference held on April 8 which discussed along with the shortages and prices of essential commodities, the question of law and order which is deteriorating. The P.B. holds that the main responsibility for the continued deterioration in the law and order situation during the last three months lies on the ruling Congress (I) and its leaders at all levels.

Attention cannot but be drawn in this context to the brazen violation of all normal laws of the land by installing such favourites of the ruling party who acquired notoriety during the Emergency regime of the 1975-76 years and who, after a short period of having been out of positions of power have now been brought back. The result is that in Delhi which is directly under the Prime Minister's close confidants like Jagmohan and Bhinder, the lives and properties of peace-loving citizens are in danger.

The P.B. denounces the action of Lt. Governor Jagmohan, who gave full licence to the men of the police forces to run amock; his order banning prosecution of police personnel for the excesses committed by these men on the citizens is a negation of all that our freedom and democratic movement has stood for, and is a return to the bad old days of British rule.

The P.B. cannot but recall also that the Congress (I) Chief Minister of Karnataka in his intervention at the Chief Ministers'

Conference called for the use of preventive detention not only against economic offenders but generally against what he called anti-social elements. This is nothing but a call for the restoration of the lawless law of the Emergency days.

The P.B. expressed satisfaction at the unanimity with which women's organisations of various political persuasions all over the country came together to protest against the increasing use of rape as a weapon of terror by anti-social elements and the police. While greeting all these organisations and individuals who joined in this organised protest, the P.B. hopes that other sections of the people will emulate this example and come together in jointly resisting any attack on their civil liberties and democratic rights.

Congress (I) Activities

The P.B. desires to point out that if any one is helping the deterioration of law and order, that is done, in the main, by the Congress (I) throughout the country, particularly in the three States of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala. The Congress (I) leaders of these States do not conceal their concerted attempts to create a situation in which the non-Congress (I) Governments can be attacked under the pretext of breakdown of law and order.

In West Bengal they are openly in league with the anti-social forces with a view to disturbing the law and order situation in the State.

In Tripura, too, the Congress (I) leaders are hand in glove with Amra Bangalee and other disruptive forces.

In Kerala, they are in open alliance with the RSS and are giving every possible encouragement to the Naxalites, the collaboration among the Congress (I), the RSS and the Naxalites being clear in several cases of murders, arson, assaults, etc.

In the Congress (I)-ruled State of Andhra Pradesh, too, the Congress (I) in Warangal district is openly found in league with the Naxalites in a campaign of murders against well-known CPI(M) leaders including members of the Legislature.

In their anxiety to create a difficult law and order situation for the Left Front Government of West Bengal, the Congress (I) went

to the extent of organising a violent campaign of preventing the movement of goods from West Bengal to Assam. Everybody who has the interests of Indian unity at heart will see that this action on the part of the Congress (I) in West Bengal is as dangerous to unity as the chauvinist activities by the leaders of the Assam agitation. The P.B. calls on all those who champion Indian unity to join together in registering protest against these partisan moves of the Congress (I) in West Bengal.

Forthcoming Elections

It is unfortunate that the opposition political parties are blind to the danger posed by these moves of the ruling Congress (I) and its Government. The series of moves made by the Congress(I) Government at the Centre should have made all the democratic and opposition parties realise the need for making such adjustments among themselves as to deny the Congress(I) the benefits of a divided opposition in the forthcoming mid-term elections to the nine State Legislatures. Unfortunately, however, leaders of most opposition parties have failed to learn the lesson of the last Lok Sabha elections and go on pursuing their own divisive methods of approach to the problem of electoral adjustments.

The walking out of the former RSS and Jana Sangh members from the Janata Party and the formation by them of the Bharatiya Janata Party have fully confirmed the apprehensions entertained by the secular and democratic forces inside and outside the Janata Party. The Jana Sangh merged itself with and functioned as a constituent of the Janata Party so long as its leaders could freely indulge in activities that enabled them to capture the Janata Party and through it the Central and State Governments. But group after group within the Janata Party realised the implications of the moves being made by the former Jana Sangh bloc in the Janata Party and started fighting back. The demand that those who are members of the Janata Party should sever their connections with the RSS became the bone of contention between the secular and Hindu revivalist elements in the Janata. As this struggle got more and

more intensified the Janata got split up and the former Jana Sanghis, who saw that they could not capture the Janata Party, came out in their true colours. The P.B. expresses the hope that the leaders of the Janata Party who have now freed themselves from the clutches of the Jana Sangh will join hands with all other anti-authoritarian and secular forces to put up a stiff resistance to the Congress (I).

CPI(M) Stand Reiterated

The P.B. reiterated the earlier decisions of the CPI (M) that the forthcoming elections to the Legislative Assemblies in nine States should be used as a political battle against the emerging danger of authoritarianism. It hoped that, despite the convulsions through which many of the opposition parties have, of late, gone through and despite the irreconcilable differences among them on questions of policy as well as of organisational cohesion, they would devise ways and means of denying to the ruling Congress(I) the benefit of a division of the opposition vote.

The P.B. assures all other opposition parties that the CPI(M) would make its own humble contribution towards bringing about such local adjustments as would avoid this splitting of the opposition vote, while every opposition party and group would be free to pursue its own policies.

CPI(M) Polit Bureau On Assam Situation*

Statement dated April 12, 1980 Issued in New Delhi following Polit Bureau Meeting Held on April 9-10, 1980 in New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its grave concern over the continued impasse in Assam despite the consensus reached at the conference of political parties called by the Prime Minister. It was thought that with the cut-off date of 1971, normalcy would be restored in Assam and immediate remedial steps would be taken to identify foreigners and rectify the electoral rolls.

But the leaders of the movement have decided to reject 1971 as the cut-off date and have resumed picketing, hartal and other forms of agitation. During the course of the movement, these activities have led to intimidation and physical attacks against minorities, and, on certain occasions, to killings of large numbers of people. Thousands were uprooted from their homes and a few thousands have had to leave the State and cross over to West Bengal.

These anti-democratic and ugly developments are the logical culmination of the outlook of some of the leaders at the top. They have been leading the movement along secessionist channels, rousing regional frenzy and directing it against others—Bengalees, people of Orissa, Biharis, Nepalese, etc. In fact in the name of removing genuine grievances of the mass of the people of Assam, the leaders are leading them to an anti-India position.

The CPI(M) has already demanded that the question of foreigners in Assam should be properly settled and effective steps should be taken to remove the fear of the Assamese people of being swamped by foreign influx.

But some of the leaders of the present movement seem to have objectives other than removing the genuine grievances. There are

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some who seem to be interested in prolonging the dispute so that a permanent wall is created between the people of Assam and the people in the rest of the country. They are utterly oblivious to the sufferings imposed on the rest of the country by the oil blockade and other means which are not at all justifiable when serious efforts at negotiations are afoot. Some of those heading the movement seem determined to undermine the heritage of national unity.

The destination of the movement is being encouraged by the local vested interests who seek to serve their selfish aims by rousing local frenzy and directing it against the minorities—linguistic and religious.

The P.B. warns that imperialist agencies, by fanning separatist sentiments in Assam, are exploiting the situation to weaken the unity of the country. The "Project Brahmaputra" circular, the visit of the U.S. Ambassador to this sensitive area accompanied, as was reported, by a number of CIA agents, reveal the imperialist interest in the movement.

The separatist distortions of the Assam movement generate reactionary repercussions as witnessed in the blockade of Assam organised by Congress(I) partymen in West Bengal. If this action and reaction continue, nothing will be left of the unity of the country and the peoples of different States in the Indian Union.

The P.B. warns that what is at stake in Assam is the future of Indian unity, the integrity of the country. Notwithstanding the original grievance which is genuine, the movement has taken a reactionary anti-Indian turn and the people of Assam have to be saved from its consequences.

The people, all progressive forces have to wage a common struggle to defend the unity of the country and prevent its disintegration. The problem certainly would not have risen in this form if previous Governments had done justice to the people of Assam and also stopped the influx of foreigners into the State.

In such a situation administrative measures, howsoever unavoidable to protect minorities against violence and killings, cannot solve the problem. The battle has to be carried on to win over the mass of the people of Assam to the path of national unity, to rouse them against the dangers of secessionist logic.

What is urgently necessary is the combined effort of all political parties to take a common stand and persuade the people of Assam to see the error of the ways of their leadership. This is the primary duty of the political parties in Assam. But this has not been discharged. The Congress(I) in Assam has done nothing to fight the chauvinistic wave. The Janata openly encouraged it. Only the CPI(M) and other Left parties took up the challenge.

The CPI(M) calls upon all political parties in the country to combine their efforts to protect national unity and rouse the people in all States to the danger in Assam from the secessionist challenge. The people must know the unity of the country is under serious challenge and their patriotic spirit must be roused to persuade the people of Assam to see the error of their ways.

The CPI(M) appeals to the leaders of the movement in Assam to immediately call off the movement and return to the path of negotiated and peaceful settlement of the issue.

The CPI(M) considers that counter-movements like the economic blockade organised by the Congress(I) in West Bengal are ruinous and further endanger the unity of the country. It congratulates the Left parties for their success in keeping the people away from the unseemly blockade movement.

The CPI(M) calls upon all parties to accept 1971 as the cut-off date and persuade the people of Assam to do the same. All parties should further endeavour to ensure that the commonly accepted agreement will be implemented impartially and no Indian citizen will be penalised. All political parties should further assure the people of Assam that they stand guarantee against further influx of foreigners in the State. A vigorous political drive by political parties for public opinion combined with earnest efforts by the Government will bring the problem under control and create a sense of national unity. The main and primary role in solving the problem will be played by political persuasion and strengthening of all-India public opinion, and the ruling Congress party and the Central Government will have to bear this in mind in their dealing with the agitation in Assam.

The P.B. is glad to note that the Prime Minister has reversed her earlier stand that she will not visit Assam unless the agitation is withdrawn, and is visiting the State for talks. The P.B. hopes the Prime Minister's visit will pave the way for an amicable settlement.

On U.S. Adventurism in Iran

**Statement dated May 1, 1980 Issued by the
Polit Bureau of CPI(M) in New Delhi**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its deep concern over the adventurist moves of American imperialism, which may bring the world to the brink of a war. Having received repeated rebuffs at the hands of the fighting people of Iran, with the fiasco of its measures to invade the sovereignty of Iran under the pretext of rescuing the American hostages, the USA Government seems to be determined to rehabilitate its prestige by a further course of adventurist and aggressive action. The spokesmen have already announced that they have not given up their aggressive intentions after Iran.

And now comes the news that the U.S. imperialists are planning intimidatory actions against Cuba. In a news carried by international news agency the U.S. air, sea and land forces will be engaged in manoeuvres for three weeks in the Caribbean Sea. The massive and intimidatory character of the manoeuvres can be seen from the fact that more than 20,000 men, 42 ships and 350 planes will be taking part in the manoeuvres called Solid Shield 80. The operation is to be led by an emergency task force set up by President Carter last year.

The most provocative and dangerous part of the manoeuvre scheduled to begin on May 8th is that they include the landing of 2000 marines at the naval base in Guantanamo, Cuba and the transportation of a battalion of 1200 U.S. soldiers to the base. Giant B-12 bombers will have the mission of observing the area of manoeuvres and of studying the technique of mining the sea from the air.

This constitutes nothing but a direct attack on the independence of Cuba and open violation of its sovereignty. The sovereignty

and independence of Socialist Cuba is very directly threatened by U.S. imperialists in their mad haste to achieve some success for their aggressive policy.

The P.B. of the CPI(M) denounces these manoeuvres of U.S. imperialism and calls on all the progressive forces in the country to raise their voice of protest. The freedom-loving people of America who have fought many a conspiracy of their Government will no doubt see to it that this one is also frustrated. American imperialism is our common enemy. It is plotting to dismember our country. It is arming the military dictator of Pakistan to create hostility between the two countries. Let our voice be raised in time.

Polit Bureau's Homage to Josip Broz Tito*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) deeply mourns the death of Comrade Josip Broz Tito, President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, President of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and Honorary President of the Socialist Alliance of Working People of Yugoslavia, on May 4 after prolonged illness.

President Tito who began his activities in the working class movement of Yugoslavia seven decades ago, rose to the position of outstanding leader of Yugoslavia after he led the fierce and protracted partisan struggle against the German and Italian fascist occupying forces during the Second World War and made Yugoslavia's contribution to the great victory over fascism.

Comrade Tito, though leading a small country, became a world figure playing an important role in the struggle for peace and progress and in the non-aligned movement of which he was a founder-leader.

Yugoslavia after liberation faced the difficult problem of nationalities which was solved under his leadership by uniting the various nationalities inhabiting Yugoslavia in the Socialist Federal Republic.

His passing away is a big loss to the League of Communists and people of Yugoslavia and the non-aligned movement.

The P.B. conveys its heart-felt condolence to the people of Yugoslavia at this hour of their grief.

Punjab : Election Manifesto Of CPI(M)*

Election Held on May 31, 1980

The people of the state have been called upon to exercise their franchise on May 31, 1980. This has been done by using the power provided in the Constitution of dismissing State Ministries, in disregard of the people's will. In fact, the dissolution of the Assemblies of the nine States is an integral part of the drive to establish one party dictatorship not only at the Centre but in the States as well. The ruling party at the Centre through these elections also intends to get a two-thirds majority in the Rajya Sabha to enable it to amend the present Constitution and remove from the Statutes whatever democratic rights are there and change the present parliamentary form into a Presidential form of Government.

The elections are being held in a hurry without giving sufficient time to the enumerators to do their work and candidates, political parties and others interested to do the work, to raise complaints and objections to the lists, thus depriving thousands of their right to vote.

Total Failure Of Congress(I)

The ruling party is in a haste to get the verdict of the people because all the criticism made of the Janata regime and the promises made during the Lok Sabha elections have proved to be a hoax. During its four months' rule the Congress(I) Government has totally failed to tackle any of the problems harassing the people, the situation, in fact, has rapidly deteriorated in this period. The prices of the necessities of life continue to rise, the price of sugar particularly reaching unimaginable heights, diesel,

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*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 25, 1980.

kerosene, cement, etc., are just not available except in the blackmarket. There has been increase in the prices of coal and steel by more than 50 per cent. What to say of bringing down the prices, hardly a day passes when the price-index in relation to essential commodities does not rise. The railway transportation system continues to be in the doldrums, disrupting the movement of essential commodities as well as coal leading to chaos in power generation. The peasantry has been treated very shabily by providing only Rs. two increase in the price of wheat when the general price-index has risen by more than 20 per cent.

The law and order situation has worsened under Congress(I) rule. Attacks on Harijans and women have become a regular feature with the police either conniving or acting as onlookers. Inside the ruling party, a demand is being made to bring law and order, a State subject, under the Concurrent List and the State Governments are being asked to follow the policies and programmes dictated by the Centre in violation of promises and pledges given to the electorate by the different political parties running the State Government. This demonstrates the drive of the Central Congress(I) leaders against States' autonomy and the federal provisions of the Indian Constitution. It is not accidental that the entire Emergency outfit is being rehabilitated by appointing them to influential positions and officers who were doing their duties in unearthing the Emergency crimes are being penalised.

Situation In Punjab

The situation in Punjab is much worse. Apart from the high prices and the scarcity of everything which is required for agricultural and industrial productions leading to unemployment and loss in production. The administration is being run at the dictates of the Congress(I). Ordering mass transfers of officers and other administrative cadres with a view to boosting the narrow party interests of the Congress(I) Party.

The repression launched against the workers of the Partap Steel and Rolling Mills, Chheharta, the indiscriminate firing on innocent workers by the police and management are indicative of things to come if the Congress(I) Party comes to power.

This is the background in which the present Assembly elections are being held. These elections occupy an important place in the struggle against authoritarian forces. Keeping this object in view, our Party decided to do everything in its power to transform the ensuing electoral struggle in Punjab into a serious political struggle. In order to mobilise the widest public opinion against the authoritarian forces and to defeat them, it has played an important role in bringing together the CPI(M), CPI and the Akali Party by forging an electoral understanding by reducing its seats to thirteen from the beginning. It also tried to make all the efforts to bring in the Janata Party and Congress(U) in the alliance but could not fully succeed in its efforts.

Our Party's Record

Our Party is a consistent fighter against authoritarianism and in defence of the interest of the working class, agricultural labourers, peasantry, students, youth, employees and other toiling people. It also has begun fighting for the genuine demands of small traders and small-scale and medium industrialists. Its members in the last Vidhan Sabha have a clear record of such a fight as true representatives of the toiling millions of the State. No lure of office or personal benefits have attracted them. Wherever the interests of the common man are involved and wherever there was repression against the people, wherever there were struggles of working class, agricultural workers, employees, peasants and others, they stood in the forefront, whether it was inside the Vidhan Sabha or outside it. Neither repression nor any personal ambition could detract them from the sacred cause of building the unity of the Left and democratic forces with a view to developing an alternative to the bourgeois-landlord regime.

Our Party today is leading three State Left Front and Left and Democratic Front Governments. Within the Constitutional limitations, these Governments have the brilliant record of providing relief to the working class, employees and other sections of the people. The three Governments have extended their supporting hands to the movements of the struggling workers, agricultural labourers and peasants. They have made

active interventions in support of the establishment of trade union rights. The two lakh jute workers of West Bengal have been able to win a minimum wage of Rs. 470.10 per month for each worker. Three lakh workers in the engineering industry have been benefited by the increase in their basic wage by Rs. 52 to 56 per month. For the sharecroppers, through the 'Operation Barga', 6.66 lakh sharecroppers have already been recorded in the land records. The preliminary step to meet the land-hunger of landless agriculturists has been initiated by taking over the land of big landowners, retained above the ceiling through various machinations and its distribution to the landless. The oppression carried on in the past on the cultivators in the name of levy has been abolished. The small and middle peasants have been given relief in the form of exemption from land revenue up to four acres of irrigated land and six acres of unirrigated land. To relieve the peasants from the clutches of usurers, the State Governments are making all possible efforts to make available to them cheap loans from financial institutions. Agricultural workers have been ensured a fair wage. The West Bengal Government is the first State Government which during 1978-79 provided unemployment allowance to 145,000 youth incurring an expenditure of Rs. 9.25 crores. During the current year, 1979-80, one lakh more people are to be provided with unemployment allowance incurring a total expenditure of Rs. 13 crores. The West Bengal Government has provided old-age pensions for small farmers and agricultural workers, increasing the pension of Government pension-holders and made education free up to Class XII from 1981.

Similarly the Kerala Government has provided pensions for agricultural workers at the rate of Rs. 45 per month for those above 60 years of age, unemployment allowance, health cards for 55 lakh school children to medically examine them and to take follow-up action. The Kerala Government has taken many other measures to give relief to the toilers.

It is because of dedication to the cause of the toiling people that our Party won significant victories during the Lok Sabha elections, giving a crushing defeat to the Congress(I) in these States. It is due to this record of service that the Left and

democratic forces won impressive victory over the Congress(I) in the States after it had established its rule at the Centre. That is why the Congress(I) Government in the Centre is trying to distress these Governments by using its power in the Centre and by instigating trouble through various methods. Our Party along with other Left and democratic parties will fight against these manoeuvres as a part of the struggle against authoritarianism. It will tirelessly work to mobilise the people of the State for the introduction of these measures which have been adopted by these Governments.

Programme For Punjab

In this situation our Party and other Left parties have to play a key role in acting as a mobiliser, organiser and initiator of the struggle against the authoritarian party. As a consistent champion of the interests of the masses and fighter for democracy our Party places before the people the following programme for which it will carry on the struggle inside and outside the Legislature.

A slightly summarised version of the programme follows:

In the political sphere, the programme is aimed at bringing changes in the Constitution to enable the States to have more powers so as to develop the economic, political and social life of the people of the States; the inclusion of Chandigarh and other Punjabi speaking areas in Punjab and solution of problems of river waters on the basis of accepted principles; to fight against communalism in any form by uniting all the democratic and secular forces and by ensuring the right of religious freedom and worship; to create a scientific outlook among the people on various issues and strengthen the unity of the common Punjabis.

In the economic sphere, for setting up a dry port in Amritsar as well as for starting an international flight from Amritsar to London and to work for establishing a railway line between Ludhiana and Chandigarh and linking it directly with Delhi; for lessening of the burden of taxation on the poorer sections of the people and for levying taxes on the richer sections who are in a position to pay; for removing imbalance in industrial development in the State by setting up heavy industries as well as

more sugar, cloth and yarn factories; for the speedy completion of the Thien Dam and other power projects for making enough power available for industrial and agricultural advancement of the State; for guaranteed supply of power and diesel to industries, agriculture and transport, for provision of cheap credits, supply of raw materials and help in the marketing of the production of small-scale industries; for State trading and foodgrains and other essential commodities and strengthening of the public distribution system to supply essentials at subsidised prices to those with annual income below Rs. 2000.

For the working class, fixing of minimum wages at Rs. 350 per month along with D.A. at Rs. 1.50 per point increase in the price index; recognition of trade unions on the basis of secret ballot along with the right of minority unions to join in negotiations.

For Government employees, full trade union rights and recognition of their democratically elected organisations, withdrawal of Article 3, 17(A)(2) from the Civil Service Rules; removal of anomalies in pay grades within three months; Central pattern of D.A.; bonus to all employees at 8.33 per cent; provision for housing or adequate house rent allowance; services of all ad hoc employees with one year's service to be regularised.

In the sphere of education, free education up to the Secondary standard; reorganisation of education system in a secular and democratic basis; nationalisation of all educational institutions; development of Punjabi language and its use as medium for higher education; recognition of elected students' unions and their participation in the running of educational institutions.

For the youth, voting right at the age of 18; more facilities for vocational and technical training; arrangements for sports and cultural activities in the rural areas; provide adequate employment and unemployment allowance.

For women, social and political equality, equal pay for equal work; maternity benefit and kindergartens for working women's children; for using only women police for arrest and investigations involving women.

For peasants, amendment to land ceiling laws to plug all loopholes and make sufficient surplus lands available for distribution to agricultural workers and landless peasants; seek the distribution of all evacuee and waste lands to Harijans and other abadkars at the rate of five acres per family; remunerative prices for agricultural produce and their purchase by Government agencies at the price fixed; crop insurance for agricultural prices; for overhauling the co-operative credit system and credit from other banking institutions to agricultural workers and small peasants to save them from the clutches of usurers; supply of agricultural inputs; implements and insecticides at cheap rates; for issuing passbooks to all cultivators to enable them to get inputs on credit and protect them from harassment by revenue officials.

For agricultural workers, enactment of legislation to protect their interests and ensure implementation of their wage rates; application of Minimum Wages Act to brick kiln workers; cheap credit for agricultural workers, house-sites and subsidy and credit for construction of houses; no agricultural worker's family to be without a house within the next five years; old age pension to agricultural workers whose income is less than Rs. 1200 a year, at the age of 60 at the rate of Rs. 45 a month; untouchability to be dealt with as a criminal offence and indulging in social boycott of Harijans to be dealt with severely; provision of sufficient grants and interest-free loans for employment-generating schemes for Harijans and other backward classes.

The Manifesto then ends with the following appeal:

Appeal To The People

As has been stated above, these Vidhan Sabha elections are very crucial not only for the people of our State but for the whole country. On the results of these elections depend whether the forces of authoritarianism will have their way to do away with the democratic rights achieved after prolonged struggle by the Indian people and impose one-party dictatorship, or the forces of authoritarianism are checked and the struggle for democracy and progress strengthened. The results of these elections are going to

have far-reaching effects on the body politic of the country—whether in a democratic set-up, the Left and democratic alternative represented by the three State Governments is allowed to develop in competition with the bankrupt policies of bourgeois-landlord Governments or one-party rule is established there also by the undemocratic step of dissolution of these Assemblies. On the result of these elections will depend whether the bankrupt path of development which has led the country to untold miseries, unprecedented price-rise and inflation, growing unemployment and disparities would be allowed to work in the interest of monopolists and landlords or Left and democratic forces are able to provide an alternative showing an alternative path which alone can take the country out of the present economic mess.

The CPI(M) appeals to the workers, agricultural labourers, peasants, employees, students, youth, intellectuals and other toiling people, small traders and small industrialists to rally behind the CPI(M), CPI and the Shiromani Akali Dal alliance to give a crushing defeat to the Congress(I) in the State. It appeals to them to support the candidates of the Janata Party, Congress(U) and Lok Dal where there is no CPI(M), CPI or Akali Dal candidate. Anyone of them who is capable of defeating the Congress(I) should be supported. This will strengthen the struggle against authoritarianism in the State.

The CPI(M) is the revolutionary Party of the working class, dedicated to the cause of the downtrodden and is entering the elections with a view to strengthening the Left and democratic forces inside and outside of the Vidhan Sabha. The CPI(M) represents the best revolutionary traditions of anti-imperialist struggles, of anti-feudal struggles and of struggles of working class and the peasantry and all democratic movements. Its leaders and cadres have a record of untold sufferings in the struggle for a better future to the people of the State and the country. Although its objective is to set up a People's Democratic State which alone can solve the base problems of the people, it is entering the elections with the objective of bringing a change in the correlation of class forces in favour of the working class.

It appeals to the patriotic people of the State to tirelessly work for the candidates of the CPI(M) and support them with votes and money. It has fielded only 13 candidates who include leaders like Pt. Kishori Lal, Comrade-in-arms of Shahid Bhagat Singh, Comrade Dalip Singh Tapiala, Comrade Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri, Comrade Chanan Singh, Dhoot who have a record of serving the people of the State for more than 45 years. Devoted comrades like Master Chand Singh, Darshan Singh Jhabal, Sarwan Singh Cheema, Master Bhagat Ram, Prof. Balwant Singh, Dr. Dev Raj, Daya Singh Ghamnewal, Bibi Shaminder Kaur, daughter of the late Praja Man leader Bhagwan Singh Longowalia, and Bibi Surjit Kumari, a fearless leader of agricultural workers.

The victory of everyone of these comrades is very important for developing the unity of Left and democratic forces in the State. Apart from our candidates, victory of CPI candidates is of utmost importance for strengthening the unity of Left forces and of Akali candidates to defeat the authoritarianism of the Congress(I). The workers and cadres of our Party and the people following us should do their utmost in defeating the Congress(I) in all parts of the State. We are sure that the people of our State will play an important role to give a crushing defeat to the Congress(I) as they did in the June 1977 elections.

Defend Democracy, People's Livelihood*

CPI(M) Polit Bureau's Statement on June 10, 1980

The following is the text of the Press statement issued in New Delhi on June 10 by the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) after its two-day session on June 9 and 10:

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) considers that the electoral victory of the Congress (I) in the Assembly elections in several States constitutes a portentous development spelling danger to popular rights and democracy.

It centralises power in the hands of a power-hungry party which has neither given up its authoritarian ambitions nor made any bones about them.

It is not therefore accidental that important spokesmen of the ruling party have already started talk about changing the Constitution of the country and replacing it by a Presidential one. A conspiracy against the parliamentary form is already afoot and an attempt is likely to be made to get it constitutional sanction, utilising the Congress (I) majorities in Parliament and the State Assemblies. The Law Minister has already expressed the Government's disagreement with the important Supreme Court Judgement that Parliament has no powers to change the basic structure of the Constitution. In the name of giving precedence to Directive Principles over Fundamental Rights, the ruling party is again out to subvert the Constitution. The Congress (I) is bent on retaining power in its hands at all cost.

It will be wrong to conclude that the Congress (I) has secured a popular mandate for its designs of one-party rule. Those who have

voted for the Congress (I) have voted out of quite different reasons like dissatisfaction with the performance of Janata rule and absence of any viable alternative to the Congress (I). Besides, the large number of seats secured by the Congress (I)—two-thirds and three-fourths in some States—are not a measure of its strength and popularity; they are the result of the present electoral system which does not provide for proportional representation. The Congress (I) has hardly secured 50 per cent of the votes polled in any State. It has secured a minority vote and won two-thirds of the seats. Its support is as low as 16 to 23 per cent of the total electorate in various States. Its victory is largely due to the division of the Opposition vote rendered inevitable by the lack of vision and political rectitude on the part of a number of bourgeois-landlord Opposition parties.

If the ruling party considers its victory as a popular mandate for arbitrary one-party rule, it will meet further popular resistance. The people will growingly realise that dictatorial rule is no solution to their socio-economic-political problems.

A number of bourgeois-landlord Opposition parties must bear full responsibility for the victory of the Congress (I). They were too busy with partisan consideration and overlooked the common danger. Their claim to fight authoritarianism and protect democracy lost credibility when they refused to reach electoral understandings with each other and with the Left to prevent the division of vote. The leaderships of these parties with their eyes fixed on ministerial fleshpots exaggerated their strength and forgot the common danger. Some of them surpassed themselves in indulging in anti-Left utterances. They forgot that whatever might be their strength, a Left prop and image was required to bolster their claims and defeat the Indira Congress. If the Congress (U) in Maharashtra had joined hands with the parties of the Left and the Janata, the story in Maharashtra might have been different. If the Congress (U) and Lok Dal had come to an understanding with each other and joined hands with the Left, the Congress (I) would have been routed in Bihar. And if Charan Singh had not acted as if he had a mandate from heaven to defeat the Congress (I), the story in U.P. would also have been different.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 15, 1980.

The CPI(M), knowing the disarray of the bourgeois-landlord parties and their weakened electoral position, made repeated appeals to all of them to come together. It hastened first to bring about the unity of the Left forces, so that with its aid a broader electoral unity could be brought about.

Different Results

The struggle for Left unity and broader resistance has provided results where such resistance could be brought about, giving a rebuff to the Congress (I) and its ambitions of one-party rule. In Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK in alliance with the Left and other parties was able to inflict a crushing defeat on the DMK-Congress (I) alliance—the Congress (I) vote shrinking from 31 per cent in the parliamentary elections to 20.73 per cent in the Assembly elections. The P.B. congratulates the AIADMK, the Left parties and the people of Tamil Nadu on their electoral victory which has given a big set-back to the sponsors of one-party rule.

The Congress (I) escaped defeat in Punjab but could secure only a slender majority because there was a broad front of resistance to the Congress (I) consisting of the Akali Party and the Left parties—the CPI and the CPI(M). This narrow victory of the Congress (I) in Punjab stands sharply in contrast to its large-scale victories in other States. In Bihar, too, despite the division of vote, the Congress (I) has really lost the elections—its declared victory being the result of use of guns and falsification of election results.

It is quite clear that despite the capturing of a large number of seats in several States by the Congress (I), the counteracting forces have already started. Popular disapproval has already expressed itself in the low polling and the smaller share of the Congress (I) even in this low vote.

Learn from the Experience

The P.B. wants to point out that the battle for democracy, the fight against authoritarianism cannot be carried on espousing reactionary causes or rousing communalism and casteism to

secure petty advantages. And this is precisely what some of these Opposition parties did during the election campaign on the Assam issue. Instead of exposing the threat to the integrity and unity of the country, they supported the secessionist movement as a legitimate and democratic movement, surrendering the initiative on national unity to the Congress (I). The massacres of linguistic and religious minorities did not evoke any protest from them. Only the CPI(M) and other Left parties stood solidly by national unity and the defence of minorities. The BJP dominated by RSS-Jana Sangh elements adopted openly communal positions encouraging the driving away of Muslim citizens from Assam.

All this made a present of the minorities to the Indira Congress and they swung in her favour.

The CPI(M) calls on all parties to digest this experience and lessons and prepare themselves for the post-election challenges. The CPI(M) considers that the closer relationship between the Left parties during the elections has strengthened the urge for Left unity which must be developed to bring about greater cohesion among all parties and forces opposed to authoritarianism.

Resist Unitedly

The CPI(M) calls upon all parties to present a solid opposition to all anti-democratic measures of the Congress (I) coming before the Parliament and the Assemblies. The united voice of the people must ring from the parliamentary forum with greater decisiveness, and conviction in the cause of defending democracy and people's livelihood. The ruling party has already started its offensive against the people and their livelihood. In the three States of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka they have introduced the Essential Service Ordinances banning working class strikes in so-called essential services. This is a resurrection of the legislation of the Emergency days. On the eve of the Parliament session, the Government has increased the prices of fertilisers, of diesel oil, of petroleum products and also proposes to raise railway passenger fares. With the increase in the price of diesel oil, bus transport charges are bound to be increased. The increase in the prices of fertilisers will fall heavily on the

peasantry. These must be unitedly resisted on the floor of Parliament and the Assemblies. The Left parties must stand united and firmly take the initiative to bring about common opposition in Parliament.

The capitalist world is already in the midst of deep recession. The Indian economy already in crisis will be facing more critical days in the coming months. The economy is already on the point of break-down and nothing seems to work. The inflation rate is already exceeding 20 per cent, and there is absolutely no chance of its coming down. Stagnation and inflation—the two companions of economic crisis—will continue to be with us. The stability promised by Indira Gandhi is a chimera. The country will be facing all-round economic instability and the mass of people will soon be made the scapegoat of the crisis. The new budget will throw an enormous burden on the people through fleecing taxation, high prices, transport and electricity charges and what not.

The defence of democracy and people's livelihood can no longer be confined to the precincts of the Assemblies and Parliament House. The effects of high prices, of taxation, unemployment, closures will have to be defended through popular movements. The full strength of the mass organisations of all parties is required to defend people's livelihood. The CPI(M) calls upon all parties loyal to the people and democracy to join together in this battle. The trade union, kisan, student, mahila organisations of all parties can play a role in this.

Situation in Assam

The developments in the North-Eastern region where divisive and secessionist movements in Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur, have gathered momentum exploiting some of the genuine grievances of the people of these States, are disturbing. The anti-democratic policies pursued by the ruling bourgeois-landlord parties during the last thirty-three years since Independence have had a big role in providing grist to the mill of the chauvinist and secessionist forces in the region. These movements, directed as they are against the linguistic and

religious minorities, are posing a grave threat to the integrity of the country and unity of its people. It should not be forgotten that imperialist agencies are playing their dirty game of destabilisation in this region.

The struggle for safeguarding the integrity of the country and unity of its people demands immediate action by all parties and forces which stand for it. The Polit Bureau calls on the leaders of the agitation in Assam to call off their harmful movement so as to pave the way for the withdrawal of the armed forces and a political solution of the problem. The Polit Bureau deplors the role of the BJP in giving all encouragement to the secessionist agitation. It calls on the leaders of the Janata, Lok Dal and others to rise above narrow partisan considerations and take a firm stand against the secessionist forces.

Developments in Tripura

The Polit Bureau extends its solidarity to the Left Front Government of Tripura which is facing a very difficult situation. Rabid chauvinist forces like the Amra Bangalees and the extremist sections of the Tripura Upajati Samiti have given a violent turn to events there. The Congress (I) in Tripura instead of taking firm positions against the chauvinists of all hues, is encouraging certain sections among them and is exploiting the situation to demand the dismissal of the Left Front Government.

Democratic forces in the country cannot leave it entirely to the Congress (I) Government to protect the integrity of the country. They have to take the initiative all over the country to ensure the protection of the minorities, their citizenship rights, and defeat the chauvinist and secessionist forces.

Defend Left-led Governments

The Congress (I) electoral victory constitutes further threats to the non-Congress (I) State Governments. In dissolving the nine State Assemblies and during the election campaign, Indira Gandhi had again and again declared that her party which rules at the Centre should also be in office in the States. This is an open attack on the federal character of our Constitution, it portends an

attack on even the limited powers that the States enjoy today. Above all, it is a threat to the existence of the non-Congress (I) Governments—the Left-led Governments in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura and the AIADMK Government of Tamil Nadu. The pro-people policies of the Left-led Governments vary basically from the pro-vested interests policies of the Congress (I), and the policies of the Left-led Governments have begun to attract people all over the country and the concept of a Left and democratic alternative to the bourgeois-landlord regime is gaining strength in the people. There are all vicinations of a Congress (I) offensive to topple these Governments, to concentrate all powers in its hands.

The Left-led State Governments are important out-posts of anti-authoritarian victory, they constitute a tremendous force helping the struggles of the people in all spheres. The Congress (I) designs against these Governments have to be frustrated by mobilising people all over the country through the popularisation of the achievements and alternate policies of these Governments in contrast to the policies of bourgeois-landlord State Governments.

The CPI(M) especially calls upon all Left parties to realise that the weakness of the Left in these States is proving extremely dangerous and united efforts must be made to overcome it.

Above all, the Polit Bureau wants to impress upon all the cadres of the CPI(M) the grave responsibilities that rest on the Party, the arduous role it had to play in the coming period. It is the task of the Party to consolidate the unity that has been achieved of the Left forces, to build united movements to safeguard the integrity and unity of the country, to defend States' autonomy and the Left-led Governments from all conspiracies, to defend people's livelihood from the ferocious onslaught that are in the offing. This requires that all weaknesses of the Party be overcome as quickly as possible and a strong Party be built. Without the direct activity of the Party among the masses there is no chance of a breakthrough. The mass organisations also have to overcome their weaknesses quickly to play an effective role in the coming days.

Let all hands work for defending democracy and for protecting people's livelihood. And above all let democratic forces all over the country frustrate the Congress (I) designs to set up a dictatorial regime.

On Tripura Developments*

Statement Dated June 11, 1980 Issued by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M)

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) considers the sudden developments in Tripura as a conspiracy of opportunist and anti-national elements to unleash the forces of disintegration and as a part of a foul design to bring down the Left Front Ministry.

In the recent riots engineered by the Tripura Upajati Samiti and the reactionary Amra Bangalee who are opposed to progressive measures to ameliorate the conditions of the tribal people, three hundred persons have been killed, hundreds have been injured and thousands have been rendered homeless because of burning of houses and whole localities.

The responsibility for this mass murder of innocents must be fully shouldered by the Upajati Samiti and the chauvinist Amra Bangalee and Anand Margis.

The Tripura Government had passed legislation for the formation of a separate tribal district council with autonomous powers. It had also passed legislation and restored the land of large number of tribal peasants evicted during the last two decades. The CPI(M) had always had the support of the large mass of tribal peasants and this has been consolidated.

The leaders of the Upajati Samiti, claiming to represent the entire tribal people but in reality playing a reactionary political role and placing its services at the disposal of the ruling classes, found that its hold was rapidly decreasing and was out for mischief. Influenced by the agitation against foreigners in Assam and elsewhere it took up the same slogan and sought to set tribals against non-tribals.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 15, 1980.

From the other side, the Anand Margis and Amra Bangalees, sworn opponents of the Left Ministry were rousing Bengali chauvinism against the Ministry for its legislation for the Tribal District Autonomous Council, elections for which are to be held in the next few days. The most foul part of the conspiracy is that the Congress(I) in Tripura, together with parties like Janata in the State is openly fanning the fratricidal conflict and conspiring to bring down the Left Front Ministry. Having created a law and order problem it has asked the Centre to dismiss the Ministry and put the State under Presidential rule. The P.B. warns all democratic forces against the heinous conspiracy and calls on them to unitedly frustrate it.

The Central Government and the Congress(I) will not be able to solve the Assam problem and save the integrity of the country if their party elsewhere champions a similar secessionist movement and in the bargain conspires to attack democracy. Minimum honesty and loyalty to national integrity require that the Congress(I) should rebuke its local unit for its anti-national role and demand that it stop creating a law and order problem for the State. The Congress(I) should ask its Tripura unit to give up this path and help the Left Front Ministry which is exerting all efforts to restore normalcy in the State.

The Polit Bureau extends its heart-felt sympathy to the large number of people who have been victims of the attacks organised by the chauvinist forces.

The Polit Bureau expresses its sense of appreciation of the way in which the Left Front Ministry and ranks of the Party have withstood the attack of reactionaries from all sides—some of them openly financed by foreign agencies. The valiant fight which they are putting up for defending the integrity of the country, the unity of all sections of the Tripuri people, should earn them the praise of all democratic forces. The Polit Bureau expresses its full solidarity with them. The P.B. calls upon all Left and democratic forces to stand behind the Tripura Ministry and frustrate the designs of reactionaries against it.

Observance of National Integration Day*

Decision Taken by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M) in a Resolution Adopted in its Meeting Held on June 9-10, 1980

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in its meeting held on June 9 and 10, 1980, has adopted resolutions on Assam and Tripura. Earlier also a lot of material had appeared in *People's Democracy* and *Lok Lahar* about the situation in Assam. It will be clear from all this material that the situation is very serious, and the secessionist movements in the North-Eastern region are out to disrupt the unity of the country. This is disruptive of the democratic movement in the region as well as in the country as a whole.

There is no doubt that the imperialists also are behind these elements. This danger can be fought only if all the forces who stand for national unity and integration are mobilised to oppose these disruptive movements. Perhaps there is not sufficient awareness about this danger in many parts of the country. Therefore we ask all Party units to observe a day before June 25. The exact date can be decided by the States themselves as a day of national integration against disruptive movements in Assam, Tripura and elsewhere by holding hall meetings, public meetings and using other means to explain our Party's point of view and rally democratic forces throughout the country.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 22, 1980.

Polit Bureau on Assam*

**Statement Dated June 11, 1980
Issued in New Delhi**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement on Assam on June 11, 1980 in New Delhi:

The CPI(M) has fully supported the demand for an end to foreign influx into Assam, and has been working all the time for a peaceful and just solution of this problem. But the hope of an early solution has been belied. The P.B. of the CPI(M) calls upon all democratic parties and forces, all patriotic people to realise that in Assam the country today faces a serious threat of disintegration. The agitation in Assam is no longer a just movement for saving the integrity of the country from foreign influx. Notwithstanding the desire of the masses passionately supporting this demand, the foreigner issue is now being used by the most disruptive forces as an excuse to advance secessionist plans of creating destabilisation, supported from behind by India's traditional enemies, the imperialists, whose Press and Radio are lending full support to the anti-national efforts from abroad.

The P.B. notes with concern that though the leadership of the agitation could not carry out their threat to take the law into their own hands and identify and deport foreigners, numbering four and a half million according to them, yet, hundreds of Indian citizens have been ousted from their homes, their properties looted or destroyed, reducing them to destitutes. Thousands have, as a result, crossed into West Bengal already.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 22, 1980.

The most perturbing aspect of the situation in Assam is the complete identification of a substantial part of the Assam administration, the police and administrative services included, with the current agitation, of which they have become outposts in fact. Though there are officers loyal to the Constitution and to their duty, the administration, by and large, encourages activities directed against the country's integrity and unity. The Governor of Assam, an old ICS official, has done nothing effective to bring the anti-national forces under control, but seems to have done everything to encourage them. He must be deemed to be the most guilty party in the Assam administration.

The movement is neither a democratic movement to assert popular rights nor is it waging a struggle against unemployment, poverty and neglect by the Centre. It is a movement to separate Assam from the rest of India, for which the imperialist agencies have been laying plans for a long time. The anti-minority and anti-outsider frenzy is roused to conceal this real direction as well as to create a proper psychological basis for a secessionist movement in Assam.

That is why the movement has directed its attack against religious and linguistic minorities, seeking to uproot them from the soil of Assam. The minorities are fired upon by the Assam police—it seems more than a hundred were killed in police firing on May 26 when the minorities first organised their demonstration. And, besides, mass murders of minorities have been committed by the influenced followers of the movement. Hundreds of Muslim and Hindu Bengalis and others have been massacred during the last few months. Thousands have been forced into refugee camps living in terror.

The CPI(M) holds the Congress Government and its past policies responsible for this massacre and challenge to Indian unity, for this distortion of the just discontent of the people of Assam into anti-national channels. The concentration of power at the Centre, the reduction of the States to the status of feudatories of the Centre, the opposition to treat the States as constituents of equal status and the evils of the capitalist path have all led to this challenge of disruption.

The Central Government, though it realises the serious character of the situation, is yet unable to move quickly and save the minorities from further attacks.

Notwithstanding its assumed concern for the minorities, it has failed to protect them, for the simple reason that it still relies on the local administration which by and large is committed to drive out the minorities.

Not all its announced measures of declaration of Public Disturbances Order Act, deployment of CRP, flag march of the army units have added an iota of protection to the minorities and created a sense of national solidarity among the Assamese people.

The CRP and the army units have to act under the civil authorities. Local high-ranking administrative officers do not allow the Central forces to act in defence of minorities. Most of them strongly support the movement.

The CPI(M) firmly holds that while the rights of Indian citizenship have to be ensured at all costs and linguistic and religious minorities have to be guaranteed protection by the full use of Central authority, simultaneously a political solution has to be found to settle the question of foreign nationals. Such a measure as the Preventive Detention Act and others only exacerbate the situation setting dangerous precedents to attack individual liberties.

The CPI(M) is of the considered opinion that the Centre has failed to discharge its task of defending the rights of Indian citizens and the minorities. It will be ruinous for the country and the betrayal of national interests if the Central Government compromises on these issues in the name of a political solution.

The CPI(M) strongly deplores the attitude of a number of political parties who, instead of warning the people against the danger of disintegration, are supporting the movement. They are callous to the atrocities on linguistic and religious minorities and let down the banner of national unity. It calls upon all these parties not to be a plaything of the imperialist forces who are determined on the vivisection of the country.

The CPI(M) welcomes the awakening among the minorities of Assam—religious and linguistic, Hindus and Muslims, Bengalis,

Biharis, Nepalis and Rajasthanis. They have risen to defend their Indian citizenship and their fundamental rights. This democratic movement for preserving national unity is described unscrupulously by the big bourgeois Press as a communal movement. This is the stand of the secessionists which the Press is systematically spreading.

Besides, there is a new awakening among the plains tribes who form an important minority. All these years this section of the minority was denied its due share in education and the administration by the chauvinists and now they are threatened with further curtailment of their rights.

The CPI(M) demands full protection to the minorities. So far, the failure of the Government to carry out this essential task of civil Government has been singular.

The Polit Bureau sends its greetings to the Party comrades who have been valiantly fighting the anti-national movement. They had to face murderous assaults, attacks, beatings and public humiliation. They together with the leaders of trade unions of the CITU, of the SFI and kisan organisations have earned the congratulations of all democratic forces all over the country.

The CPI(M) conveys its fraternal greetings to the leaders and cadres of the Left parties of Assam, and to groups and individuals who, standing together with our Party, have defended the cause of national unity and faced the assaults of secessionists. The CPI(M) considers the assault on Prof. Hiren Gohain, who continued to hold aloft the banner of national unity, at the hands of the agitators a serious threat to democracy and the unity of the country.

The CPI(M) pays its homage to the memory of those who fell victims to the gangster attacks organised by the secessionists.

The CPI(M) calls upon all democratic forces and parties in the country to raise their voice against the forces of disintegration and support a solution of the problem on the following basis:

(1) The secessionist agitation should be withdrawn and following it all repressive administrative measures should be withdrawn; (2) steps should be taken to instil confidence in the minorities by revamping the local administration; (3) the Centre

should announce firm measures to stop all further foreign immigration across the border; (4) discussions should be started with 1971 as the cut-off year; (5) an impartial machinery having the confidence of the minorities to detect foreigners; (6) a joint campaign by all democratic parties to explain to the people of Assam the vital issues at stake and win them over to protect national unity; (7) an agreed programme for the economic development of Assam to overcome problems of unemployment, landlessness and poverty.

Election Reviews—1980*

CPI(M) Central Committee's Review of Lok Sabha Elections of January 1980 and State Assemblies Elections of May 1980

Introduction

Printed in this booklet are the reviews made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) of the Lok Sabha election of January 1980, and also the elections to nine State Assemblies in May 1980. They deal with the tactics followed by the Party during the July 1979 crisis which led to the resignation of the Morarji Desai Government and the break-up of the Janata Party, and the formation and resignation of the Coalition Government comprising the Janata(S), the Congress(S), AIADMK and Akali Dal. They also deal with the electoral tactics of the Party in both the Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections. The two documents analyse the election results in detail, how they came about and what they portend.

The Central Committee had finalised and adopted the two reviews in July 1980 itself. Some differences of opinion had arisen regarding the tactics the Party had followed in the situation that was developing after the Janata began to break up. The Central Committee had come to the conclusion that the tactics pursued by the Party were correct.

What were these differences? Whether it was correct to have come out with the statement supporting the no-confidence motion against the Morarji Desai Government, whether it was correct to have offered support to Charan Singh's Coalition Government when it was to face a confidence motion, whether in all this there was any overemphasising of the communal danger from the RSS to the detriment of the struggle against the authoritarian forces?

*Published as a Booklet in June 1981.

The Central Committee had come to the conclusion that the stand of supporting the no-confidence motion against the Janata Government headed by Morarji Desai was correct.

The Janata Party which rightly began the struggle to dismantle the Emergency regime set up by the Indira Gandhi Government, following its victory in the March 1977 Lok Sabha election and its subsequent victory in the elections to the State Assemblies, had slowly and steadily lost its momentum and slackened the struggle against the authoritarian platform represented by Indira Gandhi.

Under pressure of the ever-deepening economic crisis and growing mass discontent, and also due to the very class nature of the Janata Party and its leadership, most of the Janata-run State Governments as well as the Central Government had begun to rapidly acquire the traits of authoritarianism. The banning of strikes, the repression on the people, the enactment of preventive detention laws, and increasing attacks on minorities and the oppressed Scheduled Castes and Tribes had become a normal practice with the Janata-ruled State Governments. The promulgation of anti-working class Ordinances by the Central Government, its announced proposal to enact a preventive detention law and the brutal manner in which it suppressed the legitimate nationwide agitation of the police, CRP, CISF, etc., left no doubt as to the authoritarian trends developing in the Janata leaders.

There was also the disgusting spectacle of senior leaders and Ministers of the Janata Party like Morarji Desai, Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram hurling charges of corruption against each other and indulging in constant factional in-fighting.

The RSS-Jana Sangh combine, when it found itself to be the single biggest organised detachment in the ruling Janata Party, had begun to throw about its weight for self-aggrandisement at the expense of the other constituents of the Janata Party. The RSS-Jana Sangh had succeeded in securing a firm hold over the dominant leadership of Janata Party organisation. This RSS-Jana Sangh dominance in the Janata Party, the known involvement of RSS leaders in the communal riots as in Aligarh and Jamshedpur, the growing atrocities on the Harijans, were all alienating the

minorities and weaker sections from the Janata Party, and throwing them back into the fold of Indira Gandhi's influence, seriously undermining the struggle against authoritarianism. The issue of dual membership—simultaneous membership of the RSS and the Janata Party—was raised by other constituents like the BLD, Socialist, a section of the CFD, etc.

Thus the Janata Party, its political character, role and complexion had begun rapidly changing in the twentyseven months it was in power and the party itself began to break up as seen at the time of the no-confidence motion. Except a section of the former Praja Socialists, the Congress(O) and the RSS-Jana Sangh, all the other constituents walked out of the party.

Not to have supported the no-confidence motion, or remaining neutral on it, would have been wrong; and continuance of support to the Morarji Desai Government would have meant, objectively, handing over effective power to the RSS-Jana Sangh combine. The Central Committee reaffirmed the correctness of the Party supporting the no-confidence motion.

The political developments during the July 1979 crisis and following it, made it clear that the alignment of political forces that took place on the eve of the March 1977 Lok Sabha election and afterwards was undergoing rapid shifts, and the Party had to reorientate its tactics in working for a new realignment of political forces, a realignment that would facilitate the struggle against the authoritarian forces and also help the process of uniting the Left and democratic forces. Any attempt on the part of the Party to save the Janata Government of Morarji Desai as it stood at the time of the July crisis, would have compromised the Party's position and proved counter-productive.

When the leaderships of both the Charan Singh-Chavan alliance and the Jagjivan Ram led Janata began making efforts to strike a deal with the Congress(I), the Central Committee stated its position clearly regarding the formation of a new Government: "The CPI(M) would offer its cooperation to political parties which are trying to form a Government which is not dependent for its existence on either the Congress(I) or the Jana Sangh-RSS combination." Further, if such a Government fails to materialise, "the CPI(M) thinks that an appeal to the people is absolutely necessary".

Consistent with this stand, the CPI(M) did not lend the names of its Lok Sabha members when Charan Singh submitted to the President the list of his supporters including the Congress(I). The Polit Bureau also issued a statement saying, ".....it seems that with the process of counting of heads in full swing, principles were being jettisoned for the sake of numbers and certain Janata(S) leaders made a beeline for Congress(I) support". "With these developments it is clear that the Janata(S) Government, if it is formed, will be heavily dependent on the Congress(I) for its survival and existence. The CPI(M) cannot be a party to support a Ministry which comes to depend upon the Congress(I) for its survival." At the same time, the Polit Bureau expressed "its firm opposition to the formation of a Ministry dependent on the Jana Sangh-RSS combination".

But the situation was rapidly changing. The Congress(I) mounted pressure on the Charan Singh-Chavan alliance demanding concessions including the abolition of Special Courts; for its own partisan-ends, the Congress(I) began allying with the RSS-Jana Sangh-dominated Janata in Bihar and Haryana.

While this was taking place on the one side, on the other, Janata (S) began adopting a stiffer attitude to the Congress(I). The inclusion in the Charan Singh Cabinet of a number of Congress(S) leaders who had given evidence against Indira Gandhi before the Shah Commission, the flat refusal to concede the demand for withdrawal of cases and abolition of Special Courts, Charan Singh's open statement that he would not meet Indira Gandhi and have discussions with her till the vote of confidence was over, and so on, were straining relations between the leaders of Janata (S) and the Congress(I). Charan Singh also issued statements to the effect that he was prepared to face a mid-term poll rather than give in to the pressure of the Congress(I). One trend in the Janata(S) was for closer relations with the Congress(I), while another stronger trend was asserting itself to lessen dependence on the Congress(I) and to compensate the loss of Congress(I) support by mobilising the support of the Left, democratic and regional parties and groups.

It was this situation that the Party had to assess to decide on its attitude to the issue of confidence vote in the Charan Singh Government. The question was: what would help the strengthening of the struggle against the authoritarian forces of the Congress(I) and the compromising wing in the Janata(S)?

The Polit Bureau and the Central Committee came to the conclusion that lending support to the specific issue of confidence vote, without committing the Party to overall support to the new Government, would help "the Ministry to disentangle itself from dependence on the Congress(I) and enable it to struggle both against authoritarianism and communalism". The Party's support to the vote of confidence would strengthen the hands of the anti-authoritarian elements and weaken the compromising forces who were for greater cooperation with the Congress(I).

Events that followed proved the correctness of the line adopted by the Party. The conflicts and contradictions between the Congress (I) authoritarian forces on the one hand and the forces represented by the Janata(S)-Congress(S) alliance proved stronger and Charan Singh's Cabinet preferred to submit its resignation rather than be blackmailed by the Congress(I).

The Central Committee's election review documents reaffirm the correctness to the tactics adopted by the Party during the July crisis and subsequent days. At every stage of the crisis, the CPI(M)'s tactics were aimed at strengthening the forces that stood against Congress (I) authoritarianism. At the same time, these tactics did not leave any scope for the forces of communalism to take advantage of the situation. Whatever differences had arisen over some of these questions were resolved, as can be seen from the fact that the Central Committee finalised and adopted these review documents and unitedly worked out all its tactics subsequently.

It is necessary for the entire Party to study and assimilate these correct tactics followed by the Party in a period full of twists and turns. The reviews made by the Central Committee of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies elections and published here are intended precisely for this.

REVIEW REPORT OF JANUARY 1980
LOK SABHA ELECTION

The parliamentary election of January 1980 produced a complete change in the political situation with the authoritarian party once again installed in the Central Government. Power has again passed, through a popular mandate, to the party which had clamped the Emergency on the country, dispensed with democratic norms and announced its plan to change the Constitution to suit its purpose of one-party rule.

The authoritarian party lost no time in increasing its stranglehold over the administration and the governmental apparatus. It had no compunction to disband the Governments of nine States which were ruled by opposition parties. For the time being, it has spared the three Left-led Governments but its intentions are quite clear.

This swing of the people towards the authoritarian party which was routed in the Hindi area only two and a half years ago, constitutes an amazing and ominous development. It has overwhelmed many, making them lose sight of the deep social forces at work. At the same time, the important and reactionary character of the change cannot be minimised. Our Party was concentrating its effort precisely to avoid this danger, to prevent its emergence by working for the implementation of certain policies. This objective of the Party could not be realised. The trek towards the Indira Congress of people, alienated by the Janata could not be stopped. The election came in the midst of this process and produced the inevitable result.

The results of the elections are striking. They revealed the great gulf that was stretching between the Janata and the people, thanks to its performance of the last two and a half years; and also the weakness of the opposition due to division of votes. The distribution of votes in the last election showed the shift in voting.

Party	Year	Votes won	Percentage of votes
Congress (I)	1980	83.5 million	42.56
Congress (United)	1977	64.7 million	34.35
Janata	1980	37.2 million	18.97
Janata	1977	81.1 million	43.06
Lok Dal	1980	18.5 million	9.45

The Janata vote fell by more than 50 per cent, a fall of more than four crores of votes. The combined vote of the Janata and Lok Dal fell short of their votes in 1977 by more than two crores. Their percentage fell from 43.06 to 28. Such was the big landslide in the vote experienced by the Janata Party and its former constituents.

According to a UNI publication, the tally of the Congress(I) is higher than the combined vote of the Janata (18.97%), the Lok Dal (9.45%) and the Congress(U) (5.3%). Over 70% of the new Lok Sabha members who have won with majority votes belong to the Congress(I). As many as 286 of the 525 members won on majority votes. Of these 203 were from the Congress(I). The DMK sent all its members on majority of votes, their winning percentage averaging 55.1. Next came the CPI(M), 28 out of its 35 members having been elected on majority votes. The average poll percentage in their case worked out to 54.37. Twentyfour of the 31 Janata members and 36 of the 41 Lok Dal members were elected on minority votes. The analysis shows that the overall average poll for elected members is 50.67%, for the 351 members of the Congress(I), the figure is 51.78%.

The Congress(I) increased its share of the vote by an average of 11.28% in all but two of the major States compared with the 1977 elections, mainly at the expense of the Janata Party and the Lok Dal. The rout of the Janata Party was so complete that it had no representative from 14 States and 8 Union Territories.

The Congress(I) won more than 50% of the votes cast in Karnataka (56.25%); Andhra Pradesh (56.21%); Orissa (55.65%); Gujarat (54.84%); Maharashtra (53.30%); Punjab (52.46%) and Delhi (50.40%).

The States where it did not receive the majority of the votes are Madhya Pradesh (46.52%); Rajasthan (42.66%); West Bengal (36.47%); Bihar (36.41%); Uttar Pradesh (35.90%); Tamil Nadu (31.62%); Haryana (29.29%) and Kerala (26.30%).

Interestingly the Congress(I) had a better percentage of votes in West Bengal where it got only four seats than in Bihar with 30 seats, U.P. with 35 seats, Tamil Nadu with 20 seats, Haryana with five seats and Kerala with five seats.

Erosion of Janata Vote

The erosion in the Janata vote had started within months of the 1977 parliamentary elections and it was seen in the Assembly elections of that year.

In the Assembly elections of seven States in June 1977, the Janata Party got two-thirds of the seats. However, there was a difference in the quantum of popular support as compared with the March Lok Sabha poll.

In all these States, the Janata Party secured less votes in the Assembly poll than in the parliamentary poll. Although the party had won two-thirds of the seats in each State, it could win 50% of the votes only in one State, i.e., Rajasthan, whereas it had won over 50% of the votes in all the seven States in the Lok Sabha election. In contrast, the Congress had started improving its popular support in four States: Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. While its vote was slightly lower in Haryana, there was a substantial fall in its support in Himachal Pradesh and Orissa.

States	Lok Sabha Poll Votes		Assembly Poll Votes	
	Percentage		Percentage	
	Janata	Congress (I)	Janata	Congress (I)
Bihar	65.01	22.90	43.14	23.83
Haryana	50.35	17.95	46.70	17.15
Himachal Pradesh	53.37	38.30	49.01	27.74
Madhya Pradesh	57.95	32.50	47.28	35.88
Orissa	51.77	38.18	49.24	31.01
Rajasthan	65.21	30.56	50.69	31.49
Uttar Pradesh	68.03	25.04	48.35	32.27

In Punjab, the Akali Dal was an ally of the Janata Party and the CPI(M) in the Lok Sabha poll. The combine got 49% of the votes in the Assembly elections whereas it had obtained 59% of the votes in the Lok Sabha poll, the Akali Dal share being 31% in the Assembly poll compared to 41.5% in the Lok Sabha poll. The Janata Party's share was 15% in the Assembly poll compared to 12.8% in the Lok Sabha poll and the CPI(M)'s was 3.5% which was 1.5 less than the March 1977 poll.

It will be seen that the Janata Party and allies started losing their influence from June 1977 onwards. The fall in the Janata Party's vote did not always go to the Congress(I) in the June elections. The electorate was moving away from the Janata, but all those who were moving away did not plump for the Congress (I). The process was to be completed in the 1980 parliamentary elections with the Janata rapidly losing its image and the Congress (I) improving its position among the people in a big way.

Defections, Crossing Over, Disintegration

The process of Congress(I) consolidation was preceded by the process of disintegration of the bourgeois-landlord parties through splits, defections and crossing-overs. By January 1978, the Congress party split and the Indira Gandhi faction came to be known as the Congress(I). The Indira Congress made a far better showing in the Assembly elections in February 1977 and in a number of by-elections than the other Congress. Indira Gandhi's victory at Chickmagalur boosted the prestige of the organisation. At this stage, large numbers of Congressmen walked over to the Congress(I).

But then a reverse process started for some time. Devraj Urs, the Karnataka Chief Minister, fell out with Indira Gandhi, joined the Congress and gave it a big boost. A number of Congress(I) members of the Lok Sabha went over to the Swaran Singh Congress, Congress(S), raising its strength to 76 and reducing the Congress(I) to 70. The Congress(S) was recognised as the official opposition and its leader Y.B. Chavan as the leader of the opposition.

On January 1 and 2, 1978, a convention of Congressmen was organised under the Presidentship of Indira Gandhi. Only a minority of the 657 AICC members attended it. Indira Gandhi, however, claimed that the majority of the AICC members were present and organised a split declaring her faction as the real Congress. The February elections in five States showed that Mrs. Gandhi had bigger pull with the masses in the Southern States. She won absolute majorities in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. In Maharashtra she won a sizable number of seats. The Congress(S) demonstrated its strength in Maharashtra and Mrs. Gandhi had to accept a Congress(S) leader as the Chief Minister in a Coalition Ministry.

This show of strength led to crossing over, several Congress members joining the Congress(I) party in Parliament. The Congress(I) became the second biggest party in the Rajya Sabha with 61 members whereas the Congress had a strength of 72 members in the Lok Sabha. On March 9, the Congress(I) won recognition as a political party in the Lok Sabha which meant it had a strength of more than 50 members. The Congress(I) was soon recognised as the main opposition party in the Lok Sabha, its membership having gone up to 71 as against 68 of the Congress. The process of crossing over had brought about the change.

But simultaneously the crisis inside the Congress(I) was coming to ahead. It burst out within ten days of the Congress(I) being recognised as the main opposition party in the Lok Sabha. On April 21, Devraj Urs raised the issue of Sanjay Gandhi's involvement in politics at the AICC meeting in New Delhi. This led to confrontation between Indira Gandhi and Devraj Urs, and the latter was expelled on June 24 for six years. This, for the time being, led to another switch-over and by July the Congress (I) ceased to be the main recognised opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Congress taking its place.

The Congress(I) was experiencing continuous crises and defections. If it could still survive and fight back, it was because the bourgeois opposition parties were also affected by crisis and opportunism. Indira Gandhi used this situation to her advantage. She was in need of allies and she won them over from different quarters. She could do so because she continued to retain substantial support among the people. Though between 1977 and 1980, in some States her vote went down, still taking the country as a whole, she had improved her electoral appeal. Before going in for the 1980 elections, she won over Bahuguna along with the Imam of Delhi's Juma Masjid in her support. She split away Brahmananda Reddy, she won over a major part of the Maharashtra Congress to her side and was able to isolate Devraj Urs in Karnataka. She broke the Congress-Lok Dal bloc in the election with ease so that its appeal in the election was minimum.

During the months that intervened between the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and the elections, the Congress party continued to suffer further defections.

Dissensions in Janata on Question of RSS

The ruling party was plagued with dissensions from the beginning as it was really a conglomeration of different groups who had not ceased their rivalries. After overcoming their differences over the choice of the Prime Minister, the Janata leaders got divided over selection of candidates for the State Assemblies. The formation of Ministries where the Janata had secured majorities sharpened the differences. Working together, the BLD and Jana Sangh groups shared the Chief Ministerships in six States. In U.P., Bihar and Haryana the Chief Ministers belonged to the BLD and in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh they belonged to the Jana Sangh.

It was in the period following the formation of the Janata Ministries in the States that the question of association between the Janata Party and the RSS was raised for the first time. One of the General Secretaries of the Janata Party called for an enquiry into the nature of the relationship between the Janata Party and the RSS.

On September 18-19, 1977, Morarji Desai advised Ram Naresh Yadav, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, to throw out Janata legislators who indulged in indiscipline.

By the end of 1977, several Janata-ruled States were showing signs of dissidence. In U.P., about 200 members of the State Assembly belonging to the Janata signed a memorandum demanding the removal of Chief Minister Ram Naresh Yadav. These mostly belonged to the former Jana Sangh group. In Bihar, Chief Minister Karpooori Thakur was faced with a revolt from his party members, i.e., those belonging to the Jana Sangh group and some others (caste, etc.). In Haryana, Devi Lal was having a confrontation with Socialist Labour Minister Mrs. Sushma Swaraj. In Madhya Pradesh, the Chief Minister who belonged to the Jana Sangh was having a tussle with the former Socialists in his Party.

The elections to the State Assemblies in February 1978, in which the Congress (I) scored a thumping victory in the South, exacerbated the divisions and factional struggles inside the Janata.

Raj Narain accused Chandra Sekhar of failure to organise the party and of mismanaging the elections. Chandra Sekhar blamed reactionary elements inside the organisation for the party's poor

performance in the elections. On March 18, 1978, Jagjivan Ram attacked Charan Singh and cited the U.P. riots as the chief cause of the alienation of the Muslim masses from the party. Charan Singh replied to Jagjivan Ram seeking to demolish his arguments.

Ministerial crises broke out in U.P., Bihar, Haryana, all BLD-ruled States. Charan Singh who was then the Home Minister resigned from the party's national executive alleging that the leadership was encouraging the dissidence in the States ruled by his faction.

The Parliamentary Board asked the Haryana and Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers to obtain votes of confidence. In Haryana, Devi Lal won a confidence vote on May 18 frustrating the conspiracies of the Jana Sangh and its allies. Ram Naresh Yadav also was given a massive vote by the U.P. Legislature Party on June 4—another defeat for the Jana Sangh combine.

Charan Singh denounced his central colleagues as a bunch of impotent people, and Desai demanded his resignation as well as the resignation of Raj Narain.

On July 4, the Parliamentary Board asked Chief Minister Devi Lal of Haryana to resign and directed the State Legislature Party to elect a new leader. This decision followed Devi Lal's statement accusing the central leaders of "hatching a conspiracy to oust Charan Singh and Raj Narain".

The Jana Sangh faction played its cards cleverly, now supporting Morarji Desai against Charan Singh, now appealing for an understanding and playing a mediatory role. It appeared that the conflict was between Charan Singh and Morarji Desai with the Jana Sangh on the waiting lines. But the former BLD had started realising that the real conflict was between itself and the ambitious Jana Sangh group.

Raj Narain started vehement attacks on the RSS-Jana Sangh combination and justifiably charged the RSS with engineering the communal riots in Aligarh. The Janata Party leadership blatantly screened the RSS role in the riots and gave it a good conduct certificate. Once again the RSS leaders were involved in the communal riots in Jamshedpur and the Janata Party screened their misdeeds. Now the die was cast. The question of dual membership

came up again and again and Morarji Desai, intent on retaining the support of the RSS, sabotaged a decision on the issue.

Ram Naresh Yadav, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, dropped two Cabinet Ministers belonging to the Jana Sangh group from his Cabinet on January 25, 1979. The Central Parliamentary Board directed Yadav to seek a vote of confidence from the State Legislature Party. Yadav lost the vote and resigned.

Charan Singh openly attacked the Jana Sangh for these manoeuvres and conspiracies. He said that it was the Jana Sangh which had already started the game of no-confidence motion in States where the Chief Ministers were not its nominees. It never talked about destabilising the Chief Ministers in States ruled by it.

Destabilisation Game

On April 7, the Central Parliamentary Board of the Janata Party directed the Chief Ministers of Bihar, Orissa and Himachal Pradesh to seek a fresh vote of confidence. The same meeting also decided that the separate front organisations of youth, labour, women and farmers owing allegiance to various constituents of the Janata Party should be integrated into a single unit. Expressive of the solid alliance between Morarji Desai, Jagjivan Ram and the Jana Sangh-RSS was the fact that the decision regarding the front organisations was not to apply to the RSS which was described by Ramakrishna Hegde, one of the party secretaries, as a cultural organisation. On the same day, i.e., April 7, Jagjivan Ram in a press interview stated that the RSS bogey had been raised to kill the Janata Party. The same Jagjivan Ram denounced the RSS for its communal outlook, its disruptive role and its pro-Indira leanings after the January 1980 elections.

Now the Janata Party was in the midst of a crisis and its leadership was sponsoring the destabilisation game. The State Chief Ministers of Bihar and Himachal Pradesh were directed to seek confidence votes from their respective State Assemblies. The inner-party battle was already carried to the legislatures, to the other parties with whose support the Janata Party leaders in the Centre sought to topple their own Ministries in the States. A regular war now started. Haryana Chief Minister Devi Lal asked the

Jana Sangh Ministers to quit. In Himachal Pradesh, three Ministers opposed to Jana Sangh Chief Minister Shanta Kumar tendered their resignations. This was supposed to be in retaliation for the action of thirteen Ministers of Bihar who resigned from the Thakur Ministry on April 17. They belonged mostly to the Jana Sangh group. The three Ministers who resigned in Himachal Pradesh belonged to the BLD group. In Haryana, the Cabinet was said to have held an emergency meeting in the night of April 18 and decided that no Minister with any direct or indirect link with RSS should be allowed to remain in office.

The former BLD-Jana Sangh alliance about which the Jullundur Party Congress Resolution spoke was now replaced by a new alliance of Jana Sangh, Congress(O), etc., opposed to the BLD.

Congress (I) Support to Jana Sangh Combination

In the confidence vote of April 19, the Jana Sangh scored over the BLD group in Bihar. Karpoori Thakur was defeated in the Assembly by the Jana Sangh group aided by the Congress(I). The Jana Sangh group was unscrupulous enough to join hands with the Congress(I) to defeat the Ministry of its party. This fact should be noted because it is forgotten by many.

In Himachal Pradesh, the Jana Sangh combination won and was able to continue in the Ministry.

The Janata Parliamentary Party elections on May 16 firmly sealed the alliance between the Jana Sangh and Morarji Desai, Jagjivan Ram. All the important posts were annexed by the Jana Sangh-Congress(O) alliance. It captured the posts of Deputy Leader, three General Secretaries and Treasurer. The Charan Singh group was completely routed.

The conspiracies continued. Devi Lal was ousted and, to ensure a majority in the State Legislature of Haryana, his successor Bhajan Lal relied on Congress(I) support. He purchased it by agreeing to withdraw some of the court proceedings against Bansi Lal charging him with heinous offences. Both Morarji Desai and Chandra Sekhar justified the withdrawal of the cases. The Janata leadership openly joined hands with Indira Gandhi to oust the Devi Lal Ministry. This fact again is forgotten. And now this treacherous Bhajan Lal, whom the Janata leaders supported against Devi Lal, has defected to the Congress(I).

Long-Term Process of Break-up

This is the background to the Janata break-up. It was not a sudden event taking place in July. The ground was prepared by earlier conflicts in which the Jana Sangh group was forging ahead to occupy strategic positions in the Government and the party. It was taking place in the background of reactionary economic policies, and repressive measures which were eroding the image of the Janata Party. And, it was, besides, coming in the midst of serious attacks on the Muslim and Harijan minorities which were tolerated or ignored by the Jana Sangh-dominated Government.

It was no accident that opposition to dual membership should be expressed in the Janata Party as early as in 1977. It was then both a means of opposing the RSS-BLD alliance and also the influence of RSS ideology. It soon became a weapon of fighting the RSS domination over the Janata Government and its policies and demanded more attention because of the alienation of the Muslims and Harijans whose massive votes had helped the Janata Party to secure the 1977 victory.

In July 1979, when the Lok Sabha met, the unity of the Janata Party was already undermined. On July 9, Raj Narain walked out with ten members. In two days, 27 MPs quit the Janata Party followed by ten more led by Sri Madhu Limaye. Soon, more than 80 members left the Janata Party reducing it to a minority in Parliament. Morarji Desai's Janata now had a strength of only 206.

This narration shows that the split in the Janata Party was maturing for a long time; that it was getting concentrated on the issue of RSS which was seeking a dominant position in the Government and the organisation, and that the RSS wing was not above seeking the help of the Indira Congress in its struggle against the rival wing. This was no sudden discovery for the CPI(M), for it was for long warning against the Janata's breakdown and pinpointing the RSS-Jana Sangh activities as a source of loss of Janata's influence, apart from its class economic policies. Those who were taken aback by the split and ouster of the Janata Government were really unaware and unconscious of the deep social processes at work undermining the unity of the organisation.

The incapacity of the Janata to defend the interests of the people, followed by the loss of its image, the growing shift of the people to the rival bourgeois-landlord party (the authoritarian Congress(I), the inner-fights and the struggle of the RSS-Jana Sangh to dominate the Government made the Janata incapable of protective its unity in face of the mounting economic crisis, as was clearly stated in the Jullundur Resolution of our Party Congress.

Subsequent developments should enable all to place the earlier split as a part of the inevitable social process. The Janata Party went through three successive splits—(a) Lok Dal; (b) Jagjivan Ram; and (c) RSS-Jana Sangh. The latter has now formed a party based on itself, a pure Jana Sangh combination, and even Morarji Desai has not yet picked up courage to throw his lot with it. These recent developments show that finally the issue of dual membership had to be settled. The Socialist section, also a part of the Congress(O) section, in the end did revolt and were prepared to face a sure split but not compromise.

Why did Jagjivan Ram denounce the RSS? Why did the Socialists part company with it? They all realised the treacherous role played by the RSS-Jana Sangh combination. In the election, it secretly helped Indira Gandhi where Jana Sangh nominees were not contesting, i.e., against the Janata candidates from other groups. They, besides, realised little too late the havoc done to the Janata image by this combine, the loss of influence leading to its political rout.

The struggle for dissociation from the RSS had started quite early in the Janata Party. Our Party endeavoured to see that all the non-RSS groups stood together and isolated the RSS. But things shaped in a different way. The non-RSS groups split from the RSS wing on three different occasions. When Charan Singh split away, the Socialists and Congress(O) continued to remain with the RSS-Jana Sangh; when Jagjivan Ram split away, the Socialists and Congress(O) again remained with the RSS-Jana Sangh. In the end, the Socialists and Congress(O) also had to split away from the RSS-Jana Sangh combine on the issue of dual membership.

It is necessary to observe in this connection the recent policy of the RSS announced by Balasaheb Deoras. Whatever might be said by the BJP for the sake of electoral propaganda, the RSS leader does not see any special danger to democracy in Indira Gandhi's return to power and harks back to the past when the RSS was ready to join the Congress. This was preceded by the open understanding with the Congress (I) to instal a Jana Sangh-Janata Government in Bihar, and a similar pact with Indira Gandhi to keep Bhajan Lal in office. When the Janata was ruling at the Centre, the alliances in these two States, we may call them temporary understandings, had already taken place.

Party's Line towards the Janata Developments

It is obviously true that no one expected that by July 9 or so, the crisis would burst leading to the disintegration of the Janata Party. But our Party was reacting to the developments for a long time, even raising doubts whether the Janata Party Government would last its full term. It was also warning against the RSS-Jana Sangh danger and did not see it only on the eve of the no-confidence motion.

The editorial of *People's Democracy*, dated April 29, 1979, had the following to say under the caption, "Janata Mess": "The Janata is going through a second round of travail and agony. All those who expected some sort of stability and continued Janata rule at the Centre, at least for the remaining three years of the term of the Lok Sabha, are once again forced to raise the question how all this Janata mess will end, and what shape the Indian political scene is going to take." "The threat to parliamentary democracy, that was averted by the defeat of the authoritarian forces led by Indira Gandhi in the March 1977 elections, is again surfacing, from the regrouping of the Congress(I) forces on the one hand, and the forces represented by the RSS-Jana Sangh combine and its aggressive machinations on the other." "In this otherwise unhappy and murky political atmosphere in the country, a welcome sign of democratic awakening is the growing awareness of the danger of Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism and RSS-Jana Sangh's anti-secular and obscurantist drive." "The coming two to three months are going to be crucial in the country's political developments."

The above passages show that the Party was neither underplaying the danger of the authoritarian forces, led by the Indira Congress, nor oblivious of the danger posed to the anti-authoritarian struggle from the RSS-Jana Sangh combine and its disruptive activities. The entire effort was how best to carry on the struggle against the authoritarian forces of the Congress(I) in the changing conditions of in-fights in the Janata, the rising of the menace of the RSS-Jana Sangh combine and the growing division among the Janata on the issue of "dual membership" and the increasing efforts of the Congress(I) to thrust forward exploiting the situation to its full advantage.

This was full two months before the no-confidence motion and the downfall of the Janata Government.

The Central Committee's inner-party statement on the national situation, dated April 13, 1979, gave an exhaustive analysis of the changing situation, political alliances and pinpointed the RSS-Jana Sangh danger. The RSS-Jana Sangh danger was mentioned in the Jullundur Resolution. Its growth, its new alliances and their dangerous implications were emphasised again. The April 13 document also highlights the authoritarian danger.

Struggle for New Alignment

Then comes the significant statement about new alignment.

"For all those who are serious about fighting authoritarianism, this provides an illuminating lesson. What happened in March 1977 and after has not removed the threat of authoritarianism from the political life of India. With all the zigzags in its fortunes, it is trying to take advantage of every new development to regroup its forces and come on top. It will be utter folly to underrate the capacity for mischief with the "caucus" behind Indira Gandhi still possesses.

"Against this background should be seen the two-year record of the Janata Government and the utter failure of the Janata Party to emerge as a united and cohesive political party.

"As the Political Resolution of the Tenth Congress and the documents adopted by the Central Committee before and after it show, the socio-economic policies pursued by the Janata

Government are impoverishing the mass of the working people, while enriching a handful of big capitalists and landlords. This cannot but lead, in fact leading, to the ever deepening crisis of the national economy.

"The Janata's approach to the problems of Centre-State relations, its language policy, its treatment of the religious minorities, the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and other backward castes—all these are giving rise to acute discontent among the various sections of the people, which, in its turn, is sought to be used to disrupt the unity of the people. Forces of national disintegration are once again raising their heads. This poses a serious threat to the united struggles of the democratic forces.

"One cannot but draw attention in this context to the problem created by the activities of the RSS which is not formally part of the Janata Party but is known to wield considerable influence over its leadership through the several 'Swayam Sevaks' who are either Central or State Ministers, or active functionaries of the ruling party at various levels. The fact that the RSS 'sakhas' are carrying on with impunity their semi-military drills in public and that their organs of publicity and propaganda specialise in broadcasting anti-secular, obscurantist ideologies, is creating panic not only among the minorities but among all those who oppose the ideology and programme of the organisation. This perhaps is the foremost issue which divides the Janata Party from top to bottom, while it unites a considerable section within the Janata with secular, democratic and radical forces outside.

"It should be noted that the leadership of the RSS has consistently rejected the demand that the RSS should either be merged into, and made amenable to the discipline of the Janata Party, or Janata leaders be obliged to sever their relations with the RSS. They are trying to have the advantage of both—being unaccountable to the Janata Party, but enjoying all the facilities provided to a constituent of the ruling party. This is resented and resisted by influential sections within the Janata Party."

Then comes a significant statement about new alignment:

"The new alignment that has started taking shape within the Janata, as between the RSS and its supporters on the

one hand and its opponents on the other, together with the liaison that is being established between the latter and secular forces outside the Janata Party, are positive developments. It is from this point of view that the recent developments in U.P.—the break-up of the old BLD-Jana Sangh alliance, the formation of a new alliance between the former CFD and BLD, followed by the support extended to this new alignment by the anti-unity Congressmen; the Right C.P. and other Left and democratic forces—should be seen. The old blind anti-Janata stance of the Right C.P. had suffered a dent."

RSS Undermines Anti-Authoritarian Unity

The Party was aware of the disintegrating process of the Janata; it was aware that this together with the policies pursued by the Janata Government was enabling Indira Gandhi to forge ahead; the Party was warning against the RSS danger and was working for a new alignment inside and outside the Janata against the RSS.

The P.B. statement, dated April 26, 1979, pinned down the RSS as the deliberate planner and organiser behind the communal massacres. The statement observed that "as in other riots like Aligarh, the leading light among the organisers of the riot in Jamshedpur is the confirmed RSS leader who happens to be the local MLA. . . . The Bihar Military Police, by and large, acted in concert with the RSS in the killing, the looting, the house-burning and other inhuman deeds—all directed against the minority community". "The RSS which refuses to dissolve itself and submit to the discipline of the Janata Party is, at the same time, using its position as a constituent of the ruling party to burrow into the administrative machinery and transform it into a vehicle of communal disruption. A large section of the Janata leadership and ranks have correctly demanded that this 'dual membership' of RSS leaders should be immediately put an end to.

Many comrades perhaps even now do not understand the political meaning of the RSS exposure. They take it as the usual fight against communal ideology having no immediate bearing on the conduct of the anti-authoritarian struggle. In fact, the RSS misdeeds were driving the Muslims and Harijans into the Indira camp and therefore exposure and fight against them were an

integral part of the fight to maintain anti-authoritarian unity. Slowly all other components of the Janata Party had to come to the same conclusion and part company with the RSS crowd.

The July Crisis and the Vote of No-Confidence

The July crisis was the culmination of intense inner-conflicts and factional struggles which resulted in the pulling down of Janata Ministries in U.P., Haryana and Bihar. In these unseemly in-fights of the Janata, if one side is spearheaded by the Charan Singh and Raj Narain faction, the opposite faction is led by the RSS-Jana Sangh combine, with Prime Minister Morarji Desai ganging with it. Both these rival Janata factions were busy negotiating with the Congress (I) to seek its support in the Legislatures of U.P., Haryana and Bihar, and the Congress (I) in turn was not averse to throwing its weight on one side or the other, in order to cultivate one or the other faction of the Janata to its advantage. The deposed Chief Ministers of Bihar and Haryana, Karpoori Thakur and Devi Lal, together with Raj Narain who was eased out of the Central Cabinet, were engaged in hectic activity in Delhi to avenge their "fall", and pull down the Morarji-RSS combine from power at the Centre.

It must be noted that it is precisely in this period that the aggressive attacks of the RSS gangs on our Party in Kerala had increased. Reporting in the issue of *People's Democracy*, dated May 6, 1979, under the caption "RSS Murderous Attacks on CPI(M) in Kerala", it was stated that, "in Tellicherry alone, nine comrades were killed in these attacks and twenty-nine sustained severe injuries. . . . and many of them have been disabled for life".

The July crisis came in the wake of the communal riots in Jamshedpur and Aligarh, the countrywide policemen's strike and heavy repression to crush it, the issuing of an Ordinance on CDS money and another against the striking Reserve Bank employees, the refusal to pay bonus to railway workers and the move to enact a law for preventive detention.

The July crisis will have to be also seen in the background of the Delhi Socialist Convention called by the Socialist leaders on July 7 and 8, 1979, which some 700 delegates attended from

different States; the resolutions and statements of this Socialist convention were extremely critical of Janata Government policies and the disruptive role of the RSS-Jana Sangh constituent of the Janata Party and Government.

Finally, the July crisis came in the wake of the formation of the Congress (U) at the Bangalore Convention, the emergence of the Congress (U) as the main opposition party in the Lok Sabha displacing the Congress (I), the split in the Janata and the efforts of the Congress (U) and others in the Lok Sabha to form an alternative Government in alliance with the Janata (S) and others who were willing to join them.

The Janata Party leaders wanted our Party to toe their line without making any concessions to the masses. In effect they were demanding a vote of confidence or neutrality for their Ordinances, for the Preventive Detention Act and for suppression of the police agitations and were asking us to behave as their camp-followers. This was the role assigned to us by them.

Besides, after the split in the Janata, the Jana Sangh-RSS group now dominated the organisation. In effect our vote of neutrality was demanded to support a Government dominated by the RSS-Jana Sangh section against whom we have been fighting; the Janata leaders wanted us to choose an alignment with the RSS wing while our Party had already welcomed a new alignment against the RSS.

Taking these developments into consideration, it would have been the height of opportunism to adopt an attitude of neutrality towards the no-confidence motion. It would have identified the Party with Janata's repressive policies, it would have further identified it with the RSS-Jana Sangh section which was now dominating the Janata and would have undermined the faith of the Muslim masses in the Party both in Kerala and West Bengal.

Such identification would have come at a time when our Party in Kerala had already to take an open anti-RSS stand in the elections and wage a fight against its murderous attacks.

The adverse election results should not blind us to these facts. Parliamentary manoeuvring cannot change the correlation of forces among the people.

It is now clear that whatever stand the Party would have taken the Janata Party could not have been saved. It had already split and could not have remained in the Government to avoid elections and in the elections it could not have put up a better show. It did not lose its influence among the people because of our election tactics or our support to the no-confidence motion.

The Question of Underestimation of the Authoritarian Danger

The results of the elections which have gone completely in favour of authoritarianism make comrades feel that we had underestimated the authoritarian danger and concentrated too much on the communal danger. This is not correct. The background and analysis presented and the testimony of the Party documents point to the fact that we were estimating the Janata policies, RSS emergence and Janata split from the point of view of their effect on the anti-authoritarian struggle.

The Party has been repeatedly pointing out that the authoritarian forces are getting stronger. The Party realised that the correlation of forces among the people had changed and was changing. Only by dissociating ourselves from the Janata policies and RSS-Jana Sangh association, could we keep our image and prepare a foundation for the progress of the anti-authoritarian front. But our exposures, criticisms and dissociation did not stop the rapid flow from the Janata to the Congress(I).

There is no doubt, however, that neither the Polit Bureau nor the Central Committee expected the spectacular victory of Indira Gandhi. We certainly thought that the currents and cross-currents in evidence might prevent an outright victory of Indira Gandhi. In any case we knew that authoritarianism could not be fought by befriending the Janata Party which was rapidly losing among the people. Support to the no-confidence motion indicated the sharp desire to repair the damage done by the Janata to the anti-authoritarian unity.

There is no valid argument against the policy pursued by the C.C. The Janata Party had lost the confidence of the people. It could not have continued and much less played a role of fighting

against authoritarianism. This section, besides, was not above taking the help of Indira Gandhi to instal its Governments in Bihar and Haryana and making concessions to Bansi Lal.

Our Party was aware of the processes inside the Janata and was welcoming the growing resistance of certain elements against the RSS-Jana Sangh domination. This is what we said in the C.C.'s statement on the national political situation in April. This was our line: try to bring out a new realignment more favourable to the democratic and anti-authoritarian forces freed from the handicap of the RSS-Jana Sangh combination. In April and May, we did not visualise an open split. We thought of continued developments inside the Janata with the anti-RSS elements strengthening themselves.

But by July, in the background of Chavan's no-confidence motion, the crisis came out into the open with Raj Narain and Charan Singh walking out. In this situation we continued our line of mobilising all forces for a new alignment. In the background of Urs' revolt and the Congress(U) becoming the major opposition party in the Lok Sabha with crossing over from the Congress(I), it was correct on the part of our Party to work for a new realignment and not to trail behind the RSS-Jana Sangh alliance. We had not asked Charan Singh and Raj Narain to walk out, but once this process had set in, we had to think of a new alignment of forces outside the Janata and call on our allies, the Akali Dal, Left parties and others to take part in it.

We took an active part to bring about a new realignment after Charan Singh's departure from the Janata, we tried to convince other anti-RSS elements to part company with the RSS-Jana Sangh combination. We persuaded Bahuguna and his followers who were bitter against the RSS policies to take a quick decision and give up vacillations. We did our best to persuade the Socialists who had assembled in a conference to take the proper decision, but failed. We saw to it that the new realignment was supported by the Akalis and others who were in touch with us. These moves of ours were in pursuance of our efforts for a new realignment of forces.

Jullundur Resolution

It is erroneous to argue that our Party's support to the no-confidence motion was against the line of the Jullundur Congress which only called for fighting the authoritarian danger and not the Janata. This puts an opportunistic interpretation on the Jullundur Resolution. It is, of course, true that at the Party Congress we did not raise the slogan, Down with the Janata Government. We correctly argued that the time was not yet ripe to raise this slogan as the anti-authoritarian possibilities of the Janata were not yet exhausted and inner developments were taking place. To argue as if no change has taken place in the situations since then, is to reject all the Party documents written since then and turning Nelson's eye to the Janata doings. The Jullundur Resolution, besides, warned the people that the authoritarian danger could be fought by the growing alliance of Left and democratic parties, by changing the correlation of forces among the people and not by relying on the Janata. It warned the people against the ominous development seen in the growing domination of the RSS over the Janata.

For Broad Electoral Opposition

The Central Committee pursued its policies of shaping a new realignment among the anti-authoritarian forces and simultaneously redoubled its efforts to strengthen Left and democratic unity. It had, before it, the supreme concern of how to stem the advance of the authoritarian forces rendered inevitable by the policies of the Janata, now Jana Sangh-dominated.

The dissolution of the Lok Sabha and announcement of elections demanded strenuous efforts on the part of the Party to build broad resistance to the authoritarian party. It was obvious that a split in the Janata Party, with the RSS-Jana Sangh issue having assumed political importance, such a broad front could not have included the Janata. The Lok Dal, the Congress(U), two important parties, together with the CPI and some other parties would not have accepted it. There was another alternative: the Party could have allied itself only with the Janata. No one dared suggest it.

The Central Committee decided to forge an alliance of Left and democratic parties and a more broader electoral understanding with

the Lok Dal, Congress(U), etc., and called for support to it. When the Central Committee decided on its electoral tactics no one objected to it; but after the election results, the Party's tactics in seeking an understanding with the Congress and Lok Dal began being questioned.

It is not correct to argue that our support to the Lok Dal, etc., and our efforts for a broad electoral front meant that we were running too much after the bourgeois parties. This criticism means that the Party should not have made any effort to build a viable resistance to the Indira Congress in cooperation with other bourgeois parties. It amounts to leaving the field free to Indira Gandhi, giving up all efforts to prevent the division of the anti-authoritarian vote. The Party has not accepted this line in the struggle against authoritarianism. If we had followed this line in West Bengal in 1977, the Parliament results for our Party would not have been the same. It is the same old line which took a neutral attitude to the J.P. struggle and goes against the Party's estimate of the correlation of class forces.

The Central Committee unanimously decided on its election tactics and decided to support the Lok Dal-Congress alliance while strengthening the Left and democratic forces. It took into consideration the Congress(I) as the main danger, the RSS-Jana Sangh role, and took its decision in the background of the overall continuing struggle against authoritarianism of which the electoral struggle was only a part.

As the September 6 document stated:

"The election as a sequel to this intensification of the crisis of the system poses the same question before the people—dictatorship or democracy. The main vehicle of this dictatorship—the section from which the immediate danger arises, which has the possibility of getting into power—is the Congress(I) and defeat of this force, preventing its return to power, must be our main objective.

"The challenge of the Hindu chauvinistic forces, which at one time threatened to take over the Central administration has been frustrated but yet everything has to be done to cripple them further, their obscurantist and authoritarian outlook has to be met and

everything has to be done to cripple the strength of this force. At present it does not seem to be in a position to get anywhere near a majority.

"We are directly opposed to these two forces and our election tactics must address themselves to the broadest possible mobilisation against the authoritarian Congress(I) and the Jana Sangh-RSS-dominated Janata. While endeavouring to cripple the strength of the authoritarian and communal forces, our aim should be to bring about a change in the correlation of forces, in Parliament, i.e., a substantial increase in the strength of the Left forces in Parliament. Any bourgeois-landlord Government at the Centre must continually feel the pressure of the Left if democracy is to be defended and secularism is to be maintained. Needless to say, a substantial increase in the direct representation of our Party is a *sine qua non* of the increased strength of the Left.

"The tactics that we have to adopt are determined by our overall objectives—defeat of the authoritarian forces represented by Indira Gandhi, defeat of the communal forces, increased strength of the forces broadly opposed to the Congress (I) and Janata, increase in the strength of the Left and democratic forces and among them, increase in the strength of the Left forces headed by the CPI(M).

"The election struggle for us is a serious political battle, and not just a struggle for parliamentary seats; we have to endeavour to bring about a correlation of forces among the people which should be far more favourable than after the last elections. In this connection, we may recall the following from the Jullundur Resolution of the Party: 'While legitimately concerned with the immediate task of uniting the people against the forces of authoritarianism, the Party cannot forget the correlation of class forces obtaining at present and the weaknesses in the political situation favourable though it is. . . . The present situation is characterised by the following features: the authoritarian dictatorship has been removed with the electoral defeat of the Congress and the restoration of civil liberties and democratic rights. But the anti-Emergency struggle and the electoral victory have not led to a shift in the balance of forces in favour of the working class, i.e., the masses have not moved away from the influence of

bourgeois parties and started rallying round an alternative leadership. As in 1971, in the recent election also, polarisation took place round the two bourgeois-landlord combinations—the Congress and the Janata. . . . But despite the biggest upheaval since Independence which frustrated the Congress designs to impose an authoritarian dictatorship over the country, the Left and democratic forces which constitute at present the only alternative to the bourgeois-landlord parties, have not emerged as a viable force. On the contrary, except in West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura, they are very weak, leaving the bourgeois-landlord parties in virtual monopoly of the people.'

"Every effort has to be made by our Party to change the correlation of forces among the people, to increase the influence of Left and democratic forces under our initiative. This must be the constant aim of our election tactics and struggle. We are certainly not interested in seeing the victory of one combination over another without an increase in the strength of the forces that are vital in the struggle against authoritarianism and communal reaction.

"The question of maximum mobilisation of the forces ranged against the authoritarian and the communal forces brings us to our approach to the three main bourgeois-landlord combinations. The Congress(I) representing the challenge of dictatorship has to be opposed and routed. So also the Janata dominated by the RSS-Jana Sangh.

"What about the third bourgeois-landlord combination—the Janata(S) and the Congress? The class character of this combination, its image among the people, its reactionary economic outlook, etc., have already been noted. Despite this, the combination for its very electoral success, and ambitions, must fight the other two combinations to whom we are firmly opposed. It presents the possibility of forming a part of a broad mobilisation of the forces opposed to the Congress(I) and the Janata. This combination is ranged against both for the time being and will objectively be of help to the people in the fight against authoritarianism and Hindu communalism. Hence, we must try to have some kind of electoral understanding with it wherever such understanding is possible and will help us to bring about a mobilisation and weaken the other two forces.

"This electoral understanding will be more limited than our understanding with the Janata Party in the 1977 elections. In 1977, there was a general anti-Emergency wave, anti-Indira upsurge. The common watchword of all opposing parties was democracy vs. dictatorship—a watchword born out of the common popular experience of the Emergency. The mass movement earlier led by J.P. and others, the repression directed against them, made the Janata the main symbol of the anti-Emergency fight and the prestige of the Janata leaders was high. The Janata Party, besides, had spread its influence over a greater part of India. The Janata Party leaders were yet to be tested and tried in action. A much closer electoral understanding with common propaganda and meetings developed expressing the mass urge for unity against authoritarianism.

"The situation is quite different today so far as the Janata(S)-Congress are concerned. There is, no wave of democratic anger associated with the combination. In many cases, the image of the leaders is defaced. Their economic performance and their criticism of the Janata will be hardly convincing, since till recently they were part of the Janata leadership and are not known to have fought for any demands of the people.

"Nonetheless, it is necessary to have an electoral understanding with the combination to resist the authoritarian and communal forces and disperse their strength. There is, of course, no question of a common electoral programme. The character and strength of the understanding depends on the strength of this combination as a force in fighting the two other forces and mobilising the anti-authoritarian and anti-communal vote. Despite the understanding, we may have to criticise the electoral platform of the combination.

"But it should be clear that we do not place this combination in the same category as the Congress(I) or Janata. These latter two are our adversaries in the elections whom we are determined to fight. The Janata(S)-Congress combination must be treated as a useful force in this fight, a force which enables the people to have a broad mobilisation of the anti-authoritarian and anti-communal vote. Having decided this approach, we must take the varying situations in the States and direct our efforts to secure our objectives—broad mobilisation of forces opposed

to authoritarianism and communalism and increased strength of the Party in Parliament, of the Left in Parliament and increased influence of the Left and democratic forces among the people.

"In West Bengal, our Party and the Left Front headed by us constitute the bulwark and bastion of the anti-authoritarian and anti-communal forces. It is our Party that was singled out for repression during the days of semi-fascist terror and it is we in cooperation with our allies who have defeated the Congress(I) in West Bengal. During the last two years, again, it is our Party that has succeeded in isolating the Congress(I) and the other bourgeois parties—Janata, Congress, from the masses. If in other States, the Congress(I) hopes to recover lost ground, it has hardly any such hope in West Bengal. We, with our Left Front, are the dominant anti-authoritarian force in West Bengal. Our tactics must address themselves to strengthening our representation in Parliament, in consonance with our strength among the people, increasing the representation of the Left parties allied with us, and at the same time, broadening the appeal and base for mobilisation of the anti-authoritarian and anti-communal vote. This latter aspect should not be forgotten. Besides, while determinedly sticking to this position, we should do our best to ensure that our opponents do not unite against us. Driven to desperation, they are likely to create trouble in the election, resort to violence, provoke police action and propagate that the elections have been unfair. It will be of great help to us if their coming together is prevented."

These extracts do not show that there was underestimation of the danger from Indira nor do they show that there was exaggeration of the communal danger, nor do they attribute special virtues to Charan Singh. On the other hand, this is a cold sober estimate of the bourgeois-landlord parties and their electoral stand and of the extent to which it helps the anti-authoritarian forces.

This was a correct line consistent with the Party's struggle to build resistance to Indira and mobilise maximum support for it. We supported the whole of the Janata when it was playing an anti-authoritarian role, and now some people object to the same attitude towards Lok Dal, etc.

Politically this was the only combination that offered possibility of drawing large sections in the common electoral struggle. Their strength was not exaggerated by us. We were bound to attach importance to the Congress(U) after Urs left the Congress(I). Urs did have a base in Karnataka and the reverse process from the Congress(U) to the Congress(I) had not started. In fact, it was the other way about this time. The Bangalore Conference gave a big boost to Congress(U) prestige and we were bound to take notice of it. It would have been wrong to ignore it.

So also it would have been wrong to ignore the Lok Dal with its mass base in U.P.

To question the Party's support to the Lok Dal-Congress(U) alliance is wrong. What was wrong with the Lok Dal? Only Charan Singh. This is the same old story: decide the attitude to a movement, organisation or party not by reference to the objective role it is playing but by reference to the person who leads it. This is the same old J.P. and Jana Sangh movement story. Objectively, Charan Singh did help to secure more than a crore of votes against Indira Gandhi, demarcating from the Jana Sangh-Janata. The C.C. was fully aware of the limitations of Charan Singh's outlook.

As the August 15 document stated:

"The biggest contingent of the combination is the Janata(S) whose President is Raj Narain and which is led by Charan Singh. This is mainly the former BLD with its strength mainly based on the rural masses of U.P., Haryana, Bihar, with some scattered following in Rajasthan". "Charan Singh for some time has emerged as the rallying force for this peasant mass—in certain parts of U.P. and Haryana. In 1977, it was largely his mass base combined, of course, with other forces, that led to the rout of Indira Gandhi in U.P. This former leader is known to be full of reactionary ideas and ideology. His opposition to working class demands is known. He propagates the false idea of rural versus urban and pits the rural mass against the urban poor and the working class. He represents the rural vested interests, the landlord gentry and landlords, and also gives expression to the fear of the small proprietor against the big industry. He is also known for his

anti-Harijan bias—coming as he does from the upper-caste Jat peasant community. And he also is plagued with an anti-Muslim bias, like many Congressmen. He has been a staunch opponent of bonus in the Morarji Cabinet and was also the initiator of two Ordinances."

Again, in the Central Committee's document, dated September 18, 1979, and circulated to all State Committees, it is stated: "The second was the trend represented by Raj Narain, Charan Singh and others, which also picked up the anti-RSS slogan as a useful lever in the fight for distribution of power, against the parent organisation; compromised its honour by seeking Indira Gandhi's help to show majority backing. The subsequent confrontation between it and the Indira Congress leading to the resignation of the Charan Singh Ministry has now put it in open opposition to the Congress(I) in the elections". The basis of Charan Singh's opposition to the RSS is properly placed here.

Those who attack our support to the Lok Dal-Congress alliance are, in fact, asking the Party to go alone with the Left. This, in the interest of not underestimating the authoritarian danger.

It is thoroughly unrealistic to hold the Party's election tactics responsible for the election debacle. All this really gives alibi to the bourgeois opposition parties, mainly the Janata, which brought about the big adverse electoral change.

The question has to be answered, why did the alliance fare so miserably? Partly, of course, this is due to the electoral system, i.e., there is no provision for representation in proportion to the number of votes polled. But, apart from this, it is clear that the alliance failed and was not able to impress the people.

Indira Gandhi Seeks New Allies

In the document quoted above, the C.C. had already pointed out that the task was difficult, that the leaders of these organisations did not have a good image, that there was no wave against Indira Gandhi and that the policies pursued by the Janata Party had already offended the people. Yet, it was seen that the Congress(I) was also not able to unite its ranks, the splitting of Devraj Urs had weakened it. It was not incorrect on our part to give importance to Urs at that

time or to the mass mobilisation of Charan Singh. The Lok Dal did get majority votes in 182 U.P. Assembly constituencies in the Parliamentary elections.

But during the subsequent months, as elections approached, new developments started and the Congress(I) did consolidate its position. Indira Gandhi aware of her position did everything to split the Congress(U), the Lok Dal and seek new allies. The defections from the Congress(U) had now started, i.e., a process in the reverse direction. This was a reflection of what was happening among the people, with two and a half years of Janata rule and five months of the Caretaker Government. The functioning of the Caretake Government, the continued rise in prices, the incapacity to control the situation, the combined blackmail of the Government by the Janata and the Congress(I), etc., saying the Caretaker administration had no right to take important decisions, all further denigrated the image of the alliance. It should not be forgotten that five months passed between the dissolution and the election. All these led to a quickly changing situation which completely upset our cautious estimate.

Uncertainty Continues

In fact, the situation was changing so rapidly that none, neither the Press nor the Congress (I) nor anyone else, could anticipate the results. Indira Gandhi's behaviour itself showed that she was uncertain. She was searching for every possible ally. She flattered Bahuguna to join her to secure the support of the Imam of the Delhi Juma Masjid to guarantee Muslim votes in the North. She was holding negotiations with Jagjivan Ram till the last hour and, as a final precaution, she decided to stand from two constituencies, from Rae Bareilly and Medak. The election results showed that she need not have had a shadow of doubt about her success in Rae Bareilly. But she did have. This was the atmosphere.

The manner in which Indira Gandhi plunged for an alliance with the DMK which she had denounced as corrupt to the core and whose Government she had toppled in 1976; the wide opening of the gates of her party to several political leaders whom she had denounced and expelled and who were vehemently attacking her and the Sanjay caucus around her; the assurances to Muslim

minorities which she offered to sign publicly and the fact that she was contesting from Rae Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh and Medak in Andhra Pradesh, all go to show how panicky the Congress(I) and its leaders were on the eve of the elections. It was no surprise that in October she talked of her readiness to have a Coalition Ministry. *The Hindustan Times*, dated October 29, 1979, published the following report circulated by the PTI and UNI:

"Congress(I) President Indira Gandhi said here today that if no party secured majority in the coming elections her party would try to form a Coalition Government with other like-minded parties."

Mrs. Gandhi said, "However she did not consider any other party as like-minded and said any coalition the Congress(I) might enter into would not be the Janata-type coalition which had ruined the country".

Asked about the possible election results, "Mrs. Gandhi said I do not prophesy about election outcome".

The Press and the political parties were not expecting majority for any party though perhaps they thought at the end of the campaign, that the wind was favouring Indira Gandhi but none expected a landslide victory. The mood of the electorate was changing everyday and none could gauge its exact strength.

Our Assessment

In our estimate, we had correctly assessed that the Congress(I) would make an advance in the Hindi belt but, at the same time, we expected setbacks for it in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It was thought that the Congress(I) would lose at least ten seats in Andhra Pradesh, half the seats in Karnataka, and quite a few seats in Tamil Nadu. And with all this she would get the full quota, or even more than what the united Congress got in 1977, more than 150 seats. The influence of Devraj Urs was exaggerated. The strength of the Opposition in Andhra Pradesh was also exaggerated and the Tamil Nadu results were completely surprising. In the Hindi belt also her victory was far bigger.

We observed: "The Congress(I) has its tentacles spread over India, it is an all-India party, though with varied strength in several States." After narrating some setbacks suffered by it due to Devraj

Urs's split, we stated that the Janata split and the Janata(S) seeking its support "again brought her to the forefront and increased the confidence of her followers". "Elections in the Hindi areas have shown that she made considerable progress in these very areas where she had lost heavily in the 1977 elections. Electorally it has definitely improved its position in the Hindi belt and with the division in the anti-Congress (I) vote due to the split in the Janata Party, the hopes of the organisation are high." Then describing the inner-Party squabbles inside the Congress(I), and its antics of offering support to the Lok Dal alliance and its subsequent withdrawal, the support it extended to the Jana Sangh-dominated Janata State Governments in Haryana and Bihar, we hoped that its opportunism would be exposed, thus weakening it. But we ended saying that, "Big Business and their Press want Indira Gandhi back".

"With all the setbacks it has received and the ups and downs it has seen, the Congress (I), its strength and challenge should not be underestimated. . . . The immediate danger in the electoral battles comes from this party which is still well-organised, well-financed and which has been capitalising on the erosion of the Janata image." "In any case, a certain shift is certainly taking place from the Congress towards her and this adds to her strength. The challenge, therefore, is real and direct and cannot be neglected." (C.C. document of September 18.)

Inaccuracies and Wrong Formulations

There were, of course, certain inaccuracies and wrong formulations which were corrected in time; in any case they did not affect the tactics of the Party. One such formulation which is correctly criticised is about the twin danger of authoritarianism and communalism. If the documents concerned are examined, it will be found that even where this formulation occurs it was made after describing authoritarianism as the main danger. Nowhere, even by implication, it is suggested that the two dangers are of equal proportion. Nonetheless, the expression, twin danger, was not a correct formulation as it would create an impression of equating the two dangers. To say, however, that this was the Central Committee's line and it affected the elections is to indulge in fault-finding.

The second incorrect formulation occurred in relation to the parties in alliance with the Janata. In the September 1979 election document, it was stated that "In no case do we permit an understanding with any party in alliance with the two evil forces we are fighting in the election". This was rectified long before the elections in view of the Tamil Nadu development when the AIADMK struck an alliance with the Janata. We modified our stand to maintain this front. This also did not change the election results. Similarly, we continued our alliance with Sharad Pawar in Maharashtra after his understanding with the Janata.

The election results in the final analysis constituted an expression of the correlation of forces existing among the people. It is futile to think that the authoritarian party was given a quit ticket once for all in 1977. The new correlation of forces put the swing back in favour of Indira Gandhi. Efforts of the Party to build a front of Left and democratic forces to change the correlation of forces succeeded only in Kerala (in West Bengal and Tripura such a front already existed). In the rest of the country, the people continued to be divided among the bourgeois-landlord parties and the swing went over to the authoritarian party, thanks to all that the Janata did and did not do.

Party's Struggle for Left Unity

Our Party has been patiently working for Left and democratic unity to forestall such a situation. We did succeed in winning over the CPI and securing the dissolution of their Kerala Ministry and forging an understanding with them. This has certainly raised the prestige of the Party and the credibility of the Left forces. It must, in passing, be observed that the importance of Left unity with the CPI was being underestimated sometimes.

The general atmosphere of Left unity, coupled with our big victories in West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala, has enhanced the prestige of the Left movement and our Party, and more and more people are looking upon the Left as a salvaging force.

At the same time it is to be realised that the struggle for Left unity proceeded at a slow pace. It was difficult to overcome the resistance of the CPI leadership and it was difficult for the latter to free itself from its earlier ideas. It meant a big struggle and

crisis inside the CPI. The crisis is on the main political issue in the elections—attitude to the authoritarian party. It led to the ouster of Dange. These are important developments and only those who attach no importance to Left unity will ignore them.

Our Party had a big role to play in bringing about Left unity, showing patience and understanding towards those who were carrying on the fight inside their party. Because of the late fruition of our attempt, their effects on the elections were not seen. But its importance should not be minimised. The Party is of the opinion that the battle against authoritarianism is a running battle and it cannot be successfully carried on without growing Left unity. It has to be carried on in mass actions, and for that Left unity is essential. Working patiently to build Left and democratic unity, and build a broad front against authoritarianism, our Party pursued its line steadfastly. Had it just poohpooed the Congress party, the front in Kerala could not have been built and Kerala also would have been pocketed by the Congress(I). In Kerala, the Congress(U), i.e., the Antony Congress is an important component of the Coalition. The Jana Sangh-Janata there joined hands with the Congress(I). They were murdering our comrades and we had to declare our total boycott of them long before the parliamentary elections. If we had succumbed to the reasoning of those who ridiculed the Urs Congress we would have smashed the Kerala front. In Kerala we have a still broader front with the Kerala Congress, the Muslim League, etc. This success of the Party is highly important, and it shows that where we are able to persuade other parties because of our strength to adopt our correct tactics, it produces results. Where we are basically weak, our tactics were not accepted by others and they could not produce results. The Kerala victory is a visual demonstration of our successful struggle for broader unity—very broad unity to fight the forces of authoritarianism.

Tamil Nadu provided another important success of the Party in the struggle to build a broad front against the authoritarian party. This success is being ignored by many because the front could not win seats. But the political importance of the front, the fact that millions listened to the anti-authoritarian propaganda and also

voted against Indira Gandhi has got great importance in the political struggle against authoritarianism, in preparing the masses to fight a continuing battle against it. Parties and masses are getting gripped by the idea of broad resistance and releasing new forces.

Reviewing the election results as a whole, it is clear that the return to power of the Indira Congress, a menacing development, was rendered possible by the collapse of the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties and their bad record and performance during the last two and a half years, coupled with the rise of the RSS in the Janata. As against it, the Party's line and tactics strove to save as much as possible from the wreckage to present viable resistance to the authoritarian forces. The fact that the Party succeeded in isolating and defeating the forces of dictatorship in the three States of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura shows again that the failure elsewhere was the failure of the main bourgeois opposition groups. Our Party's achievement in the three States have increased our strength in the Lok Sabha and our tactics have also increased the strength of the Left forces. The Left in Parliament today constitutes the spearhead of the opposition and this fact has immense importance in the days to come.

REVIEW OF ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, MAY 1980

The Assembly elections in nine States have completed the process set in motion by the January election. Indira Gandhi has secured a big electoral victory in six States. In Bihar and Punjab she has won by a narrow margin. Thus Indira Gandhi has achieved her objective of capturing the administration in the States and that, too, by a direct appeal to the people.

She, however, has met with a big reverse in Tamil Nadu where the Congress(I) was heavily defeated despite her alliance with the powerful DMK. The AIADMK, allied with the CPI(M), CPI and some other parties, has secured a two-thirds majority reducing the Congress(I) seats to a mere 30 in a House of 244. After Kerala, Tamil Nadu is the second State in the South to give a rebuff to Indira.

There is no doubt that these results which strengthen the grip of the authoritarian party on the States foreshadow portentous developments.

Pre-Election Assessment

It is necessary to assess the results properly in the background of our pre-election assessment and election tactics.

The March document on elections made an assessment of the strength of the various bourgeois opposition parties and came to the conclusion that they were entering the electoral battle in a much weaker condition.

"Defections, betrayals, crossing over from Congress and Janata have taken place in recent days. In the Rajya Sabha, the Congress(I) was in a minority. Only in its last session, the Rajya Sabha passed an amendment to the President's Address disapproving any action against non-Congress(I) Governments, despite Congress(I) opposition. But now the Congress(I) has secured a majority in the Upper House to endorse the dissolution of nine Assemblies.

"The Congress(U) is getting weaker everyday. A large number of its leaders and followers have joined the Congress(I). Mr Swaran Singh is now again wearing the Congress(I) badge. Devraj Urs is endeavouring to seek understanding with the Left. In Kerala, the Congress(U) is part of the broad alliance which supports the Coalition Ministry. In Orissa, the Congress(U) is now strengthened by the entry of Nandini Satpathy. But there is no doubt that the Congress(U) is very weak.

"The Lok Dal made a very good showing in Uttar Pradesh, and to some extent in Bihar, in the January election. In the former State it secured a majority vote—absolute majority in nearly 180 Assembly constituencies. It is now riven with dissensions. Raj Narain is on the way out.

"But the Janata Party has fared the worst. The Janata Party, in the Parliamentary elections, stood second to the Congress(I) in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar. But since the

elections, demoralisation and disruption have set in. Almost the entire Janata Assembly Party in Haryana together with the Chief Minister walked over to the Congress(I).

"Since the election the Janata Party is facing one crisis after another. The crisis was brought out in the open when the RSS leader, Deoras, openly offered his hand of friendship to Indira Gandhi."

Approach to Election—Electoral Tactics

The elections occupy an important place in the struggle against authoritarianism. Any rebuff to Indira Gandhi in any State will be a big blow in favour of the anti-authoritarian forces and will shake up the ruling party. Everything has to be done to secure this result, to give as wide a rebuff as possible to the dictatorial ambitions of the ruling party. The electoral struggle is an integral part of the continuing struggle against authoritarianism. The Central Committee statement of March 16 outlines the Party's electoral tactics.

"The C.C., therefore, decides to do everything in its power to transform the ensuing electoral struggle in the nine States into a serious political struggle in order to mobilise the widest public opinion against these authoritarian trends of the Congress(I) and the Central Government it runs, and to defeat these trends and reverse these policies. The C.C. appeals to all opposition political parties, who are interested in the struggle against the authoritarian forces led by the Congress(I), to sort out the deep differences and divisions that are plaguing them now to offer united opposition to the Congress(I) and its aim of sweeping the polls in all the nine States. An electoral understanding and adjustment between the opposition parties, based on the realistic assessment of the strength of these parties and the urgent need of the struggle to bar the drive of the authoritarian forces, is direly needed in the prevailing political situation in the country.

"However, electoral understanding and adjustment between opposition parties do not depend on us. They are sharply divided. Some of them are splitting. An understanding between the Lok Dal, Congress(U) and the Janata Party seems to be remote at least in a number of States.

"Nonetheless, we must continue our efforts to see that the oppositional vote is not split.

"In our election tactics, we must continue our efforts for Left and democratic unity and broader resistance. In the continuing struggle against authoritarianism, for developing broad resistance to it, we will have to start with relying on the followers of parties who oppose communalism and who have not yet shown any conciliatory tendencies. Our struggle for alliance of Left and democratic forces cannot gain strength without simultaneously a struggle for such broad resistance in these States. Our line should, therefore, be (1) in the present elections every effort should be made to ensure that the Left parties stand together, (2) that they develop understanding with the Lok Dal, Congress(U), AIADMK, etc., (3) that they help these parties wherever possible to reach understanding between themselves, (4) and do not oppose the efforts of these parties to seek understanding with the Janata Party so that the opposition vote is not divided, provided such understanding is not at the expense of the Left and democratic forces.

"At the same time it should be our special endeavour to develop friendly contacts with the Socialists in the Janata Party and outside. In the struggle for the Left and democratic front, the Socialist elements if harnessed have a role to play. At present, blinded by parliamentary lure, demoralised by the state of the Janata Party, lacking confidence in themselves because of the liquidation of their independent mass base, they find it difficult to take decisions. To develop their political resistance and make them take their place in radical politics is part of our task. Conditions are favourable for such an approach. Many Socialists are thinking of reviving the Socialist party.

"We certainly can have an understanding with non-RSS-Jana Sangh individuals and groups, if this can be done without undermining Left unity or our understanding with other parties."

Before the elections, the Janata Party, split further on the issue of dual membership, the RSS-Jana Sangh group separating itself and proclaiming itself as the Bharatiya Janata Party, bringing down the credibility of all constituents of the former Janata Party to the lowest level.

The exit of the RSS-Jana Sangh wing on the question of dual membership directly flowed from internal conflicts and the realignment of forces in the Janata Party. The meaning of this process has been explained elsewhere.

However, it has to be noted that this split on the eve of the election, led to the further division of the oppositional vote and weakened the opposition as a viable force.

It was in this background that the Party had to put up organised and united resistance against the Congress(I). The Party was, of course, in a very weak position to do this as its influence and mass strength were limited in these States and everything depended on the response of the bourgeois opposition parties with large sections of the electorate at their command. The Party had very little to offer to them and they were still at daggers drawn with each other. It was, therefore, inevitable that the Party should get limited response to its call for united resistance.

Party's Big Success—Tamil Nadu

The biggest success of the Party was in Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu, the major party, the AIADMK, impelled by its own interests, did exactly what our Party was asking opposition bourgeois parties to do. Learning by the experience of his party, understanding the solid strength of the DMK-Congress(I) alliance, M.G. Ramachandran went all the way to forge an electoral pact of several parties, not neglecting the smallest. He was prepared to offer twenty seats to the Janata. He did everything to neutralise the forces of Narayanaswamy Naidu and to accommodate the followers of Kamaraj and others.

It was known that MGR was vacillating all the time and had made attempts to sue for compromise with Indira Gandhi. He had

also made several compromising statements on the eve of the election. But once forced to fight, he seems to have been steadied by our consistent support, our political approach to the masses and increasingly relied on the Left during the elections.

This favourable combination was able to expose Indira Gandhi's policies convincingly, including her failure to deal with the rising prices of necessities of life.

Besides, the arbitrary dismissal of the AIADMK Government had raised the question of Centre-State relations—an extremely sensitive issue in the Tamil Nadu context. It caught Karunanidhi on the wrong foot. Indira Gandhi's support to Karunanidhi, whom she had dismissed for corruption, also compromised her position with the people.

Our Party was able to overcome all difficulties in the way of seat adjustments, in the way of an understanding with the CPI, because the main party itself saw the urgent need of a common electoral front. The result is that the combination opposed to the Congress(I) got two-thirds of the seats and the AIADMK was able to form its Ministry.

We should take note of our contribution to this big success. Our Party kept its political approach and was able to impress and inspire thousands of AIADMK cadres. The result is that our Party has now reached all the districts of Tamil Nadu in the course of the campaign on our behalf and on behalf of the front, has attracted thousands of young people from all sections, especially from amongst the untouchables. Lakhs heard our anti-authoritarian speeches and listened to our exposition of the political and economic problems of the time. It will not be an exaggeration to say that unprecedented opportunities are now opening in Tamil Nadu to expand our Party, to recruit young cadres and expand our mass organisations.

The Example of Punjab

In Punjab, again, we were able to forge an understanding with the major democratic party—the Akali Party. This was an important political achievement whose significance should not be underestimated.

Unfortunately the Dange elements in the CPI dragged out negotiations demanding too many seats—sitting seats of the Akali Party. The result was that understanding could be reached only on the eve of the elections, weakening the common struggle. Our Party had to intervene to bring about adjustments. The CPI also put up candidates against us in one or two seats. The central leadership of the CPI was a helpless spectator of these antics of their followers.

Despite these difficulties, the anti-authoritarian forces offered powerful resistance and the Congress (I) had to satisfy itself with a thin majority in Punjab when it was sweeping two-thirds to three-fourths of the seats in other States. The Akali Party made a good showing capturing 37 seats. The Congress (I) has a majority of only seven in a house of 117. The CPI secured nine seats and our Party secured five seats, three less than in the last election. It is extremely doubtful if the Akalis by themselves could have secured so many seats had they not taken the help of the Left. The Left image and alliance were a necessary weapon in their fight against authoritarianism. The combination was expected to win a majority. The failure to reach an agreement early and the fifth-columnist activity of some Akalis and the sabotage in their midst, deprived it of victory. It is estimated that not less than 15 seats were lost on this account. The total votes polled by our Party has increased and is more than the vote of the CPI.

Some ill-informed critics of our Party suggested that the Party had experienced reverses in Punjab because of too much meddling with Akali politics. The struggle for keeping a democratic party allied with the Left, the struggle to defeat attempts to take it towards the Congress (I), is not meddling, but a part of the tactics of the Central Committee in the fight against authoritarianism. The result of this struggle is the near defeat of the Congress (I) in the elections.

Bihar

Bihar is the State where next to Tamil Nadu and Punjab, the biggest resistance was offered to the Congress (I) though the opposition vote was divided into so many parties and confusion was created by caste appeals running across political loyalties.

In Bihar, the Congress (I) has secured a narrow majority in the midst of charges of rigging and using goonda methods. Despite the foul methods of the ruling party, it would have been defeated in the election if a number of bourgeois-landlord parties had reached an electoral agreement on seats and if the CPI, instead of pursuing narrow and short-sighted ambitions, had lent all its efforts to bring about such an agreement.

In Bihar, we contested 28 seats. Following our C.C.'s line, our State unit made endeavours to forge an electoral understanding with the Congress (U), Lok Dal, along with the CPI, etc. The CPI(M) and CPI came to a common understanding on the question of seats. But Karpoori Thakur and Congress (U) continued to be elusive showing no interest in reaching an understanding with us. Perhaps the CPI did develop some understanding with the Congress (U). The result was that in Bihar we were virtually fighting on the strength of the Left forces—on our own strength, aided by the CPI which has a powerful base in the State. In these circumstances our performance—six seats as compared with four in the 1977 elections—is an advance and our Party can be said to have done well.

The CPI has won 23 seats but in contesting more than a hundred seats, it overestimated its strength and actually did harm to the common electoral fight against the Congress (I). Had it restricted its ambitions, it would have been possible for it to reach an understanding with the Congress (U) at least, and more seats could have been won by the opposition, making Indira Gandhi's defeat certain.

It should be realised that in this State, the CPI had the main responsibility for building common resistance. The party is a big force and other parties were interested in seeking an understanding with it. It is not known whether the CPI made any effort to seek understanding with the Lok Dal. Most probably not, because it seems it considered the Congress (U) to be the only 'secular' party among the opposition parties.

The CPI in Bihar pursued its own line laying almost exclusive emphasis on a "Left Front" and raising the slogan of a Left Front Government in Bihar. For this purpose it worked for a front of the

Forward Bloc, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Marxist Coordination Committee. While our Party was always willing to have an understanding with other Left forces, it was opposed to having a deal with the unreliable Marxist Coordination Committee. But we decided not to break on this issue. As for the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, we knew that it had an understanding with the Congress (I), but the CPI was projecting it as a Left force. And regarding the Forward Bloc, we knew that it had no strength whatsoever, but the CPI had conceded it 22 seats to bolster the claim of the Left to form a Left Front Government. The entire line virtually conformed to the pattern of no common front with non-Left parties against Indira Gandhi.

Maharashtra

In Maharashtra, our endeavours to forge a common front of Left parties, the Janata (Chandra Sekhar) and the Congress (U) failed. The Congress (U) leadership led by Chavan and Sharad Pawar refused to have any understanding with any other party. The leadership was calculating on the discontent in the Congress (I) ranks over tickets—the dominant Maratha peasant community was dissatisfied. The Congress (U) feared that association with the Janata and open association with the Left would prevent mobilisation of this vote dominated by powerful landed interests. They did succeed in getting this vote and secured for the Congress (U) the status of the recognised Opposition in the Assembly. In the bargain, they made Indira Gandhi's victory inevitable.

Bereft of the support of the Congress (U), the electoral front consisted of the Left parties—all of whom are weak, and the Janata which after the separation of the RSS-Jana Sangh combination was further weakened with its electoral appeal reduced to the minimum.

The result was that the Congress (I) secured 181 seats out of 284 seats, Congress (U)-47, the Janata Party-17, the BJP-14, the Peasants' and Workers' Party-8, the CPI(M)-2 and CPI-2.

In the Parliamentary elections, the Congress (I) had secured absolute majority in 224 Assembly constituencies, whereas in the

recent election the Congress (I) tally is 181. This also was rendered possible by the swing towards the Congress (I) in Bombay where it captured 26 seats out of 39. In the Parliamentary elections, the city had voted for the Janata Party.

In Maharashtra, we contested 10 seats. The swing in Bombay affected us and we lost all the three sitting seats. Out of our 9 seats in the State we could retain only 2—from the Scheduled Tribes area. In some other seats, our main contest was with the Congress (U). The Left as a whole, therefore, did poorly. The PWP also got a lower representation than before. Though disillusionment with the Congress (I) had started, the multi-party contests helped that party.

Other States

In Madhya Pradesh, U.P., Gujarat and Orissa, we could not get a single seat. This was inevitable. The Left forces are weak, and there could be no understanding with any other opposition party. Our Party had to rely only on the understanding with the CPI. The CPI, on its own strength, won five seats in U.P., and two in Madhya Pradesh. In U.P., we contested 18 seats; in Gujarat five, in Madhya Pradesh 9.

In Rajasthan, our Party endeavoured to have understanding with the Lok Dal, because that party had influence where a number of our candidates were contesting. There was partial adjustment but that also did not work. In one place, the local Lok Dal Secretary, in spite of agreement between the two parties, stood as an Independent with his party's support; in another place, the Lok Dal supported an Independent; in yet another, the Lok Dal candidate retired in favour of the Congress (I). We contested 16 seats. We worked for an understanding with the CPI, the only other Left party. Both the parties are weak and we had virtually to rely on our own strength. The State was swept by Indira Gandhi and our Party could secure only one seat and the CPI also could secure only one. It seems we lost our sitting seat this time, but got another one.

It will be seen that in these States, Maharashtra, etc., the Left forces have done poorly in the elections, their representation in

the Assemblies is minimal. The main bourgeois parties fought their battles without feeling the need of Left support. The mass of people continued to be divided among the several bourgeois parties. The Party's objective of expanding its representation in the Assemblies, of strengthening the Left representation, has not been achieved; on the other hand, there are certain setbacks.

Taking all the nine States, our Party's performance has been far from satisfactory. We have won 11 seats in Tamil Nadu, 6 in Bihar, 5 in Punjab, 2 in Maharashtra, 1 in Rajasthan and nil in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa and U.P.

The Party was aware that our movement was weak in these States and had decided to pay special attention to the Hindi-speaking areas. Some efforts, no doubt, have been made in this direction, but they hardly meet even the fringe of the situation. States like Maharashtra, U.P., have not shown any progress despite the favourable atmosphere, and the cause needs to be investigated.

In most of these States, the Party base is extremely weak and no serious efforts have been made to rectify this weakness. Some of the State Committees refuse to pay any attention to mass organisations, which often become playthings of inner struggles. In some States, the strength of some mass organisations has shown a tendency to fall. There is absolutely no chance for the Party's line to succeed if these weaknesses are not overcome and our organisation does not develop the minimum political strength necessary to intervene for a broad front.

Left Unity

Our recent advance in achieving Left unity should not blind us to the fact that the struggle for that unity was a hard one. To develop understanding with the CPI, to bring that organisation to the path of unity, to make it give up its anti-Marxist alliance in Kerala, demanded continuous struggle as well as appeal. It also meant struggle against sectarianism and scepticism in our own ranks, some of whom equate understanding with the CPI to conciliation with revisionism.

In the recent Assembly elections, there was further progress along the line of Left unity, of understanding among the two parties. Our Party ranks and leaders should know that this progress also could be achieved by fighting the grabbing tendencies and opportunist understanding of the CPI elements in many places.

In the course of the elections, the feeling and basis for growing Left unity has been strengthened. In almost all the States, closer relationship between the CPI(M) and CPI has developed through common work and propaganda for each other's candidates and addressing of meetings by the leaders of both parties. In the final analysis, in all the States, the two parties represented in the main the Left forces and their coming together on the electoral platform has strengthened the urge for Left unity among the ranks as well as the people.

Our experience of the CPI, however, is not uniform. Along with a general desire for genuine cooperation, there were instances of withholding of cooperation, sabotage and working against the line of Left unity. These mostly represented the Dange wing hostile to Left unity. But not only they. The result was that in many places the local CPI worked against us. In some places they put up candidates against us—in Punjab, Rajasthan. In some places they did not pull their weight for us and so on, Bihar for instance. In many other places, however, their cadres honestly worked for the success of our candidates—in Bihar and elsewhere.

In its election approach and tactics, the CPI seemed to be underestimating the authoritarian danger and hesitating to give up completely its former approach of equating the Congress (I) with other bourgeois-landlord parties. This time, perhaps, it had less inhibition to join hands with the Congress (U) certified as a secular party.

It is obvious that the CPI will continue to be subject to its own vacillations and hesitations despite its accepted stand of waging an irreconcilable fight against authoritarianism. Its vacillations will be seen on the question of a broader front of resistance.

Along with this, there will be pressures of the Dange group to draw the CPI backward towards conciliation and collaboration with the Congress (I). The struggle for Left unity has to take note

of these factors and our Party while recognising the favourable atmosphere will have to be vigilant against these vacillations and hesitations.

We must note the various types of fronts that the Party has succeeded in developing in the fight against the authoritarian forces, in the struggle to isolate them and the specific weight of our Party and the Left forces in them.

There is, first, the West Bengal Left Front where our Party is in a dominant position with its vast mass base and influence, and our Left partners are a small force compared with us. It is a combination of Left forces led by us with our overwhelming influence compared with others. The Tripura front is still more overwhelmingly led by the CPI(M).

The second type is the Kerala front. It is not a Left front but includes the Congress (U), Kerala Congress, Muslim League. Here again, our Party is bigger than any other party, it is the biggest single force, but not in the same position as our Party in West Bengal. Even aided by other Left parties like the CPI and the RSP, it does not reach that position. The non-Left forces are also strong and they have to be with us so long as they seek to escape dependence on the Congress (I). The conflicts between the various bourgeois parties, and the correlation of forces arising from them, necessitate an alliance and understanding with us. This is a broad front today including some opposition bourgeois parties, the Congress (U), etc.

The third type of alliance that defeated the Congress (I) is the Tamil Nadu alliance where the democratic party, the AIADMK, constitutes the major force but is unable to win the election without the help of the Left parties. The alliance in Punjab also belongs to this category. In Tamil Nadu, the major force is not the Left, and the Ministry formed by the AIADMK cannot be expected to follow in the footsteps of Ministries, led by us, though there is some scope for popular measures.

In the course of our struggle against authoritarianism, we will meet with varying forms of alliances or understandings in which the strength of our Party, the Left forces and the other parties will vary. In some, our strength may be greater than others, in others,

we will be small in popular strength, nonetheless, a vital part of the common resistance against the forces of authoritarianism.

Our Party along with the Left and democratic parties will have to continue our efforts for building a broader resistance front. It will be wrong to expect, however, a repetition of the past or a combination like the Janata Party emerging again. What exact shape such a broad resistance front will take will be decided by the correlation of different forces. The possibility of a broader front under the existing conditions depends on how we succeed in mobilising the Left and democratic forces for that purpose. The Jullundur Resolution of our Party, it is known, laid stress on the development of Left unity and the consolidation of Left and democratic forces in the fight against authoritarianism, while calling for a forum of broader resistance.

Assessment of Election Results

The results of the election in nine States are represented below:

GUJARAT: Total number of seats 182
Congress (I) 140; Janata 21; BJP 9.

MADHYA PRADESH: Total seats 320
Congress (I) 246; BJP 60; Janata 2; CPI 2.

ORISSA: Total seats 147
Congress (I) 117; Lok Dal 13; BJP 3; Congress (U) 2; CPI 4; Independents 7.

PUNJAB: Total seats 117
Congress (I) 63; Akali 37; CPI 9; CPI(M) 5; BJP 1; Others 2.

RAJASTHAN: Total seats 200
Congress (I) 133; BJP 32; Janata 8; Janata (S) 7; Congress (U) 6; CPI 1; CPI(M) 1; Others 12.

UTTAR PRADESH: Total seats 425 (declared 419)
Congress (I) 305; Lok Dal 58; Congress (U) 13; BJP 10; Janata (S) 4; CPI 7.

TAMIL NADU: Total seats 234
AIADMK 129; Congress (I) 30; DMK 38; CPI(M) 11; CPI 10; Indian Union Muslim League 1; Janata 2; Gandhi-Kamaraj National Congress 6; Forward Bloc 3; TNKC 3.

MAHARASHTRA: Total seats 288
Congress (I) 186; Congress (U) 47; Janata 17; BJP 14; PWP 8;
CPI(M) 2; CPI 2; Others 12.

BIHAR: Total seats 321
Congress (I) 167; Lok Dal 42; Janata 13; BJP 21; CPI 23;
Congress (U) 14; CPI(M) 6; JMM 13; MCC 1; FB 1;
Janata (S) 1; Independents 19.

An important feature of the election was the use of violence and gangsterism by the ruling party along with the misuse of official authority in some constituencies of Bihar and U.P.

Udit Narain Sharma, a candidate contesting election from a constituency in the Fatehpur district of U.P. was shot dead. Two other Independent candidates from two other districts were killed. Besides, two political workers of the BJP including a ten-year boy in Mainpuri were shot dead.

In Bihar, according to official information, the death toll was 27. The Governor of Bihar, A. B. Kidwai, said that on the poll day there were 232 violent incidents.

Dual Process—Fall in Voting Percentage

With the swing of votes in the January elections in favour of the Indira Congress, it was clear that the Assembly elections would go in her favour. The question was how big her victory would be?

Meanwhile, the situation appeared to be somewhat changing. The inability of the Indira Gandhi Government to control prices, the failure to give relief to the people was starting a process of disillusionment among the enthusiastic voters of the Congress (I). This became evident during the election campaign of Indira Gandhi when she failed to draw big crowds and her meetings were sparsely attended.

This was the same process that had started with the Janata Party during the 1977 and 1978 Assembly elections. Compared with the Parliamentary elections, the Janata Party lost nearly 10 per cent of the vote in the Assembly elections but won two-thirds of the seats. The disillusionment of the masses in both cases started within a few months, but did not immediately change the trend of the election results.

In the present elections also, the process of disillusionment with the Congress (I) had started. But this did not mean any swing in favour of the bourgeois opposition parties who were the main opponents of the Congress (I) in the elections. On the other hand, so far as the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties were concerned, the process of dissatisfaction and disillusionment with them had not yet come to an end. On the contrary, their disintegration, their failure to come together, had perhaps added to their alienation from the masses.

The result of this dual process has been a considerable fall in the polling percentage—the percentage of people going in for voting was very low in many States—only in Tamil Nadu and Punjab a high level was maintained, with the result that the Congress (I) and its alliance were defeated in Tamil Nadu and escaped narrowly a defeat in Punjab. In Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK alliance with the Left secured more than 50 per cent of the vote and captured a two-thirds majority in the Assembly. Instead of being overwhelmed and demoralised by the Congress (I)'s sweeping victory, one should remember that this has a narrower base among the people than at the time of its success in the Parliamentary elections.

The percentage of polling in January 1980 was 56.80. In 1977 it was 60.84 and in 1971 it was 55.29.

The final figures of the recent polling are not yet available. But perhaps this may prove to be the lowest polling on record.

According to press reports there was heavy polling (around 70%) only in Tamil Nadu and Punjab (50 to 60%). In Rajasthan the polling was between 50 and 55%. In U.P. it was 45%. In Bihar it was as low as 25% in many constituencies. In Orissa the polling was between 40 and 45%. In Maharashtra it was hardly 50%. In Gujarat the polling was between 45 and 50%. In Madhya Pradesh also only about half the electorate voted.

Big electoral victories notwithstanding, the Congress (I) secured a smaller percentage of this low polling than in the January Parliamentary elections, at least in seven States. In Gujarat, the Congress (I) polled 51.1% of the polled votes whereas in the January election it had polled more than 55% when the

polling percentage was 53.69%. In Punjab, the Congress (I) share of the poll dropped by more than 7.5% compared with the January Lok Sabha election. The party which contested all the 117 seats and won 63, polled 44.96% against 52.45% reached in January. This is, however, 10.89% higher than the united Congress party's share in the 1977 elections.

Press reports say the final tally in the new House in Maharashtra is Congress (I)-186, etc. "If the Lok Sabha election results were to be taken as an index for assessing the popularity of the Congress (I), the party should have won not fewer than 230 seats in the Assembly elections. This was also the pre-poll forecast of the party leaders of the State."

"Poor polling all over the State favoured the Congress (I). Since 1977, when the Janata Party toppled the Congress from power, the voters' turn-out has been showing a decline in every successive election. A steep fall in the polling percentage was registered in the Assembly elections. In some of the Bombay constituencies it was as low as 28%" (*The Times of India*). The overall percentage of voting in Greater Bombay was 38. During the Lok Sabha poll the Congress (I) secured about 53% of the votes in the State, whereas in the Assembly poll it secured 44%—a fall of nine per cent.

In Orissa, the Congress (I) secured 47% of the votes whereas in the Parliamentary election its share was 55.69%. In January it had gained majority in 143 out of the 147 Assembly constituencies whereas in May it could capture only 117 seats. The Congress (I) secured less votes than the combined opposition in not less than 46 constituencies.

Falsification and Goondaism

In Bihar, the Congress (I) vote increased by 10.61% from the 23.53% it secured in the 1977 elections. Yet, compared with the January Parliamentary elections (34.14%), it fell in the Assembly poll. The Congress (I) could poll more than the combined vote of the opposition parties—the Congress (U), Janata, Lok Dal—only in about a 100 constituencies. In the rest of the seats, the combined strength of the opposition was more than that of the Congress (I).

Commenting on the percentage of polling, recent press reports say, "surprisingly, the poll results show that 55.56% of the electorate of 3.97 crores exercised their franchise in Bihar. This high percentage of voting (for Bihar), it is believed, was not due to sudden enthusiasm among the voters on polling day, but to large-scale rigging and booth-capturing which marked the Bihar elections". The narrow majority of the Congress (I) in Bihar is not a genuine majority, but has been contrived by goondaism, booth-capturing, use of guns and falsification of election results. In many places and constituencies, the full power of the State was used to help the ruling party at the Centre. Opposition parties were harassed and obstructed in their movement; the voters in many places were intimidated; in some places booths were captured by the polling or district officials to help the Congress (I). Counting was stopped or postponed in a few constituencies where the Left or opposition candidates were winning. The Chief Election Commissioner was neither informed nor was his advice sought by local poll officials. A statement issued by the CPI office said that in a constituency where repoll was ordered, the District Commissioner and other officials captured the booth, beat the CPI candidate and his agent, seized the ballot papers and cast votes for the Congress (I) candidate. There is no doubt that the narrow majority achieved by the Congress (I) could not have been possible but for these illegalities and falsification of election results.

That the Congress (I) should be reduced to this strait, in spite of the division of oppositional vote, shows how it has lost ground during the last three months since it captured the seat of power at the Centre.

In Tamil Nadu, the Congress (I) share of vote dropped precipitously. Whereas the DMK suffered a marginal decline from 23.1% in the January elections to 22.43% in the June elections, the Congress (I) share dropped from 31% in January to 20.6% in June.

These are significant indications in the shift of popular estimates and mood which have an important bearing on the continuing struggle against authoritarianism.

This does not do away with the fact that the authoritarian party has now got a much firmer hold over the Government and the administration. But, it, at the same time, shows that, notwithstanding its popular mandate, it lacks a firm base among the people and instability is inherent in the situation.

Opposition Bourgeois-Landlord Parties

The bourgeois-landlord parties whose leadership refused to forge a common electoral front against the Congress (I) are reduced to a sorry plight. Splintered and divided, unable to offer a viable alternative because of sheer fragmentation, they made a miserable showing, notwithstanding their considerable mass following, and the fact that together they were more powerful in the electorate than the Congress (I). Their electoral antics have brought reverses to the democratic movement and created obstacles in the way of developing the unity of Left and democratic forces.

The elections have shown that while the united Janata Party was an all-India force, its splintered groups have only regional influence. None of these groups has been able to secure more than 20 per cent of the seats in any State. And all have shown varying strength from State to State.

Only in Gujarat, the Janata Party led by Chandra Sekhar has emerged as the largest single opposition group. This seems to be the strength of the old Congress (O) group led by Morarji Desai. In the rest of India the Janata Party, consisting mostly of the former Socialists and the Congress (O), has made a poor showing.

The Lok Dal

In the Hindi-speaking States of U.P. and Bihar, it is the Janata (S), Lok Dal led by Charan Singh, that has emerged as the second largest party, though far behind the Congress (I).

Charan Singh's party has won 57 seats in the U.P. Assembly which may be regarded as quite a good performance considering the electoral swing. But in reality the figures show how the electoral swing had gone rapidly against the Lok Dal in the last five months, shrinking the base of Charan Singh's mass following. In the Parliamentary elections, the Lok Dal had secured an absolute majority in not less than 181 Assembly constituencies. It

was because of this that Charan Singh was boasting of forming a Ministry in U.P. and was unwilling to sign any agreement on seats with any other party. Little did he realise that every move of his was being watched by the sensitive electorate, and everyone of his eccentric and reactionary statements undermined the faith of his following in him.

Bharatiya Janata Party

In Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh which have been the traditional strongholds of the Jana Sangh, the Bharatiya Janata Party has emerged as the main opposition. It has secured 32 seats in Rajasthan and 60 in Madhya Pradesh. The other parties—the Janata, Lok Dal, Congress (U)—have been wiped out. The Jana Sangh-RSS combine thrived on its association with other parties and forces in the united Janata Party. They seized a disproportionate share of power in the Central and State Government and in the party. Now they are reduced to the rock bottom of their influence, though their total electoral tally may be slightly bigger than the other parties. It should not be forgotten that in several constituencies of various States, the Bharatiya Janata Party was openly supporting the Congress (I) against the opposition candidates when it found that its candidates have no chance. Reducing the strength of the opposition parties was one of its objectives.

Congress (U)

The Congress (U) has again failed to click except in Maharashtra. In the rest of the States its performance seems to be miserable. In Maharashtra, it has emerged as the major opposition group far ahead of others, though far behind the Congress (I). It has secured 47 seats out of 284, whereas in the Parliamentary elections it had secured only one parliamentary seat and had a majority only in 22 Assembly constituencies. Perhaps this is due to some adventitious factors—the inner-discontent in the Congress (I) over tickets. The distribution of tickets had offended the dominant Maratha peasant community and the Congress (U) seems to have been its beneficiary. It is doubtful whether all its 47 members will remain in the opposition.

Such is the debacle of the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties. They are all reduced to small or big groups in Assemblies, but this does not really reflect their strength among the people. In the various States they were the main contenders of the Congress (I) and their total vote tally was larger in many States, or was short by only 4 or 5 per cent, than the Congress (I) vote. The main mass in these States still continues to be under the influence of rival bourgeois-landlord parties.

Why the Debacle?

Certain factors must be noted in considering the debacle of the bourgeois-landlord parties in several States. The people were undergoing intense suffering with the skyhigh prices of sugar, edible oils, pulses, kerosene and every necessity of life and giving expression to their indignation and resentment in various ways. There was open criticism of Indira Gandhi's rule, open expression of disappointment with her performance.

And yet the opposition bourgeois parties could not use the situation in their favour. On the other hand, Indira Gandhi put them on the defensive, charging them with the responsibility for high prices. And the opposition had no answer except to bleat that during the Janata Party rule prices were stabilised. This certainly could not impress the electorate.

The failure of the opposition bourgeois parties in the final analysis was due to the fact that they had no alternative policies, that they also were working within the class-limitations set by their class interests. To Indira Gandhi's demagogy and accusations they could not reply with a new convincing programme of mass relief. Being recently in power they were held responsible for the existing state of affairs, while disillusionment had started with Indira Gandhi also. The debacle of these parties once again shows that the battle against authoritarianism cannot be carried on in isolation from the people's struggle for livelihood and without hurting the vested interests. The effects of class policies pursued by these parties when in power had already ruined their credibility and now they had no alternative programme to offer to the people.

Assam and Minority

But the bankruptcy of the opposition bourgeois-landlord parties was not only seen on the price question and the failure to offer an alternative programme. In their bourgeois oppositional politics they did everything to drive the Muslim minority into solidly voting for Indira Gandhi.

The bourgeois opposition parties did try to cultivate the Muslim vote by inflaming Muslim passions on the Afghan issue, branding the Indira Gandhi Government's attitude as surrender to Soviet Communism—the familiar cry of the Jana Sangh-RSS crowd. Indira Gandhi threw them on the defensive by exposing the secret meeting of Moshe Dayan, Israeli Minister, with Morarji Desai and Vajpayee.

Nothing, however, exposed the bankruptcy of the bourgeois opposition parties as the Assam issue. On this issue there was double failure on the part of these parties.

In the first place, the Assam situation posed a challenge to the integrity and unity of the country and every patriot and democrat was bound to raise his voice in defence of the unity of the country exposing the game of the imperialists and the doings of the secessionists. It was a vital sensitive issue to expose the policies hitherto pursued by the Congress Governments and show how they had led to divisive results.

But the opposition parties in a thoroughly unashamed manner abandoned the fight for unity, refused to expose imperialism and, in order to woo the votes of the Assamese in the coming elections, gave open support to their secessionist movement. They sought to use this as an election issue presenting it as an issue between the people of Assam and the Indira Gandhi Government. They left the talk about defending national unity and integrity to Indira Gandhi who made full use of it. The opposition parties thus enabled the Congress (I) to put a lid on its past policies and escape criticism.

But this was not all. This opportunist stand for petty electoral advantage did havoc to minority opinion, enabling Indira Gandhi to gather it solidly behind her. The minorities knew that in Assam the movement was directed against them—Bangladesh immigrants, mainly Muslims. They knew that they were being attacked and massacred, their houses were being burnt, their

women molested and children hacked. In their opportunism the bourgeois opposition parties did not condemn these outrages, and did not demand protection for the minorities. Not one demanded that the genuine Indian citizens, simply because they were Muslims, could not be driven out of Assam labelling them as foreigners. On the other hand, the Jana Sangh-RSS combination, the BJP, while supporting the movement, turned a blind eye to this reactionary cry for the expulsion of the minority. As against this the Indira Gandhi Government declared its intention to protect the minorities. What chance had the opposition with the minorities under these circumstances? It was no accident that the bourgeois opposition parties surrendered the initiative on the minorities question to Indira Gandhi, and enabled her to get their support. It was all the more inevitable when the opposition parties included such rabid communal elements as the RSS-Jana Sangh-BJP and when other parties did not come out clearly against its activities.

The Harijan Vote

This time, again, the untouchables *en masse* seem to have voted for the Congress (I). Notwithstanding the continued atrocities during the last three months under the Indira Gandhi rule, despite the atrocities under the Andhra Pradesh Congress (I) regime, the Harijans have shown a lack of trust in the opposition parties. This time even Jagjivan Ram seems to be a mere, a feeble, echo of his former self, unable to rouse wide sections against Indira Gandhi.

The reason for this must be understood. First, the Congress (I) image persists because of several concessions to the Scheduled Castes, which act as a bribe to the educated. Second, the untouchables and their leaders know that the Jana Sangh-RSS is openly an advocate of the Hindu caste system and in the villages acts as such. Opposition leaders like Charan Singh are known for their anti-Harijan bias and their followers in the villages make no bones about it. The Left has yet to make a dent among the Harijans in most of the States. Except where our Party has an independent base among this section, the Harijans generally voted for the Congress (I). This is mainly because many leaders of the Harijans are bought over by the Congress (I) and they use their influence to secure votes for it. Some fire-eating RPI leaders

of Maharashtra are generally to be found on the side of the Congress (I) in the elections.

The influence of the authoritarian party on the vital sections of the untouchables and the minority constitutes a serious menace to the struggle for democracy, to the struggle for the defeat of the authoritarian forces. The whole problem requires immediate attention and a new approach to remove this weakness from the democratic and class movements. One aspect of this tying of minorities and untouchables to the Congress (I) must be properly taken into consideration. The more the democratic movement presses on the authoritarian forces, the more will the latter be inclined to make reactionary and disruptive concessions to the opportunist leaders of the minorities and the untouchables. The reservation concessions are used by reactionaries to build line-ups dangerous to the democratic and class movements. The Aligarh University Bill is another measure of appeasement of reactionary forces. While the just and democratic demands of the Muslim minorities are to be supported by the working class and the democratic movement, concessions to reactionary outlook, fanaticism and obscurantism should be resisted. These continue to promote separatism and prevent the merger of the minority movement in the common democratic movement. Today the appeal to Islamic fundamentalism is a major source of strength to the reactionary forces in the Muslim countries.

A New Realignment

Having lost the electoral battle badly, having surrendered the initiative to the Congress (I), the bourgeois opposition parties are bound to be demoralised and display two contradictory tendencies, noted by the March 1980 document of the Central Committee on "The Present Situation". It said, "Since the dissolution, again, both the trends are in evidence: on the one hand, a growing offensive of authoritarianism and at the same time an urge for common resistance in Parliament, combined with disruptive manifestations in the matter of electoral understanding, the united Left forces pursuing a consistent policy of common resistance inside Parliament and in the context of the coming elections."

The document further noted, "the bourgeois-landlord parties are far more sharply divided than before and their inner-crisis is more intense than before. The movement of the masses and their militancy, the sharpened contradiction with the ruling party all will drive those who do not seek reconciliation with Indira Gandhi to pick up the gauntlet and throw their weight on the side of the popular forces. But, in the process, a new realignment of forces is bound to emerge—a realignment which will place greater weight on alliance with the Left forces."

The same contradictory tendencies will continue after the Assembly elections, notwithstanding initial demoralisation of the bourgeois opposition parties. During the elections these parties exaggerated their strength, refused to come to terms with each other and reach electoral adjustments till the last. Only after the nominations were over some of them in Bihar, Congress (U) leaders and Karpoori Thakur (Lok Dal), made a fresh appeal to the electorate to vote for the best candidate irrespective of party affiliation and prevent division of votes. Biju Patnaik, after the election reverses in Orissa, awoke to the need of unity among the opposition parties and called for it. The Lok Dal leader, Karpoori Thakur, is calling for a united party of the former Janata constituents and Congress (U).

Charan Singh, Lok Dal president, talks of the blackest day for India and calls for mass actions. On hearing the election results, he said in a statement, today was "the blackest day for India's infant democracy, for the electoral process has returned results which official minions manipulate at the point of gun or through violation of the law". He, therefore, felt that Parliament had become irrelevant and would become increasingly so. "Where do we go from here?" he asked, and added, "the shadows of the leaders of our recent struggle for national emancipation are looking for an answer". Thus speaks one leader of a bourgeois-landlord party.

It is quite clear that a number of bourgeois leaders are in no hurry to accept the electoral verdict and keep quiet. Appeal to the masses is inevitable sooner or later. In the background of the intensified economic crisis, the rival bourgeois parties will not

easily accept their deprivation from all power. Besides, the mass discontent over the price-situation is too good an opportunity to be lost in the struggle to recover the lost ground among the people.

The Ruling Party

We have already seen that the success in the Assembly elections strengthens the authoritarian forces and creates a dangerous situation for Indian democracy. Without seeking to underestimate the danger, we must take other facts into consideration also which act as a counter-force.

In the first place the authoritarian Indira forces have met with a rebuff in not less than three States—Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Punjab, the rout in the first being complete. In almost all States, it has secured its victory on a reduced percentage of polling and reduced percentage of its share of the polled votes. The spate of murders in U.P. and Bihar, the gangster attacks against opposition candidates and their supporters, the open use of the official machinery for the ruling party reveal the weakness of its "popular" mandate. These developments forecast growing instability in the coming days with the masses rapidly changing their affiliation from one party to another. The Congress (I) support is bound to go down very rapidly. Simultaneously, the Congress (I) is not a united party—it is already showing fissiparous tendencies. The manipulation in distribution of tickets done with the purpose of strengthening the youth gang of Sanjay Gandhi and the undermining of the strength of the old guard who had an independent following of their own, led to a large number of rebel candidates all over the country, which did affect to some extent the Congress (I) success. Besides, the desire to undermine the strength of the old guard necessarily meant relying on "young men" from other castes—castes different from the one to which the old leaders belonged. This deprivation of a whole section from leading positions and power is assailing Congress (I) unity in the midst of its victory. The wranglings over evolving a consensus for electing leaders of the various Assembly parties clearly reveal the inner-situation inside the ruling party. In Madhya Pradesh, no consensus could be evolved and the issue was referred to the High

Command. In Maharashtra, the Maratha wing is up in revolt against the choice of a Muslim and this may even lead to a split in the party. In Punjab, Darbara Singh was elected but only after mutual charges of betrayal in the election by rival groups. A 'consensus' may be evolved but how long it will last is a question. The trick of making a Harijan a Chief Minister in Rajasthan or a Muslim in Maharashtra will not stabilise the situation but will exacerbate it. The choice of Sanjay men as Chief Ministers in many States is bound to intensify the internal conflict.

The death of Sanjay Gandhi who had the backing of the "youth wing" and who was used as the battering ram against the old guard is bound to create new uncertainties and problems in the Congress (I). It is a matter of speculation now how long the Chief Minister nominees of Sanjay Gandhi will be able to hold on to their posts.

If the bourgeois opposition parties are in disarray, the ruling party itself is suffering from internal instability and uncertainty.

This should inspire the confidence that the forces of dictatorship can be countered and put in straitjacket.

The Increased Challenge of Authoritarianism

The process of inner-conflict will take some time to assert itself. In the meantime, the authoritarian party, egged on by its storm-trooper wing, is making every effort to consolidate itself by attacking the Left forces, especially our Party and the three Left-oriented Governments. The West Bengal Congress (I) youth recently demanded action against the West Bengal Ministry and announced that Indira Gandhi had promised to deal with the Left Front Ministry after settling the problem of Assam and Tripura. The Congress (I) leaders from Tripura have been sending telegrams for the installation of President's rule in Tripura after the riots and burnings of June 7. Zail Singh's second speech in the Lok Sabha and Makwana's speech in Jammu, both openly threatened action against the Tripura Government.

Propaganda and political blackmail both are being used to create the ground for action against the three Left-oriented Ministries.

However, if Tripura could escape dismissal after the mass killings, and if Zail Singh made a conciliatory statement in the Rajya Sabha, it was solely due to the fact that the Central Government realises that the secessionist and imperialist challenge in Tripura cannot be met by alienating the CPI(M) whose mass base offers the biggest obstacle to the conspirators.

These pressures hinder an immediate onslaught against the Left-oriented Ministries and they have to be reckoned with by the Congress (I) Government notwithstanding the demands of the Sanjay gang for action.

For the rest, the charges against the West Bengal Ministry of corruption, murders of Congress (I) men and breakdown of law and order continue unabated to create fertile ground for future action.

The North-East Crisis

The crisis in Assam and the North-Eastern border States introduces a new element in the Indian political situation. Never before did the imperialist forces act so brazenly to intervene in our country to encourage and support secessionist movements. Their agents, the Christian missionaries, have been carrying on these anti-national activities openly and the U.S. Ambassador has been paying visits to these sensitive areas. This is the biggest challenge delivered by the imperialists to the Government and the people of India. And the Congress (I) Government knows that it cannot be met without popular support and the support of the political parties. In Assam in particular, the administration has gone over to the secessionists, and the Government knows that the movement is financed by the imperialists. And the significant fact is that it is only the Left parties headed by us that are taking a firm stand against the secessionists while almost all the bourgeois parties are supporting them. There is no doubt that there are enough adventurers in the ruling party who would like to settle accounts with the CPI(M) immediately, but such a course with the imperialist challenge in the North-East, may be difficult to embark upon.

Nonetheless, we must be prepared for the worst, ready to face any challenge, as the dictatorial party is already revealing its anti-democratic ways in different directions.

Drive Against Democracy

In the background of the economic crisis and the breakdown of the economy, the need for strengthening the dictatorial apparatus, for taking quick measures before the mass enthusiasm and illusions wear out, is obvious. It is further rendered necessary by the fact that the new rulers for the most part are handpicked men who have no influence with the people. They cannot run the administration by observing democratic norms. The caucus that will be in power with a few old leaders as showboys constitutes the storm-troopers of the authoritarian party. They are anti-Communist and pass off their hostility to democracy as opposition to Communism. And none can say how many of them can become easy playthings of the CIA and U.S. imperialism as all of them are anti-Soviet to the core. Signs are not wanting to show that the authoritarian party means business. A series of measures it has taken and statements its spokesmen have made show that they are unrepentant about the Emergency and its misdeeds, and offer no assurance that the Emergency period is a thing of the past.

Indira Gandhi, in an interview with a foreign journal, has virtually restated that the Emergency was for the good of the people and the people's verdict against her in 1977 was wrong, and that they have rectified their mistake by voting her to power in January 1980.

Secondly, the entire outfit of the Emergency days is already in the field. The notorious officers are back in power ready to pounce on the people at a nod of their master. Cases against them, including criminal cases against Bansi Lal, Sanjay Gandhi and others, have been withdrawn—cases which relate to heinous crimes against opponents, or to defalcations, cheating the State and citizens, and making false declarations to the Government to get licences. All the scandals relating to the Maruti affair and the Kissa Kursi Ka case have now been laid to rest by a fiat of the new Government. Things have reached such a pass that

Magistrates dare not try defamation cases against the relatives of Sanjay Gandhi and find no compunction in dismissing them. The ordinary citizen has no remedy against the ruling caucus.

The Supreme Court has declared part of the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution giving priority to the Directive Principles over Fundamental Rights as null and void of the Constitution. But Indira Gandhi's Law Minister threatens to restore the provision. The Supreme Court gave its verdict against the Amendment, declaring that Parliament cannot interfere with the basic structures of the Constitution. But the ruling party claims that right for Parliament so that a dictatorship can be introduced constitutionally. The talk of changing the Constitution was muted all these days. But now with the victory in the Assembly elections, it has come out in the open. No less a person than Chenna Reddy, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister of the Congress (I), the other day openly called for a new Constitution—not certainly to further democratise it. Soon, one is likely to hear about the Presidential form of Government or the virtues of the French Constitution. The principle of preventive detention virtually rejected during the Janata regime has been again brought into operation and a law to detain hoarders and blackmarketeers has been passed. It only now requires to add a few words to make the law all-pervading. It is no accident that this was the first important legislation of the new Government.

And further reminders of the Emergency are given by the Ordinance promulgated by the Government of Gujarat and the legislation brought forward by the Karnataka Congress (I) Ministry. These all relate to banning of all strikes in the so-called essential services and prescribe ten years' imprisonment of workers going on strike. Under the essential services all important services and a large number of undertakings including transport are listed and the Government is empowered to extend the measure to any new industry it considers as essential.

The Economic Situation

The Jullundur Congress Resolution stated that the drive for authoritarianism has its basis and draws sustenance from the economic situation and the chronic crisis of our economy.

The return of the Congress (I) to power coincides with a virtual breakdown of the economic order under the impact of three forces: (1) the inner-crisis of the economy, (2) the recession in the advanced countries, and (3) the high oil prices which the oil countries are demanding from us. These three factors have now made the economy uncontrollable and the Government is forced to make petty manoeuvres against one force or the other.

As the January 1980 Statement of the Central Committee said, "But, despite its parliamentary strength, its big majority in the Lok Sabha, it cannot offer any stability to the people. The economic situation is already out of control. The Government is unable to control the prices and the Commerce Minister has already announced that they are not under control. The Preventive Detention Act has proved useless against the hoarders. And the masses twice cheated on the question of high prices and economic stability are getting disillusioned and are already on the move."

The inflation rate has already reached 20 per cent and not only there is no sign of its abatement but every indication that it will soon exceed the pre-Emergency rate of 23 to 27 per cent. All facts point to a heavy deficit in the balance of payments and the necessity of a foreign loan to bale the economy out of the precarious situation. The Government is already forced to woo the multinationals. The Vice-President of India and the Commerce Minister recently urged a fresh look at the question of facilities for multinationals, saying 'ideological' considerations should not be allowed to deny India the benefits from operations of these corporations. With exports slacking and imports high-priced and rendered compulsory because of economic breakdown, the Indian economy will be under constant pressure from the western imperialists for concessions.

The economic dependence of India on foreign imports has increased with India's failure to meet the needs of the country. Today, India is importing edible oil, steel, coaking coal and now sugar also, spending thousands of crores of rupees on some of the avoidable items. The high prices of oil complete the dismal picture.

Decline in National Income

The year 1979-80 showed a decline in real national income, with fall in agricultural production and stagnation in industrial production. The gross national product dropped by 3 per cent. With the continuing inflationary process, there is hardly any chance of recovery. The World Bank commenting on this situation says that India has a "compelling need" for increased aid disbursements in the coming years to reduce the budgetary burden of the excessive public sector investment requirements and to overcome the foreign resources constraint. It advocates 'higher tax efforts', etc., and among other things, economising on non-developmental expenditure 'specially subsidies'. If subsidies on foodgrains are withdrawn it will mean an attack on the present consumption standards and an inflationary spiral. It will not be surprising if the Congress (I) Government sooner or later chooses this path in the name of demand management.

The Economic Survey of the Government of India already makes the menacing statement, "Therefore, the control of inflation in 1980-81 will require much more than the regulation of individual prices which show spectacular increases. Aggregate demand management will have to be pursued actively. In addition, a combination of policies which increase productivity while at the same time restraining the growth of money incomes within the limits of productivity growth will have to be pursued . . .". Money incomes here means wages and salaries of employees and not profits.

The Indira Gandhi Government, forced to seek new resources, has already imposed a burden of nearly 2000 crores of rupees on the people by raising the price of oil, petroleum products, fertilisers. This is bound to push transport costs up adding to the inflationary price-rise.

The Central Budget

The Finance Minister's speech presenting the Central Budget, underlines the breakdown of the economy, developing over the last three decades, though the Minister, to provide an alibi to his own party, ascribes it to the mismanagement of the Janata Government.

“The performance of power, coal and railway sectors was one of the most serious deficiencies on the economic scene Inadequate supply of coal and its poor quality, poor maintenance, equipment damage resulting in increased planned and unplanned outages, and poor management were responsible for the decline in the percentage of thermal capacity utilisation to as low as 45 per cent.” For once labour-troubles are not mentioned. And the plain unvarnished truth stands out that corruption and other evils have brought down the production of energy to 45 per cent of capacity inflicting terrible suffering on the people. It is obvious that this breakdown has developed over three decades of poor management.

Naturally this led to increased unemployment which grew by more than 9 per cent in the year. The number of jobseekers on the live register of the employment exchange rose from 13.15 million at the end of January 1979 to 14.44 million a year later, i.e., by 9.8 per cent.

The stagnation in the economy can be realised from the fact that between 1971 and 1979, employment in the private sector increased by only 5 lakhs and that in the public sector by 40 lakhs. No wonder the number of registered unemployed has reached one crore and forty lakhs.

The Finance Minister further underlined the adverse balance of payments position: “Export growth in value terms has only been 8 per cent or so which means there was hardly any growth in terms of volume as world inflation has proceeded at about 10 per cent in 1979-80.” The import bill has increased because of a steep increase in oil prices and other imports like fertilisers, leading to a trade gap of Rs. 2232 crores, the highest on record. The result is that the “garibi hatao” Government of famished India has decided to export one million tonnes of rice. Besides, the country is forced to export protein food—fish worth Rs. 200 crores. Such are the consequences of the growing breakdown of the economy.

Export rice, export fish and to be in the world market, export sugar when at home the people are forced to buy it at Rs. 8 per kg. and for the benefit of the capitalist path, import steel, coal, edible oils and what not.

Has the Finance Minister any recipe to take India out of the present situation? He has none except blaming the Janata Government.

Deficit Financing

In the first place, what are Mr. Venkataraman’s proposals to hold back inflation and offer relief to the people by way of bringing down prices of essential goods? It is obvious that things cannot go on and the Government will have no stability unless this question is tackled.

The Finance Minister has absolutely no remedy. On the contrary, by leaving an uncovered deficit of Rs. 1400 crores, his budget only ensures the progress of inflation and fleecing of the people. This budgetary deficit comes in the wake of the huge deficits of the preceding years. The budgetary deficit of the Central and State Governments was Rs. 1016 crores in 1977-78; Rs. 1852 crores in 1978-79 and Rs. 1698 crores (according to the budget estimates) for 1979-80. The actual deficit of the Central Government last year was Rs. 2500 crores. How then can the Finance Minister say, “This deficit is only a little over half the deficit of last year. It is my judgement that a deficit of this order will not have a significantly adverse impact on the economy”?

This uncovered deficit, it must be further remembered, comes in the wake of the increase in passenger and railway freight charges, road transport charges due to hike in oil prices—all of which are bound to raise the prices of several goods accelerating the inflationary movement.

Besides, the total uncovered deficit is reduced to Rs. 1400 crores because an almost equal sum of Rs. 800 crores from external loans and Rs. 540 crores from the International Monetary Fund are included in the budget under capital receipts. Otherwise, either the deficit would have doubled or the planning expenditure would have had to be drastically cut down.

Reduction in Planning Expenditure

Under our stagnating economy expenditure under national planning occupies an important place in stimulating the economy.

What has the Finance Minister to offer? Once again, unsustainable claims which are applauded by an ignorant crowd innocent of elementary economic truths. The Finance Minister says, "I am glad to announce that in the light of this review, the annual plan outlay for 1980-81 of the Centre is being raised to Rs. 7340 crores, an increase of Rs. 767 crores over the outlay in the interim budget; compared with last year's original outlay it is higher by 14.5 per cent." The Finance Minister did not tell the people that compared with last year's *original* outlay, prices have risen more than 20 per cent, and an increased plan expenditure of 14.5 per cent actually means reduction in plan expenditure in real terms. Considering that prices will continue to rise during the annual plan period, the real size of the plan, will be reduced very much and it will not help stimulate the economy or relax the rigours of the unemployed. Here we once again come against the dilemma—*inflation or stagnation*. The fear in official circles is that increased plan efforts add to inflation; hence the constant refrain about non-utilisation of existing capacities. It is also not realised or admitted that the failure to utilise existing capacities is not an adventitious development but an integral part of the crisis.

Taxation Relief

Press and Government supporters have joined in a chorus of approval of the budget proposals for tax-relief. While every small relief for the oppressed tax-payer is welcome, and such relief is a rare commodity, to exaggerate these reliefs and to boost them as a great boon for the common man is the tactic of the ruling party and its capitalist supporters.

In the first place these reliefs are to be assessed in the background of the imposition of huge burdens of more than Rs. 2100 crores through increase in oil prices, railway freight (Rs. 200 crores) and fertiliser prices (Rs. 300 crores). The Finance Minister, therefore, cannot claim that his budget is anti-inflationary just because he has not gone in for heavy budgetary taxation proposals.

And in the final analysis, in actual money terms, how much do these reliefs amount to? Only Rs. 34.75 crores in excise duty and

nothing more. Compare this with the Rs. 6000 crores of revenue from excise duties presented in the budget for 1980-81.

Mr. Venkataraman has, however, made many proposals pleasing to the capitalists. He has rendered the convertibility provision harmless which will encourage the private capitalists to borrow freely from the State institutions without fear of losing control over their concerns. Secondly, he has increased the permissible allowance for depreciation for new industries. He has proposed no measures to mop up the profit of the capitalists—big sums they have accumulated due to the inflationary spiral. Nor is there any provision to control or mop up the operations of the parallel economy of speculators and blackmarketeers.

Another pleasing concession to Big Business is removal of restrictions on the deductible amount of expenditure on advertisement, publicity and sales promotion. This is done in the name of helping small and medium houses. It is meant to help Big Business financiers who can now use their money for financing political parties.

The Finance Minister has made the biggest concession to the rural vested interests by proposing to discontinue the levying of wealth tax on agricultural property except on the owners of tea, etc. The reasoning is curious and amounts to saying since the big landlords refuse to pay, the wealth tax should be abolished. The Finance Minister says, "At the time when agricultural property was brought within the tax-net, it was hoped that it would be a potent instrument for mobilising resources from the affluent sections of the agriculturists. But our experience of over the last decade (no Janata here) has been most disappointing. The amount realised as wealth-tax on agricultural property has been less than Rs. one crore per annum... the valuation... leading to complaints of harassment." No doubt the smaller property holders were harassed and should have been given exemption. But the fact that only Rs. one crore per annum could be collected meant that the big landlords refused to pay and that they had bought over the taxation machinery and that the Government did not prosecute them. And naturally so. These are the rural vote-gathers in the big bourgeois-landlord alliance. And these are the people who have

amassed crores, profiting from Government spending in the rural areas under the national planning. The abolition of agricultural wealth-tax exposes the claim of the Finance Minister to stand for the weaker sections.

What does the budget then try to achieve? Half-heartedly it attempts to stimulate the economy by making concessions in excise, and fearful of inflation, it neutralises those concessions in the name of demand management. It is realised that industries are working below capacity because the purchaser has hardly any purchasing power. But it is feared that more purchasing power in his hands will mean inflation. Balancing between the two, the budget lands in promoting both inflation and stagnation. The net result is going to be a further attack on people's living standards.

Under these conditions further demand for foreign loans, concessions to multinationals to promote "employment" are surely likely. And if the World Bank demands its price, attacks on food subsidies may also follow. The budget reveals a perilous economic situation which the Finance Minister has tried to conceal by concentrating attention on petty concessions in excise duties.

The grim economic situation outlined above provides the basis for wide common action against policies leading to one-party dictatorship. The massive economic discontent will constitute the main basis of the fight against authoritarian policies. Along with this, the common basis is supplied by the impending attacks on civil liberties, the mooted changes in the Constitution and the growing collapse of the administration. The happenings in Gwalior a couple of months ago, when the entire police force ran amuck beating lawyers and threatening Judges, suggest that the bureaucratic machine carefully nurtured by the ruling party is getting out of control.

The situation calls for coordinated activity of the Left parties in Parliament. The formation of a Co-ordination Committee of Left parties in Parliament has been welcomed by all. At the same time it is necessary to have, on as many occasions as possible, understanding among the opposition parties to defend democratic rights and liberties, people's livelihood and above all the security and continuation of the Left-oriented Governments. The question

of Left-oriented Governments must be made a common issue of all parties and authoritarianism must be given a big rebuff on this question.

The defence of the Left-oriented Governments is to be carried on among the people by popularising their achievements, the alternative policies they have sponsored to protect democracy and the citizen's livelihood. It is of utmost importance that the Party, along with the Left forces, takes immediate steps to remove all the misunderstandings regarding Tripura developments and reinforce the confidence of the people in the Left Front Ministry.

The main battleground in the coming days will be the mass struggle against worsening economic conditions. Here the widest possible struggles are possible with the drawing in of the opposition bourgeois parties. But the main reliance has to be placed on the mass agitations of the Left and democratic parties for the further intensification of the struggle.

The common battle in the Assemblies which is bound to have response among the discontented masses is only a part of the big struggle against authoritarianism which is to be waged primarily among the masses on issues vitally affecting their livelihood. This will lay the foundation for their intervention on issues directly affecting democracy and popular rights. The working class must be warned of the looming attacks, and immediate steps should be taken to forge the widest possible trade union unity. The kisan movement should be developed by bringing together several organisations for common action. Some leaders of some bourgeois parties seem willing to help in this process. The key in fighting the authoritarian forces is of course a widely spread peasant movement. It is possible, besides, to bring together on the strength of the Left parties the mass organisations of students, women, youth and initiate new resistance.

The post-election situation transfers the main battle to the arena of the mass movement. Here also Left unity must play a leading role. And the Party must persistently pursue the line of uniting all the Left forces so that together they mobilise wider forces from other parties and sources. The battle in the Assemblies and Parliament then will be an auxiliary of the mass battle.

Against Imperialist Conspiracies and Disintegration

The fight against authoritarianism cannot be carried on in isolation from the struggle against imperialist conspiracies against the country. Such neglect places the initiative in the hands of the ruling party and enables it to come forward as the champion of national interests. It is then able to present its authoritarian measures as intended to strengthen the nation against foreign pressures. Certain bourgeois opposition parties keep silent about the imperialist danger while fighting the authoritarian party or take reactionary positions on issues of foreign policy (Afghanistan). This helps the Congress (I) to emerge as the champion of national interests. The struggle against authoritarianism cannot be carried on by neglecting the fight against the disintegrationist tendencies in evidence now in the North-Eastern region. The secessionist movements, encouraged by imperialism, have to be properly placed and the people fully warned against the danger to national unity. This can be done by exposing (1) the unequal development of the State constituent under the capitalist path, (2) the centralisation of power at the Centre and distortion of Centre-State relations under the Congress regime, and (3) appreciation of the growing demands of backward units for equality and economic advance while firmly fighting against their diversion into secessionist channels. In the absence of this all-sided exposure of the policies of the ruling party and the separatist movement, the former will be able to lend credibility to its anti-democratic concept of a strong Centre and present it as an effective weapon of fighting the country's disintegration.

On Present Political Situation**Statement Dated July 1, 1980 Issued by the Central Committee of CPI(M) Following Its Meeting Held in New Delhi on June 26-29, 1980**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi from June 26 to 29, 1980. At the outset the C.C. mourned the death of Comrade A. V. Kunhambu, an outstanding leader of the Party in Kerala, and paid homage to the martyrs killed by Congress(I) hoodlums in West Bengal, by RSS elements in collusion with the Congress(I) in Kerala, and by Naxalite elements inspired by the Congress(I) in Andhra Pradesh.

The Central Committee denounced the aggression on Angola by the white racist regime of South Africa. The C.C. extended its full solidarity and support to the Angola and the SWAPO in their struggle against the South African racists.

The Central Committee welcomed the initiative that is being taken by the Karmal Government of Afghanistan, specially its proposals of May 14 last, for a political solution of the problem that has arisen in the region. Even while the U.S. imperialists are doing everything to intensify hostile activities against Afghanistan, the Soviet Union has made a partial withdrawal of its troops and armour from there. The C.C. appreciated this positive step to facilitate a political solution and hoped that the countries of the region would engage themselves in serious and sincere efforts to find such a solution and frustrate imperialist designs in South-West Asia.

The Central Committee considered the recent development in India-China relations—Chinese Vice-Premier Deng Xiaoping's proposals for improving relations and settling the border problem and the Government of India's positive response to them. Welcoming these developments, the C.C. hoped that they would

soon lead to the normalisation of relations between the two countries.

The Central Committee devoted the whole of its first day's session to discuss the situation in Assam and Tripura on the basis of reports submitted by Comrade Achintya Bhattacharya, Secretary of the Assam State Committee of the Party, and Comrade P. Ramamurti who had visited Tripura recently to study the tragic developments there.

The C.C. came to the conclusion that the Assam agitation has become a movement for secession, for tearing the country apart, a violent movement directed against the linguistic and religious minorities and their Indian citizenship rights. The RSS which swears by the unity of India and a unitary State is lending support to this movement to dismember the country. The imperialists, especially the U.S. imperialists, who have long been conspiring against our country, are giving all encouragement and material help to this secessionist movement. The undue interest shown in this region by the frequent visits of U.S. diplomats, the anti-national activities of certain Christian missionaries have all fully exposed the U.S. imperialist designs.

The struggle to protect the minorities, their Indian citizenship rights, the struggle to defeat the secessionists and preserve India's unity and integrity has to be waged on a countrywide basis.

The C.C. extended its greetings to the Left parties and personalities like Hiren Gohain, who, at enormous risk to their limbs and lives, are opposing the secessionists and championing the cause of the country's integrity.

The Central Committee expressed its serious concern at the developments in Tripura. Because of the strength of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) with its base in both the tribal and non-tribal people, and the existence of the Left Front Government with its pro-people policies for over two years, Tripura had been free of the type of trouble that has been plaguing the rest of the North-Eastern region. The extremists among the tribals in the Tripura Upajati Juba Samity with their trained and armed National Volunteer Force, panicky at their diminishing influence, resorted to a carnage to shatter the peace of the State

and create disaffection against the Left Front Government. Inspired by the Assam agitation, they are also raising the demand for expulsion of all those who have entered the State since 1949. On the other side, the chauvinist Amra Bangalee-Anand Marg have been inciting the passions of the Bengalee population slandering the Left Front Government as one which protects only the interests of the tribals. There are enough facts to show that in Tripura, too, foreign imperialist agencies are very much active in creating instability.

The C.C. noted with satisfaction that the Left Front Government, with the assistance of the Centre, is doing everything to restore normalcy quickly and allay the fears of both the tribal and non-tribal population. It is an extremely difficult task that the Tripura Government is facing. Over two lakh people who have been uprooted, whose homes and property have been destroyed, have to be given relief and rehabilitated. The C.C. called on the people all over the country to rush relief in money and material to Tripura.

The C.C. noted with concern that some elements in Tripura, claiming to belong to the Congress(I) in the State, have ignored the serious situation in the State, the U.S. imperialist conspiracies in the region, and demanded the dismissal of the Left Front Government which is a consistent defender of the country's unity and integrity. The C.C. welcomed the stand of the Centre that the situation has to be tackled in co-operation between the Centre and the State Government and appealed to all not to exploit the situation for narrow partisan ends.

In view of the seriousness of the situation in Assam and Tripura, in view of the imperative need to rouse the country to the task of defending its integrity and foiling imperialist conspiracies against it, the C.C. called on all units of the Party to place the issues involved in Tripura, Assam and the North-Eastern region before the people.

The Central Committee reviewed the results of the elections to the nine States Assemblies which were ordered arbitrarily by the Central Government after the Congress(I)'s Lok Sabha election victory. The Congress(I) has won in eight of the nine States.

But the C.C. noted that the Congress(I) victory is based on the support of a small percentage of the electorate. Only around half of the electorate exercised their franchise, the lowest in the history of our parliamentary democracy. This was a mark of protest against the non-implementation of the electoral pledges made by the Congress(I) during the Lok Sabha election campaign. Prices had been rising and essential commodities continued to be scarce, no policies were discernible to put the economy back in order. Vast sections of people kept away from the polling booths. Even of this low polling, in most of the States where it won two-thirds and three-fourths of the Assembly seats, the Congress(I) did so on the basis of a minority of the polled vote. Except in one, the Congress(I) victory is based on the support of only 16 to 23 per cent of the total electorate. The disillusionment was already growing after the Lok Sabha poll and people were moving away from the Congress(I). Compared to the Lok Sabha vote, the Congress(I) vote had fallen in most of the States in the Assembly election.

Tamil Nadu has stood as a solid exception. Here the AIADMK, Left parties like the CPI(M) and CPI, and other parties including the Congress(U) formed an alliance sufficiently in time, the people saw this as a viable alternative to the Congress(I) whose policies were heaping miseries on them, and they inflicted a crushing defeat on the Congress(I)-DMK alliance.

The C.C. noted that in Punjab, too, where the Akali Party adjusted seats with the CPI(M) and CPI, the Congress(I) could have been defeated instead of winning with a slender majority of five seats, if the CPI had not dragged its feet and delayed the concluding of the seat adjustments and infighting had not erupted in the Akali Party.

The C.C. noted with concern the violence that marked these Assembly elections in U.P. and Bihar. Especially in Bihar, the polling was held in an atmosphere reeking with gun powder, with booth capturing and ballot rigging on an extensive scale. The ruling Congress(I) fully utilised the administration for both its violence and the election rigging. Despite this and despite the opposition being splintered in this State, too, the Congress(I) could secure only a small majority.

The C.C. held that a large part of the responsibility for the Congress(I) victory should be borne by the bourgeois -landlord opposition parties. Parties like the Janata and Janata(S) had split further, and not learning any lessons from the Lok Sabha elections, they fought each other more than they fought the Congress(I). The Bharatiya Janata Party, the RSS-Jana Sangh in camouflage, helped the Congress(I) to win where its own candidates did not have any chance. Not only was the Opposition splintered, these bourgeois-landlord parties had no alternative pro-people policies to enthuse the people and rouse them to defeat the Congress(I). On the contrary, their stand on very important issues played into the hands of the Congress(I). The united Janata Party, because of its domination by the RSS-Jana Sangh, had thrown the Muslim minority and the Harijans and weaker sections into the camp of the Congress(I). During the election campaign, all these parties came out in support of the chauvinists and secessionists leading the Assam agitation to the detriment of cause of the country's unity and integrity and further antagonised the minorities.

The opposition parties were thus in no position to win over the people who were moving away from the Congress(I) in disillusionment. They could not refrain even the support they had secured during the Lok Sabha elections because of their refusal to come together to give a fight to the Congress(I) the votes of almost all these parties have come down in the Assembly elections compared to the Lok Sabha election. They have let down the people who are getting disillusioned with the Congress(I) and whose discontent is growing.

The contrast as seen in Tamil Nadu, and also in the significant by-election from Nilambur in Kerala where the ruling front candidate not only trounced the Congress(I) candidate, but increased the margin three times from 6,000 and odd to 18,000, is that a viable alternative was placed before the people. Today it is not enough for these opposition parties to forge alliances between themselves, they have to reach understandings with the Left parties like the CPI(M) and CPI to project a progressive image before the people—the appeal of caste is getting more and more limited.

The C.C. appeals to the Opposition parties to give serious heed to the lesson of the elections, particularly because in the coming period, our people have to be defended from furious onslaughts by the ruling party. The economic crisis is getting deeper with all its concomitant consequences and the ruling party will seek a solution in authoritarian measures. Further, the very narrow base of the victory of the ruling party will lead it to resort to authoritarian methods.

The budget that has been presented is a deceptive one. The trick was played on the people was in imposing the increase in railway fares and freight charges, and the prices of petroleum products, fertilizers, etc, a week before the budget. All this will have a cascading effect on prices. On top of it, there is an uncovered deficit of over Rs. 1,400 crores. The budget reveals that Government is relying on more borrowings from the World Bank, IMF, and for the first time since Independence, perhaps on commercial borrowings from private foreign banks for financing the meagre investments in the public sector. These will inevitably lead to the Government coming under increased pressure from these institutions and the imperialists who dictate that the Government should curtail consumption by the common people, concentrate on exports, open the door to the multinationals and encourage the monopolists in the private sector. The rural masses with increased prices for inputs with no comparable compensation in the prices they get for their produce, and rising prices of consumer articles will be face to face with further ruination. The C.C. noted that all this presages growing attacks on jobs and wage standards, the pauperisation of the peasantry.

But they presage also growing struggles of all sections of the people on questions of rising prices, increasing taxes, indebtedness of the peasants, fair and remunerative prices for their produce, fair wages and land to agricultural workers, jobs for the unemployed, etc. Attacks on trade union and democratic rights are inherent in the drive towards authoritarianism.

The resistance to this drive is the foremost task before the Left and democratic forces. While the narrow base of the Congress(I) victory enhances the danger of the drive towards authoritarianism,

it also gives wide scope for mobilising vast masses of the people against the drive towards authoritarianism and to defeat the authoritarian forces.

While conducting these struggles of the people, the C.C. considers it important to carry on campaigns for measures of some immediate, though limited, relief to the people. These measures can include unemployment relief, pension to old agricultural workers, pensions for widows, tax exemption or concessions for the economically weaker strata, debt cancellation or relief from the middle and small peasants and the landless, credit on easy terms and so on. These are measures which are already being successfully implemented by the Left Front Governments and the people elsewhere have to fight and win them.

The unity of the Left parties, their initiative in heading the mass struggle and winning the active support and participation of all democrats in all parties is the guarantee for success in the grim battle ahead.

The united mobilisation and struggles of the trade unions, other mass organisations is of utmost importance in mobilising the entire toiling masses.

Despite their demoralising show in the elections, the Opposition parties, in their own interests, would be drawn into the campaign for championing the cause of the people. Our Party should be able to unite with them on every issue on which they agree with our slogans.

These activities outside among the people have to be linked with the activities in Parliament and State Legislature. The Left parties must co-ordinate their activities in these bodies, and on every issue on which other Opposition parties are likely to join us, the combined opposition must raise its voice against the Government's attacks on democratic rights, on the power of the Centre, against the attempts to subvert non-Congress(I) Governments.

In this context, Central Committee noted with particular satisfaction that the Left unity which has been growing in the recent past has been consolidated in the recent Assembly elections, despite some minor irritations here and there. This unity

has to be further strengthened, as on it depends to a very great extent the building of Left and democratic unity and the broadest resistance to the anti-democratic policies of the ruling Congress(I).

The Central Committee called on all Party units to immediately strengthen the Party and overcome whatever weaknesses that are there; to strengthen the mass organisations and gear up day-to-day activities as well as political campaigns to take the people along the path of progress by rapidly changing the present alignment of class forces. The entire Party, mobilising the democratic forces and the people, must throw itself into the struggle to defeat imperialist conspiracies and protect the country's integrity; to resist the drive of the ruling Congress(I) towards authoritarianism and defend democracy and democratic rights; to defend the Left Front Governments, popularise their achievements; and lead the impending struggles of the people in defence of their livelihood.

Concerted Attack on Democratic System

Statement Dated August 9, 1980 Issued by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M) in New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly protests against the Central Government's move to empower itself to declare certain areas as disturbed and use extraordinary powers to deal with the situation in such areas without reference to the State Governments. Some Congress(I)-ruled States have already armed themselves with such powers.

The move is made on the ostensible ground of the recent communal disturbances in several parts of the country which have made the civil authorities in the areas concerned take the assistance of the para-military and armed forces.

Experience of similar legislations so far, however, is that such extraordinary powers have always been used to suppress the legitimate movements of the common people for the redressal of their grievances. It should also be noted that among the "disturbances" sought to be suppressed are the legitimate movements of the common people on questions like prices, as has been happening in Gujarat, Karnataka, etc.

The CPI(M) is behind none in recognising the necessity for firmly fighting such sinister forces as are inciting the majority community against the minority leading to the riots that have of late been rocking several parts of the country. These forces, however, cannot be fought except with the full and voluntary cooperation of the democratic parties, organisations, groups and individuals. It is against these democratic forces that the proposed legislation will be used.

The Polit Bureau considers it necessary to point out that the majority of States including those where riots of a widespread character broke out recently are under the direct rule of the

Congress(I). As for the non-Congress(I)-ruled States, their Governments have made it abundantly clear that they would take every practical measure to fight the sinister forces which are indulging in riots. The proposal of the Centre to deprive all (Congress-I as well as other) State Governments of their power to deal with the law and order situation is an attack on States' autonomy in general.

The P.B. hopes that every section within the democratic movement would realise that if the Central Government is allowed to persist in this move, it will prove to be the beginning of a concerted attack on the democratic system. It, therefore, appeals to all of them to join their voice against this move while doing their utmost to fight the sinister forces inciting communal riots.

On Recent Political Developments

Statement Dated August 12, 1980

Issued by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M) in New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) at its two-day meeting held in New Delhi on August 9th and 10th 1980 took note of the serious developments in the world.

The U.S. imperialists have taken a series of measures which increase international tension and bring the danger of war closer than ever before. Their refusal to ratify the SALT Agreement, the reversal of the policy of detente, the stationing of new missiles in Europe, etc., have led to the accentuation of tensions throughout the world.

Closer to India's own frontiers, they have made a series of moves in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf region which would make West Asia a cockpit of war. Egged on by them, the Zionist regime has annexed Jerusalem—an act of such brazen aggression against the Arab peoples that even the most notorious "allies" of imperialism among the Arab rulers are unable to defend it. The military rulers of Pakistan are also made to use the soil of their country for conspiratorial moves against the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

In still another part of Asia, the reactionary rulers of Thailand are being used to attack Viet Nam. All these have brought the danger of imperialist intervention right up to the door-steps of India. The P.B. called on all the anti-imperialists in the country to join hands in the struggle against these imperialist manoeuvres.

The P.B. noted with regret that, instead of seeing these imperialist manoeuvres, the leaders of the Chinese People's republic are allowing their hatred to the Soviet Union to facilitate the imperialist manoeuvres.

The P.B. extended its greetings to the democratic forces of Pakistan who are under constant attack and denounced the military

dictatorship for brutally suppressing every democratic right of the Pakistani people.

The P.B. took note of the continuing crisis in the North-East region which, as has been repeatedly pointed out by the CPI(M) and other Left and democratic forces should be seen in the background of the hectic activity of secessionist elements in the State of Jammu & Kashmir and fissiparous forces in other parts of the country. The P.B. called upon all those who are interested in preserving and strengthening the unity and integrity of the country to beware of the danger constituted by these developments.

The P.B. is happy to note the steps taken by the Government for bringing the agitationists in Assam to the table for a dialogue on the issue which agitate the people in that State. The CPI(M) has always been of the view that the problem posed in Assam and in other States/Union Territories of the North-Eastern region can be solved only through the political means of negotiations and settlement among the various sections of the people and between them and the Government.

While thus welcoming the move for talks between the agitationists and the Government in Assam, the P.B. reiterated its view that the legitimate rights of the ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities have to be protected. What is called the issue of foreigners should not be allowed to be used, as the agitationists have been using, to attack Indian citizens who have settled themselves in Assam in exercise of their citizenship rights.

The P.B. thanks all democratic parties, organisations, groups and individuals who have responded to the appeal of the Tripura Chief Minister for help in rendering relief to the affected people in the State. The Left Front Government and people of Tripura are facing an extremely difficult situation and deserve the continuing sympathy and support of the people all over the country.

The P.B. would in this connection remind all concerned that it was the Left Front Government that, for the first time, took several commendable steps to redress the legitimate grievances of the tribal people, while at the same time safeguarding the interests of all poor non-tribals. The unity of the tribals and non-tribals for which the Left Front and its Government have been consistently fighting

is the only method which will help the solution of the problem not only in Tripura but in the entire North-Eastern region.

The P.B. however, notes that, instead of helping the Left Front Government of Tripura in carrying out its programme of uniting the tribals and non-tribals, some political parties in the State, including the State unit of the Congress(I), are trying to make political capital out of the situation and agitate for the dismissal of the Left Front Government and imposition of President's rule.

The P.B. also notes with concern that the Congress(I) unit in West Bengal is whipping up an agitation with the avowed objective of having the duly-elected Government of the State toppled. In Kerala, too, the State unit of the Congress(I) is collaborating with the RSS in organising an agitation with a view to topple the Left and democratic Government of the State.

The Congress(I) unit in Kerala, the BJP and the Indian Union Muslim League are whipping up an agitation falsely accusing the State Government of denying the Muslim Minority's right to be taught Arabic and Urdu in Kerala, while no such demand for this right is made by the BJP and the Indian Union Muslim League in the Congress(I) rule States where it is, in fact, denied. The Congress(I)-led Governments, it is well-known, consistently reject the demand for the protection of minority rights in those States. It is thus clear that the agitation in Kerala is not in defence of minority rights, but against the Left and democratic Government in the State.

The P.B. noted that the Congress(I) Government at the Centre has made the President refuse his assent to the Land Reform (Amendment) Bill which was passed by the Legislature and which was intended to plug the loopholes in the existing legislation. The P.B. called upon all the radical political parties and the mass organisations of the peasantry and other section of the working people to protest against this brazen interference in the rights of the State, this attack on the landless and the poor.

The P.B. strongly disapproves the Industrial Policy Statement issued by the Union Government. Coming as it does in the wake of liberal concessions given to Big Business in the Finance Minister's budget and the open invitation to multi-nationals to intensify their exploitation of Indian resources, this policy

statement permits the Big Business to expand its field of activity. Making a mockery of public control over Big Business, the Government is moving steadily towards the erosion of the role of the public sector in the economy of the country. All that the Congress(I) leaders and Government spokesmen had earlier talked about "the commanding heights" of the economy being occupied by the public sector are being abandoned the practice. The P.B. called upon all democratic political parties, mass organisations and individuals who are committed to fighting the Big Business to raise their voice against these moves of the Government.

The P.B. noted the alarming rise in the prices of essential commodities. All the claims made by the Finance Minister and other spokesmen of the Government regarding the impact of the Budget on prices are being falsified. The workers, the middle class employees and other sections of consumers are finding it increasingly difficult to meet the rising cost of living. At the same time, the mass of peasantry is deprived of their legitimate rights for such remunerative prices as would compensate the rising costs of production, caused above all by the Government itself raising the prices of agricultural inputs. Government policy thus is directed on the one hand, against the consuming public and on the other against the peasantry.

The P.B. noted with concern a steady increase in the number and rise in the intensity of attacks on women, Harijans and other weaker sections of society. Instead of taking effective measures to bring the guilty to book and protect the interests of the weaker sections of the society, the leaders of the Government and the ruling party are trying to protect the offenders emboldening the latter to further intensify their attacks.

While noting with satisfaction that democratic elements in the country are increasingly joining hands in the struggle on the question of prices and in defence of the weaker sections under attack, the P.B. decided to do its best to still further forge democratic unity on these issues. It called upon members and units of the party to activate themselves and help the development of a broad united movement.

On Postponement of By-elections in West Bengal

**Protest Statement Issued by The Central Committee
of CPI(M) on October 25, 1980 in New Delhi**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) vehemently protests against the decision of the Election Commission to postpone the by-elections in West Bengal to one Lok Sabha and six Assembly seats which were scheduled to be held on November 23. The decision is all the more condemnable because the Election Commission took it, solely on the basis of a representation made by the West Bengal Congress(I) President, without consulting the State Government whose concurrence had earlier been obtained for the November 23 schedule.

The Congress(I)'s demand for postponement of the by-elections is based mainly on the question of defective electoral rolls. This is a grossly baseless charge. An intensive revision of the electoral rolls had been made last year with January 1, 1979, as the qualifying date. A further special revision of the rolls had been done as ordered by the Election Commission with January 1, 1980, as the qualifying date. Because of certain complaints about these rolls the Election Commission had sent a team of officers to look into them and after that, the Commission itself had ordered final publication of the rolls in respect of the constituencies involved in the by-elections.

If the Election Commission which was obviously satisfied with the rolls when it ordered its final publication, has now changed its mind because of a demand by the West Bengal Congress(I) President, it cannot be taken as anything other than succumbing to political pressure.

This sudden and arbitrary decision of the Election Commission will result in inordinately delaying the by-elections in the State because of the census operations, the harvesting season from end

of November to February, the budget session of the Assembly from the middle of February and the monsoons from June. The people of one Lok Sabha and six Assembly constituencies are to be denied their representation in Parliament and the State Assembly for a long period just to please the ruling party at the Centre.

The Election Commission which is expected to function in an impartial manner has succumbed to political pressure and the Congress(I) has exhibited its usual contempt to democratic processes. The C.C. calls on all democratic elements to record their protest against the undemocratic and unjustifiable decision to postpone the by-elections in West Bengal.

Central Committee's Press Communique

Issued in New Delhi on October 27, 1980

1. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which met in New Delhi from the 23rd to 26th October, 1980 heard reports from Comrades M. Basavapunniah, Samar Mukherjee, P. Ramamurti and Harkishan Singh Surjeet about their recent visits to Pyongyang, Peking, Sofia, Romania and Moscow, of their exchange of views with the representatives of fraternal parties. The C.C. expressed its satisfaction over the improvement of relations between our Party and a growing number of fraternal parties and hoped that these fraternal relations will further grow.

2. The C.C. is deeply concerned over the continuing war between Iran and Iraq. The people of Iran only recently carried out a successful revolution against the tyrannical rule of the U.S. Puppet, the late Shah of Iran and overthrow it, thereby striking a heavy blow to U.S. imperialism in this area. Iraq has played an important role in building Arab unity—along with other Arab countries—against U.S. imperialism and Israeli Zionism. It is regrettable that these two non-aligned countries are engaged in a full-scale war with each other, which not only seriously damages their economy and life but would disrupt the unity of the Arab peoples against U.S. machinations, seriously hamper the glorious freedom struggles of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO, and offer opportunities to U.S. and other imperialist powers to intervene in this region. This is a grave portent for the Indian sub-continent. The war has further seriously affected the economies of the developing countries. The C.C. hoped that wise counsel will prevail on the leaders of these countries, and they would stop the war and settle their disputes by peaceful negotiations.

3. The C.C. expressed its grave concern over the war danger. The increased expenditure on defence budgets of the U.S. and NATO countries, the stationing of nuclear missiles in the West European countries, the feverish attempt to develop Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean as the biggest military base, the increase in U.S. warships and aircraft-carriers and arsenals with deadlier weapons, the refusal of the U.S. to ratify the SALT-II, and the callous decision of the U.S. to go ahead with the manufacture of the Neutron Bomb, are all portents of this growing danger.

The Central Committee notes with satisfaction the countermeasures taken by the Soviet Union, other Socialist countries and peace-loving forces to rebuff these aggressive activities of the USA.

4. The C.C. also notes with satisfaction that resistance to these bellicose measures is growing by the organised working class and diverse sections of the peoples in all countries, and the voice demanding the destruction of all stockpiles of nuclear weapons, ban on nuclear and chemical warfare, and disarmament, is growing. In this respect the C.C. hailed—the recent successful meet of the World Parliament for Peace in Sofia.

The C.C. called upon the units of the Party to rally the people of our country round these demands for a lasting peace and against the war designs of American imperialism.

Recent developments in neighbouring Sri Lanka have been disturbing. Former Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandarnaike has been stripped off all civil rights, and to prevent any protest against this patently undemocratic action, a National Emergency has been imposed on the country. In July last also, a National Emergency had been declared to suppress the growing strike wave in Sri Lanka. The C.C. extended its greetings to the fighting people of Sri Lanka and all support to their struggle for democratic, civil and trade union rights.

5. The C.C. expressed its deep concern over the decision of the AASU and the Gana Sangram Parishad of Assam to resume their agitation on the question of foreign nationals and disapproved it. It expressed its great appreciation of the CPI(M) and other Left and Opposition parties, mass organisations and the

organisations of minority and plains-tribal people of Assam in boldly standing up and exposing the separatist forces that are aided by the imperialists agencies. Their activities have already resulted in large sections of the Assamese people realising the danger to Assam and the unity of the country in continuing the movement. The 11-month-old movement has already inflicted immense harm to the people of Assam and the economy of the country. The C.C. appealed to the leaders of the AASU and Gana Sangram Parishad to withdraw the agitation and resume the talks. The C.C. expressed its grave concern at the recent developments in Manipur, including the steps to detect 'foreigners', and other neighbouring areas on similar questions.

6. The C.C. noted that in Tripura, although mass attacks by the extremists of the TUJS on the Bengalis and by the Amra Bangalees and their gangsters on the tribal population, have been stopped, stray killings, in which the cadre of the CPI(M) are the main targets, are still continuing. The C.C. noted that the political campaign carried on by the CPI(M) and other Left Parties among the people through mass meetings and rallies exposing the separatist forces have played a big role in restoring relations between the tribal and non-tribal people to a great extent. There have been many instances where the tribal population in predominantly tribal villages have protected the Bengalis from attacks by the extremists of the TUJS and the Bengali population in predominantly Bengali villages have protected the tribal people from attacks by the Amra Bangalee chauvinists.

The C.C. emphasised the importance of this political campaign in isolating the TUJS and the Amra Bangalees and their allies from the mass of the people and frustrating their activities.

The Committee draws the attention of the people to the divergence between the expression of the Central Government of its solicitude to the welfare of the tribal people and its refusal to concede the unanimous demand of the Tripura Legislative Assembly to enact a legislation for an autonomous district council for the tribal areas under the VI Schedule of the Constitution. This is a just and democratic demand. Its acceptance will give satisfaction to the tribal people and help the democratic movement to fight and isolate the separatists.

The C.C. paid its homage to all members and supporters of the Party who have been martyred in Tripura and Assam in the struggle against the separatist threat and to defend national integrity and democracy.

7. The C.C. protested against the discriminatory treatment meted out to the Left Front Government of West Bengal.

The nationalisation of Bird and Company, the take over of the Bengal Paper Pulp Factory, the ship repairing project in Haldia and a number of other projects earlier agreed upon by the Centre are all being sabotaged. Further, the Central Government refuses to honour its commitment to supply wheat for the Food-for-Work Programme on the specious plea that the State Government did not set up District Committees under the Chairmanship of the District Collector to execute the programme. The State Government has set up committees with all under the Chairmanship of Zilla Parishad President, with the District Collector as the Executive Officer of the Committee. The insistence of the Central Government on imposing committees in which the bureaucrats will have all powers is an attempt to hamper the efforts of the West Bengal Left Front Government to involve the people in implementing the programme. The C.C. hoped that the Centre would give up this anti-democratic attitude and honour its commitment.

8. The C.C. noted that the Central Communication Minister Stephen continues to carry on his game of trying to destabilise the Kerala Government. This, it can be seen, goes against the declaration made by the Prime Minister herself, according to which the Opposition should allow the elected Government to rule for the full term for which it has been elected. It is worth noting that the Prime Minister is today laying down such norms of democratic functioning by the Opposition which she has consistently violated wherever on whenever her party has been reduced to a minority in the Legislature.

9. The C.C. was extremely concerned over the growth of communal forces leading to the horrible communal riots in Moradabad, Aligarh, Allahabad and other places. The role of the PAC in the Moradabad carnage showed that the communal virus had pervaded the police forces and the administration.

The C.C. conveys its deep condolences to all the families of those who had died in the communal riots.

The C.C. was of the opinion that it has become urgently necessary to launch a big ideological campaign against the communal forces, and on the basis of the common struggles of the exploited people of all communities. The party will make all efforts to bring together all the secular forces in this campaign and pledges to fight the menace.

The C.C. pointed out that the revival of the National Integration Council, if it functioned in the same old way as its predecessor, would serve little purpose. The proposed composition of the Council, excluding some parties which have been fighting the communal ideology, is objectionable.

10. The C.C. noted the growing trend towards authoritarianism in the Congress(I) Government at the Centre. The repression launched against the working class and the common people whenever they go on struggle for their legitimate demands, the amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code, the promulgation of the National Security Ordinance, authorising detention without trial, the attempt to amend the Constitutional provision in this regard, are all pointers in this direction.

The Congress(I) leaders have begun to canvas for the Presidential form of Government. An officially patronised Lawyers' Conference has been held, inaugurated by the Prime Minister herself, with the object of canvassing opinion in favour of doing away with Parliamentary democracy and setting up a Presidential and Dictatorial form of Government. This is another command performance by the same set of lawyers who had championed the authoritarian cause at the time of the Emergency.

The persistent attempt of the Law Minister to arm the Union Government with power to transfer Chief Justices and Judges of the High Courts in the teeth of opposition from the Bar Council and Advocates' Association, the Chief Justice of India and the Conference of Judges, shows that the Government wants to have a judiciary completely subservient to it.

The C.C. while condemning these attacks on the democratic rights, as also the growing attempts to intimidate the Press and curb its freedom, called upon all Opposition parties and mass organisations and all democrats to rouse the people and fight against this trend towards authoritarianism.

11. This drive towards authoritarianism, as the C.C. had repeatedly pointed out, is inherent in the deep economic crisis that has engulfed the country as a result of the pro-monopoly, pro-landlord and anti-people economic policies that the Central Government has pursued ever since independence and its dependence on the multinationals.

The Government refuses to make a drastic break with these policies, but on the other hand gives more and more concessions to these very interests who have inflicted growing misery, poverty and unemployment on the people.

As a result, prices continue to rise phenomenally while remunerative prices to the peasantry are denied. Unemployment is growing both in the urban areas and the countryside. Unable to mitigate the sufferings of the people, let alone solving their problems, the Government is resorting to these anti-democratic measures, confident that it will be able to carry them out because of the disunity of the opposition.

12. In this context, the National Convention of six parties and its call to mobilise the people and struggle immediately on the issues of price rise, against communal danger, and for preservation of democratic and trade union rights and civil liberties is of great significance. Vaster sections of the people are aware of these dangers today than in 1975 when the Emergency was clamped in the country. If only the democratic forces unitedly mobilise the people, the trend towards authoritarianism can be halted.

The C.C. called upon its units to make all-out efforts to bring about the unity of all popular forces and mobilise the people on the three key and pressing issues facing them as given in the Call of the National Convention of Six Parties.

It greets the people of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and some other States for having initiated united struggles.

The C.C. extended greetings to the peasants of North Karnataka for their massive struggle on their pressing demands and forcing the State Government to concede many of them.

The C.C. supported the struggle of the peasantry for remunerative prices for agricultural produce and drastic debt-relief to the peasants.

The C.C. called upon all its units to overcome all hurdles and unite all forces possible and mobilise them on the pressing issues before the people.

Memorandum To Integration Council

Submitted by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M)
on November 12, 1980 in New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India(Marxist) has submitted the following Memorandum to the Integration Council in its meeting on November 12, 1980 in New Delhi:

1. The reactivation of the National Integration Council whose first meeting is being held on the 12th has over it the shadow of two earlier Councils formed in 1961 and 1968 respectively. The first was dissolved on the ground that the critical situation to meet which the Council was constituted had passed, that "national unity has, in fact, been forged in the face of the Chinese attack." The second was allowed to become defunct after the first meeting. The question naturally arises whether the present Integration Council will share the fate that overtook these two earlier efforts.

2. Before entering into a discussion of the substantive questions of national integration, it is necessary to raise an organisational question which is of some policy import. The reference here is to the exclusion of the CPI(M) from among the political parties that are represented in the Council. The likely argument that the three Chief Ministers belonging to the Party have been included is not relevant. When the Council was constituted in 1968, the then General Secretary of the CPI(M) was included though the Kerala Chief Minister was, in that capacity, a member of the Council. Chief Ministers being ex-officio members of the Council should not stand in the way of the Party being represented by somebody chosen by the central leadership of the Party.

3. This, however, is not a purely organisational question. Being a party that has been consistently fighting all fissiparous forces and holding its own distinct views, the CPI(M) should find a place in the Council. Similar representation should be given to all political parties interested in national integration.

It may be added here that among the political parties represented in Parliament, the Akalis, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference and the AIADMK too, have been excluded. The rationale behind this exclusion is ununderstandable.

4. The November 12th meeting of the Council will obviously have to deal with the two burning issues of current importance— Assam and communal tensions. This, however, cannot be seen in isolation from the larger questions of the integration of the Indian people who happen to be divided or ethnic, linguistic, cultural, regional, religious, caste, etc. lines. The views of the CPI(M) on these questions were explained by the General Secretary of the Party memoranda and notes submitted to the 1968 Council. Unfortunately, however, the views of the Party did not receive the consideration that is due to them at the hands of the authorities.

5. Take the question of Assam. The issues involved here are not so simple as is suggested by many of those who are trying to give oversimplified solution. It is not a mere question of "foreigners" versus "sons of the soil". Among the "sons of the soil" themselves, there are the Assamese-speaking people, the Ahoms, the plains tribals, the Bengalees, the Nepalees and the people from other Indian States who have settled in Assam for decades (even before independence), those who came and settled from East Pakistan-Bangladesh, etc. Among the non-Assamese settlers and the East Pakistan-Bangladesh refugees themselves, there are Hindus as well as Muslims. The democratic rights of all these sections of the people should be protected, while the legitimate aspirations of the Assamese-speaking people are satisfied.

6. It is unfortunate that the leaders of the Assam agitation refuse to take due note of all these factors as if proceeding against large sections of the people as "foreigners" would solve the problem. Their movement, therefore, has acquired not only an anti-Bengalce but anti-Muslim and anti-tribal character. It has also become disruptive of Indian unity and is being used by imperialism for the destabilisation of India. The so-called "peaceful" agitation thus turned out to be violent attacks on all those who did not join the

anti-"foreigner" agitation. This has damaged the cause of the Assamese-speaking people themselves, not to speak of the Bengalees, the tribals, the Ahoms, the Nepaleese, etc.

7. This is not to deny that the Assamese-speaking people have a legitimate feeling of being neglected and discriminated against. In fact, both the earlier British rulers and the post-Independence regimes have kept Assam socially, economically, politically and culturally undeveloped. While the British Indian provinces and Indian States were integrated and subsequently reorganised to form linguistic States everywhere else, Assam continued to be a multilingual State. The Assamese-speaking people, therefore, did not have even that much of development as the other linguistic-cultural groups in India. Coming as this did against the background of Assam being kept under the domination of the foreign planters and Indian bureaucrats down from the other States, the people in Assam felt that their distinct identity was being suppressed. This feeling was sought to be directed into disruptive channels by the Assamese chauvinists who whipped up passions among the people against everybody who is not Assamese-speaking but who have for historical reasons settled in Assam. A fertile ground was thus prepared for reactionary forces in India and abroad to sow the seeds of separatism. Every effort should be made to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of the Assamese-speaking people, while safeguarding and protecting the interests of the other groups living and working in Assam.

8. One point that needs to be explained to the leaders of the agitation is that Assam, along with other States of India that are adjoining to former West and East Pakistan, has inherited the obligations of the partition of India. Refugees from West and East Pakistan have come in their millions and settled in the adjoining States of India. Their rehabilitation and settlement is the common responsibility of the Indian people—the responsibility of the Central and all State Governments. The people of Assam should be made aware of the fact that more refugees have, in fact, settled in West Bengal, Tripura and other States/Territories of the North-Eastern region than in Assam. From West Pakistan too, millions of refugees

have been absorbed in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The people of Assam, therefore, should not think that they are being made exclusively to bear the burden of refugees but co-operate with the Union Government and the all-India political parties to find such solutions for this all-India problem as are fair to all sections of the people and will foil imperialism's attempts at destabilisation.

9. This, however, requires a complete change in the Government's policies on a host of questions which have created an explosive situation not only in Assam but in the entire North-Eastern region. Tribal versus non-tribal, language, caste and communal relations, etc., are questions which have bedevilled the relations among the various sections of the people. All these came to a head in Nagaland where armed insurgency has been continuing for a long time. This was followed by Mizoram where, too, armed insurgency has been continuing. Manipur and Meghalaya are also developing in the same direction. In Tripura, where a similar development was averted and the political unity of the two ethnic groups preserved under the leadership of the Left Front, destabilisers have gone into action and created disruption. The Assam question should, therefore, be sought to be resolved through the correct tactical approach to all these questions which, in one or another form, have led to acute conflicts and confrontations in every part of the North-Eastern region.

10. The CPI(M) has consistently demanded the application of the democratic principles of (a) wide autonomy for States, and (b) the formation of the Autonomous District Council in compact areas where the tribals are numerically large. The Left Front Government of Tripura took the initiative for getting the Autonomous District Council legislation passed. This, however, had to be done in accordance with the 7th Schedule under which the Council has lesser powers and is liable to be dissolved. This could have been avoided if the Constitution were so amended as to put the Tripura Autonomous Council under the 6th Schedule. This, in fact, was demanded by the Left Front but rejected by the earlier Janata Government and continues to be rejected by the

present Congress(I) Government. Conceding the democratic demand for amending the Constitution in this respect not only in Tripura but in other tribal areas would, to a large extent, allay the discontent in the entire North-Eastern region. As for the non-tribals in Assam, one of the measures that can allay their discontent is the widening and expansion of the powers and resources of the State Government. This is in the interests of the tribals as well.

11. It is regrettable that, far from conceding the democratic demand for greater powers for the States and the formation of the Autonomous District Councils in the compact tribal areas of every State, the Union Government is moving in the direction of centralisation of all powers. The proposals made recently with regard to the substitution of State sales tax by Central Excise, transfer of subjects in the State list to the concurrent or Union list, creation of new all-India services, transfer of Chief Justices and other Judges of the High Courts, etc., show that the tendency shown by the Union Government is towards centralisation. While this was sought to be done in the name of strengthening the Centre for national integration, the gathering discontent and the out-break of agitations make it impossible for the Centre to operate even in fields which are allocated to it. If the leaders at the Centre do not put a stop to this increasing erosion of States' powers, there will be national disintegration rather than integration.

12. One cannot but refer in this context to the functions and responsibilities of State Governors as are now being defined by the Central leaders. The theory has been propounded that the Governors should be politically committed and subservient to the party in power at the Centre. On no other ground can the dismissal of the Tamil Nadu Governor can be explained. The Governor is thus being reduced to mere an agent of the Centre to be used by the ruling Party at the Centre against the State Government. This is an erosion of the powers of the States under the Federal system as well as an attack on such State Governments as are not controlled by the Party ruling at the Centre.

13. Another important issue to be dealt with by the National Integration Council is the growingly menacing communal tension

which has already led to the riots and killings in several cities and villages. This is sought to be met by resort to purely administrative-police measures. While administrative measures have, no doubt, to be adopted to deal with those who incite riots, the root of the trouble is the existence of strained relations between communities arising out of communal ideas. These ideas and their concrete manifestations have to be combated in a systematic manner if the administrative measures are to succeed. It is here that the policies and practices of the Government and the ruling party are fostering rather than barring the path of communal forces.

14. Although the word "secularism" has been written into the Constitution, a large number of political leaders, belonging to the ruling as well as opposition parties who swear by secularism in words, are mixing religion with politics the very negation of secularism. The newspapers, the radio, the television, etc., are all used to propagate the ideas of one or another variety of religious faith. State-owned media and State functions, etc., are so organised as to mix religion with the State. While this has always been the banc of politics in post-Independence India, there was some effort earlier to disseminate the knowledge of modern science, develop the rationalist and secular outlook. Even this has, of late, been abandoned; the practice of mixing religion with the State is becoming more and more widespread. The series of 'yagnas' organised the widely publicised visits of political leaders and dignitaries to temples, pujas and offerings by them at temples—these and other forms of using the religious institutions and their leaders (Hindu as well as non-Hindu) have become part and parcel of the politics of the ruling party and several opposition parties. This has made the soil fertile for the sprouting of poisonous plant of communalism.

Once this is done by the political leaders belonging to one religious community, it easily spreads to the religious institutions of other communities. It is, therefore, suggested that the secular principal of complete separation of religion and State from each other should be strictly observed and a joint campaign should be organised against the mixing of religion and politics.

15. The evil consequences of mixing religion and politics are seen in the attitude of several members of the administrative-police force who at times of communal riots join the worst inciters of the riots in their attacks on the minority communities. The role played by the PAC in the Moradabad riots and several other incidents have become notorious. While it is no doubt necessary that the particular persons responsible for them are brought to book, a serious effort should be made completely to change the ideological-political environment in which the personnel of the administrative-police organisations are functioning. This, in its turn, requires a complete change in the attitude of the authorities towards religious communities: while fully respecting the right of all citizens to believe in and practise any religion he or she likes, all efforts to make political appeals in the name of religion should be combated.

16. Communal tensions and conflicts in our country have another dimension—their impact on our country's relations with many of the Islamic countries including our neighbours. This is being made full use of by the authoritarian, militarist and reactionary elements in the ruling classes of neighbouring countries. Our country's position in the non-aligned movement, therefore, suffers from the continuing tensions and conflicts on the communal issue.

17. The equally important question of caste tensions and caste riots can be dealt with only if the equality of castes, the conscious uplifting of the scheduled and other backward castes etc., are fully accepted and genuinely acted upon.

This has to be accompanied by the economic upliftment of these weaker sections through distribution of land, guarantee of employment and adequate wages, educational and other facilities to overcome their backwardness without which they will be pushed further down the rungs by the evil consequences of the capitalist path of development, with every danger of their growing discontent being exploited for disruptive purposes. Here again, while it is no doubt necessary to take administrative action against those who

perpetrate atrocities against the Harijans and other weaker sections of society, what is required is a joint mass campaign for the equality of all castes, for the elimination of caste as a system of social organisation. The obscurantist policies and practices which are widespread among the personnel of administrative services and among the political leaders are a big impediment in this direction, since they all use their authority to strengthen caste feelings and practices arising out of them.

18. The picture will not be complete if we do not refer to the problem of official language and the medium of instruction. The demand to perpetuate the use of English or to replace English by Hindi as the official all-India language and medium of instruction at all levels would only inflame passions as they did earlier. Complete equality of all Indian languages, freedom to use one's own mother tongue for official and educational purposes and the voluntary learning of Hindi by the non-Hindi-speaking peoples are the only basis on which the language question can be solved, from doing this, however, the authorities appear to be using everything in their power to impose Hindi on the non-Hindi-speaking peoples, as is clear from the activities of the Hindi Department of the Union Government. This would create a sense of revulsion among the non-Hindi-speaking peoples and delay the voluntary acceptance of Hindi by the non-Hindi-speaking peoples. That is why the late Prime Minister Nehru assured the non-Hindi-speaking peoples that English would continue until such time as they, the non-Hindi-speaking peoples, desire it.

19. Before concluding, it is necessary to sound a note of warning against the deplorable tendency of the Government to launch increasing attacks on the civil liberties and democratic rights of the people. The reference here is to such legislations as the National Security Ordinance which are sought to be justified in the name of fighting the forces of national disintegration. Organised efforts are also afoot for changing the political system from the parliamentary democratic to the Presidential. None of these, however, will

strengthen the forces of national integration. On the other hand, they will weaken the struggle for national integration. For, what is being suppressed is the democratic mobilisation of the forces of national unity against those of disintegration. What is required is to enlarge the freedom of action for all political parties and popular organisations, so that they can collectively defend national unity and fight the forces of disruption.

20. Finally, we suggest that the Integration Council be developed into a genuine forum for forging national unity, strengthening the secular forces and defending democracy. Our Party will make its own positive contributions for this.

On The Situation In Kerala

**Statement Dated November 24, 1980 Issued by
The Polit Bureau of CPI(M) in New Delhi**

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses its concern over the strains that have been developing in the Left-Democratic Front of Kerala, particularly between the Congress(U) and the CPI(M). These have developed into physical clashes in Trivandrum ending in injuries on both sides.

The P.B. appeals to all concerned to realise that this is precisely the situation which the authoritarian Congress(I) and its allies desire to develop. It is the supreme duty of all those who are interested in uncompromising struggle against authoritarianism to see that not only are clashes and confrontations within the Left-Democratic front avoided but understandings arrived at on all points of disagreement among the constituents.

Consisting as the front is of parties which have differences on a number of issues, its unity can be maintained and developed only if everybody concerned takes particular care to make mutual adjustments on practical questions of difference without sacrificing their respective principles. The CPI(M) is committed to this course and its Central and State leadership will take necessary measures to rectify mistakes if any on the part of members and units of the Party.

The Polit Bureau would, at the same time, remind the leaders of all other constituents of the Left-Democratic Front in Kerala that, unless every constituent discharges its responsibility in this respect, the unity of the front cannot be maintained. The Congress(U) has a special responsibility in that, as an integral part of the old undivided Congress, it has inherited a past which is of hostility to the CPI(M); its leaders should make conscious endeavours to overcome all remnants of this anti-Communist past.

The P.B. is happy to note that Congress President Devraj Urs has declared that the recent clashes between the student organisations owing allegiance to his party and the CPI(M) would not affect the functioning of the Kerala Government. For the CPI(M)'s part, State Secretary Achuthanandan, Chief Minister Nayanar and other leaders have taken necessary steps to discipline all those in the Party who have acted wrongly.

The P.B. hopes that the President of the KPCC and his colleagues would do the same in relation to their followers. The P.B. further hopes that, whenever differences arise in future, they will be subjected to bilateral or multilateral exchanges with a view to resolving them within the front and that the tendency to come out with public pronouncements against each other will be curbed.

The P.B. appeals to one and all the constituents of the Left-Democratic Front in Kerala to rise to the occasion, to soberly discuss and resolve the differences that may arise from time to time, and to defend the unity and the Left-Democratic Government as the apple of the eye. They must realise that not only the people of Kerala who have reposed great trust and confidence in them but the democratic and progressive-minded people all over the country entertain big hopes in their performance.

P. B. Denounces Maharashtra Repression*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on December 27, 1980:

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) denounces the monstrous repression unleashed by the Congress(I) Government of Maharashtra on the peaceful demonstrators in Nagpur yesterday. Right from the beginning of the Long March organised by six Opposition parties, the Antulay Government has been doing everything to suppress the march. Police lathi-charges, large-scale arrests of Opposition leaders and demonstrators resorted to during the entire march culminated in the massive show of police force in Nagpur.

The Polit Bureau greets the leaders of the six Opposition parties and the large number of demonstrators for frustrating all the attempts of the Congress(I) Government and staging their demonstration as planned to press the legitimate demand of the peasantry for remunerative prices.

The Polit Bureau wants to bring to the notice of the people that the Congress(I) Governments are becoming intolerant and would not allow even peaceful agitations of the people against the hardships caused to them by Congress(I) policies. The Polit Bureau appeals to the Left and democratic forces to urgently come together and mobilise the broadest forces of the people without which the Congress(I) Government's onslaught on them cannot be defeated and the interests of the people defended.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 4, 1981.

Polit Bureau Congratulates People For Defeating The Congress(I) In Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka And Tripura*

Statement Dated January 7, 1981 Issued to The Press in New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) congratulates the people of Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka on their success in defeating the Congress(I). The rout of the Congress(I), in Andhra Pradesh, its collapse in Karnataka and its defeat at the hands of the CPI(M)-led Left Front in Tripura, are events full of significance for the future.

None including the ruling party expected the Congress(I) to win in Tripura. The people of Tripura had experienced a qualitative change since the installation of the Left Front Government. But its collapse in the other two States was not expected. It has only revealed how the Congress(I) regimes in these two States have lost the confidence of the people because of their bankrupt anti-people policies, their moral and political corruption and trade in defectors and use of money-power to keep themselves in power. Not all the certificates that Indira Gandhi produced for her regime from abroad, not all the falsified claims she made about India's development under her rule, could stop the growing revulsion of millions who during the last elections gave her a thundering victory.

This verdict against the Congress(I) is not only a protest against its all-pervading corruption. It is the product of the all-pervading distress among the people—the inflation, high prices, joblessness, injustice to the peasant, the agricultural worker, the police repression against peasants' and workers' agitations.

This just indignation of the people has expressed itself in diverse ways. In Tripura it has given a victory to the Left forces

led by the CPI(M) who have a correct programme for defending national unity and democratic advance. In Karnataka, the Janata-Kranti Ranga combination with an understanding with the CPI(M) and CPI has scored a victory. In Andhra, in the absence of a strong Left and democratic movement, Telugu Desam, the new party, has secured the confidence of the electorate and is responsible for smashing the Congress(I) monopoly of power. All these are big victories of the people against a tyrannical, authoritarian party working in the interest of the capitalists and landlords of the country.

The P.B. sends its congratulations to the people of these States on their success in routing the Congress(I). Further consolidation of these victories depends on remaining loyal to the people and their demands. Any party which forgets the sufferings and exploitation of the people, forgets their democratic rights, is bound to meet the same discomfiture at the hands of the electorate as the Congress(I) has met. The P.B. hopes that both in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka the successful parties will do everything to consolidate the victory in cooperation with the Left.

The P.B. warmly congratulates our Party in Tripura, our Party leaders and ranks for their great victory scored in the midst of a murderous campaign launched by our opponents. The Party is confident that under our leadership new victories are in store for the people in Tripura—both tribals and Bengalees whose unity has inflicted a defeat on the secessionists in alliance with the Congress(I).

The P.B. assures the people that our Party will continue to work for the consolidation of Left and democratic unity without which the problems facing the people cannot be solved.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 16, 1981.

CPI(M)'s Greetings To Fighters Of South Africa*

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) extends its warmest greetings to the African National Congress and the fighting people of South Africa on the 69th Anniversary of the Founding of the ANC on January 8, 1981.

The last decade has witnessed momentous changes in Africa. Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau have become independent countries, and last year Zimbabwe won its freedom.

In South Africa itself, the liberation fighters, during the decade, recovered from the blows struck at them by the racist regime during the sixties, scored significant successes in rebuilding their forces, and while the People's Army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, carried forward the armed struggle, big mass actions took place, as by the students against the imposition of an alien language on them. This struggle which is going on against a ruthlessly fascist regime has evoked the admiration of people everywhere.

World public opinion is not deceived by the fraudulent efforts of the racist regime to give the impression that it has started reforming the apartheid system and would gradually and peacefully abolish it. What the people elsewhere see is that the more the racists talk of "reforms", the more they are perfecting and expanding the instruments of repression.

If, despite the big changes that have taken place in the world, and in Africa itself, despite the advance of the national liberation struggle on a global scale, the racist regime still continues to exist and is intensifying its barbaric repression on the African people,

it is because the Western imperialist powers, violating all the decisions of the United Nations and other international bodies and disregarding world opinion, prop up the apartheid regime, since the preservation of that regime is vital for their own interests—economic, political and military.

Behind the racist regime which the people of South Africa are fighting stand these imperialists and the liberation struggle in South Africa is an integral part of the worldwide struggle against imperialism. The CPI(M) extends its fullest support to the fighting African people.

The CPI(M) pays its homage to the many whose lives have been cruelly taken by the racists, it demands the release of Nelson Mandela and thousands of others incarcerated in inhuman conditions in prisons, it demands the commutation of all pending death sentences.

The CPI(M) is confident that the day is not far off when the brave people of South Africa, led by the African National Congress, will bury the apartheid system for ever and become masters of their land. The CPI(M) wishes further successes in the liberation struggle in the coming year and once again extends its warmest greetings to the African National Congress.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 18, 1981.

Rally All Forces To Preserve Democratic Rights, Strengthen People's Movement*

Call Given by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M) From its Meeting held in New Delhi on January 10-12, 1981

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi from January 10 to 12, 1981, Comrade Jyoti Basu presiding.

The P.B. paid tributes to the lakhs of peasants and agricultural labourers all over the country who came out in militant demonstrations and actions for their demands like remunerative prices for agricultural products, for relief from indebtedness, for increased wages and other demands. They have come out against the class policies of the Government which have been protecting the landlords and monopolists carrying on their exploitation of the urban and rural masses.

Taking place as this is doing against the background of widespread agitations and struggles of the industrial working class and middle class employees for such demands as wage increase, bonus as deferred wage, dearness allowance to fully neutralise the rise in prices, etc., this organised movement of the peasantry combines two major streams of people's movements and struggles against the anti-people policies of the Central and State Governments.

Broad Movement

The P.B. noted that though initially a spontaneous movement, the peasant upsurge is rapidly acquiring an organised character. It expressed its particular satisfaction that the six Opposition parties' Coordination Committee, which gave a call for action nearly four months ago, had included in its charter the urgently

*Press Communique of the Polit Bureau of CPI(M) Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 18, 1981.

felt demands, such as remunerative prices for agricultural products, increase in the wages of agricultural labourers, debt relief for the peasants and agricultural labourers, issue prices to the consumers at subsidised rates and ensuring distribution of essential articles through a public distribution system supervised by popular committees of consumers. This inspired the working people throughout the country to coordinate their actions and develop a broad movement in defence of the interests of all sections of the working people. These parties along with other democratic forces were able to develop powerful movements in various States.

It is this leadership given by the democratic Opposition parties that helped the transformation of the initially spontaneous movement in Maharashtra, Karnataka, etc., into one of the major streams of the developing unity of the agricultural producers with the consumers, both of whom are to be united against their common enemies—the wholesalers, the big landlords, the monopoly capitalists and so on. This lays the foundation of the unity of the workers and peasants and all toiling people against the policies of the Government in the interests of the monopolists, multinationals, landlords, hoarders, profiteers and other vested interests who have been fleecing the common people and fattening themselves.

The P.B. noted that these massive struggles have forced many Congress(I) State Governments to give some concessions. Though these concessions are meagre in the context of the galloping inflation, they give confidence to the working people that by their unity and courageous struggles, the anti-people policies of the Government can be fought back.

Mounting Repression

In these conditions, unable to mitigate the mounting sufferings of the people, not to speak of solving the problems of poverty and unemployment, the ruling Congress(I) Government seeks to suppress these movements with ever-mounting repression. The National Security Act was created precisely for this purpose, despite all the protestations of Indira Gandhi and the Home

Minister that the Act is intended to be used against the anti-social elements only. Proof of this is provided by the Bihar Chief Minister who threatens to freely use the Act to suppress the peasant movement sponsored by the Six Parties' Coordination Committee.

A vicious high-power propaganda has been let loose that these agitations are politically motivated by the Opposition parties, and particularly by the CPI(M). The fact that the Governments have been forced to give some concessions only when the Government is unable to suppress these heroic struggles despite severest repression, debunks and gives the lie to this vile propaganda.

Shielding the Police

The report of the Commission of Enquiry into the atrocities on a woman in Baghpet by police personnel has vindicated the charge made by the Opposition parties. And yet, beyond suspending the officers, the Government refuses to launch criminal prosecution against them for this heinous offence.

Twentyeight members of Parliament of the Congress(I) belonging to the minority community wrote to the Prime Minister that the PAC of U.P. was responsible for the mass killings and looting of property of the Muslims in Moradabad. And yet the U.P. Government shields these criminals. This belies the professed commitment of the Prime Minister to the protection of the minorities.

The Prime Minister expressed her sense of shock over the blinding of the undertrials by the police in Bhagalpur, but she is supremely indifferent to the Bihar Chief Minister's shielding of the criminals.

Her oft-repeated solicitude for the Harijans sounds hollow in face of the massive police force sent by the Bihar Chief Minister to enable the Mahant of Bodh Gaya to loot the paddy cultivated by the Harijans, and the Congress(I) Governments have taken no action against the landlords who have burnt and otherwise unleashed atrocities on the Harijans and Adivasis, landless agricultural labourers and tenants in several States.

It is significant that while the Prime Minister goes on vilifying these movements of the working people, she has not a word of

condemnation of, let alone taking action against, the monopolists and their foreign collaborators, the landlords, the hoarders and profiteers.

The P.B. noted that even the meagre prices fixed by the Government for foodgrains and other agricultural products are not available to the poor and middle peasants in most of the States, who are forced to effect distress sales of their produce. This is because the Food Corporation of India refuses to enter the market to guarantee the floor price fixed by the Government.

In Left-led States

In these circumstances, it is gratifying that the Left Front Government of West Bengal has come to the rescue of the poor peasants by purchasing their paddy at Rs. 109 and Rs.114 per quintal—much above the Central Government's floor price—and thus prevented distress sales.

The Left and Democratic Government of Kerala, too, has procured paddy at higher prices and prevented distress sales.

Frightened at the prospect of the welfare measures implemented in these States inspiring the working people in other States to struggle for a Left and democratic alternative, Indira Gandhi and the Congress leaders have unleashed a campaign of vilification against them.

The Central Government refuses to take over some of the sick industrial units despite the fact that committees appointed by the Central Government itself have reported favourably about the viability of these units.

In Tripura the Congress(I) has no compunction to join hands with the Upajati Samiti and the chauvinist Amra Bangalees in its attempt to destabilise the Left Front Government. It is significant that after the recent meeting between some leaders of the Tripura Upajati Samiti and the Prime Minister, the former have stepped up their secessionist activities.

North-East Region

The P.B. noted that the stalemate in Assam continues, and the situation in the entire North-East continues to be grave. It is

significant that the role of imperialist agencies who aim at separation of this whole area from India and the threat posed by them to the unity and integrity of India is sought to be concealed. The latest seven-point formula of Sri A. B. Vijpayee, President of the BJP, is no solution to the problem at all, but is an open encouragement to the secessionist and disruptive forces.

The P.B. is firmly of the opinion that the mobilisation of the democratic opinion throughout the country and warning them of the dangers to the unity and integrity of the country can alone isolate these secessionist forces and lead to a democratic solution to the problem, for which fertile ground was created by the total and criminal neglect of the economic development of this area since Independence. The P.B. appealed to the leaders to give up the movement and come to the table for talks without any precondition.

The P.B. regretted that the DMK and AIADMK vied with each other to support the National Security Bill and, despite their experience in the past, are vying with each other for the Congress(I)'s favour.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi repeats that her Government has no intention to change the Parliamentary form of Government. And yet she does not put an end to or even chastise her partymen and ministers who are campaigning for a Presidential form of Government.

Riven with Dissensions

The Congress(I) Governments and parties both at the Centre and the States are riven with intense factional and group fights. These groups come to blows in their meetings and often the police have to intervene. These rivalries have gone to the extent of murders of many Congressmen by others belonging to rival groups, particularly in West Bengal.

It must be emphasised that the struggles inside the ruling Congress party both at the Centre and in the States have nothing to do with policy issues concerning the welfare of the people but are entirely over the spoils of office. Such group fights are inevitable in the economic and political milieu evolved by the bourgeois-landlord parties of utilising the possession of State machinery to amass wealth.

With the intensification of the economic and all-round crisis of the system and the mounting struggles of the common people against the increasing infliction of misery, poverty and unemployment, the drive to authoritarianism will continue.

Mobilise all Forces

The P.B. is confident that this drive can be halted by the mobilisation of the people by all those who are interested in the preservation of democratic rights which are necessary for the struggle against exploitation by the vested interests.

The P.B. expresses its satisfaction that several segments of the people have come out against these authoritarian trends.

The P.B. directed all its units to strive their utmost in mobilising all the forces that can be mobilised in this struggle for the preservation of democratic rights and to strengthen the movements of the people against the anti-people policies of the Government, which alone can lead to a viable and powerful Left and democratic alternative capable of serving the problems of poverty, high prices and unemployment and leading the country to stability and prosperity.

CPI(M)'s Call To The People*

**Communique Issued By The Central Committee
Following Its Meeting Held in New Delhi
on February 4-8, 1981**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) greets the people of the non-aligned countries whose Foreign Ministers are meeting in New Delhi at a time of important developments and will be called upon to take vital decisions in the spirit of non-alignment.

It is obvious that strains have developed inside the non-aligned camp on various issues of international development. Besides, there are conflicts and even wars between members of the movement. It will be utter blindness to ignore that through these strains and conflicts the imperialist camp is endeavouring to split the unity of the non-aligned movement and push its aggressive designs ahead. Because of shortsightedness, pressures and dependence on the Western world, representatives of certain countries are falling victims to imperialist manoeuvres.

For India and the rest of the countries of the region, the supreme danger today is represented by the U.S. naval domination of the Indian Ocean in the region including its intervention in Afghanistan. Note must also be taken of the imperialist designs to create armed conflicts in these areas by pouring arms into this region. The people of India and Pakistan, who have witnessed three wars, cannot afford to ignore this challenge. The conference has to speak with a united and firm voice against these designs. It will enhance the prestige of the movement if it lends its full support to a political settlement of the Afghan issue. Any attempt to toe the line of the imperialists and beat the anti-Soviet drum will aggravate the situation in the area helping the imperialist manoeuvres. It will be lowering the

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flag of non-alignment if the conference does not accord recognition to the legitimate Government of Kampuchea—as the Government of India has recently done—and does not unhesitatingly denounce Pol Pot's claim to represent the Kampuchean people. Pol Pot today is supported by U.S. imperialism. Regrettably, the Government of People's China is lending him support. Nonetheless, it is known that Pol Pot has no right, moral or legal, to represent the people of Kampuchea.

Without taking these forthright positions based on anti-imperialism and democracy, the conference will not be able to play an effective role in the conflict between Iran and Iraq, two members of the non-aligned movement. Nor will it be able to throw its full weight on the side of the heroic Palestine liberation struggle against Israel.

It will be a futile exercise in self-deception if in the name of consensus clear-cut decisions on vital issues are avoided.

The international situation has deteriorated rapidly and the danger of war increases everyday. With the election of Ronald Reagan as the President of the USA, the U.S. imperialists are even more aggressively pursuing their policy of arms build-up, stationing new missiles in Europe, policing the Gulf area and the Indian Ocean with the expansion of existing bases like the nuclearised Diego Garcia and setting up of new bases, mounting fresh attacks on the newly independent countries and their economies, and trying to disrupt the unity of the non-aligned countries. With all this, they are reversing the process of detente and posing a grave threat to world peace. The Ministerial conference will no doubt express its concern over these developments, but it will lack moral strength if on the two issues of Afghanistan and Kampuchea, it does not take a forthright position exposing imperialist conspiracies.

The non-aligned meet cannot ignore the challenge posed by the crisis of the capitalist world, the restrictive economic measures taken by the developed countries, the disorganisation of their own economies under the impact of the strident demands made on them by international financiers like the IMF and the World Bank. Day by day the pressure is growing to let the multinationals have a free run of the underdeveloped countries, so that neo-colonialism gets back what old colonialism lost.

Here is the urgent necessity to close the ranks, take stock of the situation and embark on talks for mutual help and advance instead of moonshine talk about a new economic order with the blessings and patronage of the Western world. Every country receiving aid from the Socialist countries has felt its liberating effect and the experience has to be mastered by all countries.

All this underlines the need for the unity of the Socialist camp. The C.C. appeals to the world Communist movement to reforge its unity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. It appeals to all anti-imperialist forces in the world to close their ranks and defeat the growing war danger being created by the imperialists.

Economic Onslaught

Meeting on the eve of the budget session of Parliament, the Central Committee cautions our people that they should be prepared for a big economic onslaught on their standards of living. The last budget, and the year that has passed, have witnessed multiplication of the people's misery due to inflation and high prices and lack of jobs. But the coming fiscal year promises to unleash a further intensified attack. In fact the Sixth Five-Year Plan of the Indian Government can be described as a five-year plan of attack on the incomes of the poor, a plan for inflationary price spiral.

The bourgeois-landlord Government of the Congress(I) instead of curbing the monopolists and foreign multinationals, gives further concessions to them, and is attacking the workers, peasants and the common people to throw the burden of the crisis on their shoulders. It is arming itself with ever-increasing repressive powers to crush the people.

The plan calls for additional resources mobilisation of Rs. 21,302 crores by the Central and State Governments and their enterprises while deficit financing is proposed to be "restricted" to Rs. 5000 crores. This "restricted" deficit financing has an inherent capacity to double itself and the people will feel its effect in growing inflation. The plan very cleverly says that there is limited scope for raising resources through taxation; thereby it seeks to give relief to big business incomes and seeks to concentrate on improving the

situation through checking tax evasion. It seeks to "bribe the tax-evaders through an imaginative adjustment of tax policy so as to reduce the incentive as well as scope for such evasion". And it has given a bonanza to black moneyholders by allowing them freely to legalise their ill-gotten wealth through the bond scheme introduced by the Black Money Ordinance.

According to the Planners, direct taxes on agriculture at present constitute less than one per cent of the total agricultural income. But they have not the courage to suggest that only the fat incomes of the big landlords should be taxed. While formally suggesting a graded tax on agriculture they hasten to add: "Care should be taken to ensure that this does not affect in any way incentives to increase production and to increase productivity".

It is known that the rural masses and the urban poor are ground down by indirect taxes. Yet the main source of additional taxation is to be the common man. The railways and telephones are expected to raise substantial additional resources, naturally "through appropriate pricing policies".

The Electricity Boards should raise their rates to cover their losses. The Irrigation Departments are asked to raise their water levies. The State Road Transport Corporations are asked to revise their tariffs—this is already being done in the midst of police lathi-charges and firings. The Planners demand reduction of subsidies on foodgrains and other products. "Nevertheless, a significant reduction in subsidies from the level budgeted for 1980-81 is necessary to raise the required order of resources for the Plan." Prices will spurt. And it should be remembered that withdrawal of food subsidies is one of the directives of the World Bank which the free India Government is bound to carry out.

The scanning for resources does not end here. Block level committees and Panchayats are to raise specified resources and last, but not the least, house-rent control legislation in cities, it is suggested, should be withdrawn or modified to raise resources for the local authorities.

Attack On Workers' Wages

The Plan proposal regarding income and wage policy are hypocritical. They protect the profits of big industry while they

plan an attack on wages. In regard to incomes, the Planners say: "The need to provide adequate incentive for increased efficiency and productivity renders the task of income redistribution even more difficult". But when it comes to wages, the Planners suddenly discover disparity between man and man to restore equality on a lower level. And now they openly demand that every further increase in wages should be linked with productivity, as if the present wage-norms and production-norms are properly linked. Those who are fully employed should accept restriction on their earnings. Only, in the long run, real wages must be allowed to move with gains in productivity. In the immediate period they have no right to increase wages even if they increase productivity. The tycoons require incentives but the workers require none.

So far as the vast mass of the peasantry is concerned, there is only a bare mention of land reforms without reference to redistribution of land; there is no recognition that this mass is not getting remunerative prices; on the other hand, increase in price is disapproved. This, together with the prospect of withdrawal of subsidies, means the peasant will be further beaten down.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan which presages an all-round attack on the living standards of the people through increased taxation and prices; plans, besides, attack on the wages of the workers.

The ceiling on D.A. and bonus introduced under the rules of the new LIC Ordinance, the refusal to pay agreed bonus, the repudiation of solemnly entered agreements with the loco workers and the public sector workers constitute the opening of a battle against the working class and the employees. The Central Committee warns the working class that Emergency legislations and attacks, accompanied by repression, are in the offing and they and the trade unions must fully gear their united strength to meet the offensive.

The economic situation is beyond control with Government's inability to control inflation and prices and give relief to the people. The stench of corruption pervades the administration and the wheels of industry stop moving because of inefficient management, bureaucratic attitudes and corruption.

Notwithstanding economic agreements with a number of Socialist countries, especially the USSR, the Indira Government

has announced new facilities to foreign multinationals which reduce the talk of self-reliance to a farce and jeopardise the country's economic advance and independence. The influx of petro-dollars from the oil-rich countries for investment in non-essential concerns marks further the helpless condition of the Indian economy.

Foreign Policy

Even on questions of foreign policy, the Government is under strong pressure from imperialist circles to make a shift, soften its stand on a number of issues, using India's neighbours as pressure points and arming them. The Indira Government, hitherto, has maintained its stand on Afghanistan and Kampuchea but economic pressures are mounting. It will be suicidal for the Left and democratic forces to ignore the growing challenge of the U.S. imperialists, hitherto manifesting through economic pressure and arming of its neighbours. Now the challenge has come home in Assam and is again delivered through the demand for free operations of multinationals.

A number of bourgeois Opposition parties ignore this challenge, and the BJP is sworn to belittle it and thereby screen the imperialist designs against the country. Its open support to the secessionist movement in Assam is not only the high-watermark of opportunism but an act of encouraging the forces of national disintegration.

People's Struggles

The anti-people policies of the authoritarian Government are being challenged by the people at every step. The country saw huge anti-price-rise agitations in several States, marked by bandhs in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Bihar. Students and people have fought pitched battles against the increase in bus fares, and deaths have taken place in Andhra Pradesh and Punjab in police firings during these struggles. Employees and workers have struck work and other contingents like doctors and engineers also have joined the growing battle. But the outstanding feature of the last few months is the upsurge in the rural areas of many States, sending waves of shivers in ruling party circles. Peasants have been fired upon, imprisoned and jailed but the demonstrations and agitations continued.

Initially, in some States, the peasants' discontent was channelised by the landlords and other elements who were out to compensate themselves against reduction of fertiliser subsidies, etc., disclosing push and pull between the bourgeois and landlord partners. But once the discontentment was unleashed, it gathered its own momentum threatening the basis of official price policies based on beating down the peasant.

Peasant Upsurge

The widespread peasant upsurge is unparalleled in the history of free India. It roused the peasantry even in those States where the Left and democratic movement and the organised peasant movement are very weak. Peasants in hundreds and thousands came into action putting up road-blocks, stopping transport, organising marches and gheraos of State Assemblies, courting mass arrests, defying bullets and lathis of the police and adding to the number of peasant martyrs by shedding their blood defending their interests. Though it began spontaneously, it acquired a countrywide character forcing previous Congress(I) Governments to give significant concessions.

The ruling party opposed it in the beginning but in face of the strong peasant movement, it was compelled to make concessions amounting to several crores of rupees in several States and raise the price of sugarcane from the announced Rs. 13 to Rs. 23 and also the price of paddy.

The Left and several other Opposition parties took the initiative and intervened and succeeded in giving the movement a correct orientation calling for the unity of the peasantry and the agricultural workers. The Charter of Demands in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, which also demanded that the issue price of foodgrains should not be raised and called for a rise in the wages of the agricultural workers, showed how the interests of all the democratic and toiling sections can be combined in a fight against the bourgeois-landlord Government.

The Six-Party convention held in Delhi in September, and the fronts established in States, became the instrument of co-ordinating the upsurge and bringing them on to the path of common struggle.

The broad front for anti-authoritarian resistance could intervene successfully in the peasant unrest. Without such a broad front there was every chance of either the discontent petering out or the landlord leadership remaining firmly in the saddle.

Government Repression

The authoritarian Government tried to meet this upsurge with repression and firing. Several people were killed in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. In Tamil Nadu also, people were killed in firings. In Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Bihar, thousands were arrested but the upsurge continues. It is futile for the Government to imagine that the rural areas now roused can be kept quiet with an understanding with the leaders and the landed gentry. The Left and democratic parties and other opposition parties will now have greater strength to guide the peasants mass and align it with the agricultural workers who have been the worst victims of depredation.

The rising peasant movement marks a new stage of the crisis and creates conditions of instability for the authoritarian rule.

Hemmed in from all sides the Congress(I) Government has been resorting to brutal repression on the developing movement. The student community in Punjab, the students of the Agricultural University in Hissar, of U.P. and Orissa have been the victims of police brutality. In Orissa, school children were forced to march naked in the streets with headloads of bricks and stones and were given kneeling orders at the police station.

The National Security Act is being shamelessly used against locomen and other strikers. In Bangalore, the striking workers were fired on, killing three people. The U.P. Government continues to ban strikes in an increasing number of industries almost every month. The promulgation of the LIC Ordinance is the beginning of the reintroduction of Emergency rule against the workers' movement. All sections experience this attack of repression. Lawyers are assaulted and have to go on strike. School principals are beaten. Engineers, doctors, professors all taste humiliation at the hands of the police.

The Central Committee warns the people that a great assault on people's rights and liberties is being launched by the authoritarian Government at the Centre. It threatens to extinguish the rights of agitation and freedom of speech, all fundamental rights. Complacency will prove dangerous.

A concerted resistance must be given unitedly by forces opposed to authoritarian dictatorship.

The Indira Government has already forged new weapons to silence the voice of the people. After the National Security Act comes, the attack on the Judiciary, the second step towards the scuttling of the Parliamentary system and the establishment of a Presidential form of Government. The crude attempt to lower the dignity of the Judiciary and make it subservient to the Executive is seen in the orders of transfer served on two Chief Justices of the High Court. It has evoked strong protests from the legal profession and all democratic forces.

In the midst of this attack on civil liberties and democratic rights, of making the masses the scapegoat of the economic crisis, stands the shining performance of the three Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. They have loyally served the common man, protected democratic rights, upheld his dignity and thrown their weight on the side of the exploited in economic struggles. Working under inhibiting financial restrictions arbitrarily imposed by the Central Government, the three Governments have shown how to do justice to the common man and protect democracy. The three Governments have refused to use the National Security Act or any other preventive detention measure. They are the advanced outposts of the democratic forces struggling all over the country against the forces of dictatorship. It is unfortunate that some opposition parties in some States fail to see this reality and help the Congress(I) conspiracy against these Governments.

The continued existence of the Left Front and Left and Democratic Front Governments and their enhanced prestige among the people, constitute a setback to the authoritarian forces. But the Congress(I) continues its conspiracies against them and the people must fight them unitedly.

The three State Governments are discriminated against in every manner possible whether it is plan resources, or food-for-work schemes, or sanctioning of new industries and so on by the Indira Government. They are daily slandered and constant threats are being held out against them by Congress(I) leaders and Central Ministers. The Prime Minister also adds her voice to this. Law and order problems are being created in these States by the Congress(I). Plans are being made to attack these Governments. An attack on these Governments will be the prelude to an attack on all democratic rights. It should be the concern of all democratic and anti-authoritarian forces in the country to defend and protect these Governments.

In this context, the Central Committee also expressed its strong protest against the Union Home Ministry's Office Memorandum for Intelligence Bureau verification, apart from the usual police verification applicable to other States, of people from West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura for employment in Government service. This is sheer political discrimination against the three States for the only reason that they have Left-led Governments.

It is to be noted that discrimination is being practised also against other non-Congress(I) Governments as those of Tamil Nadu and Jammu and Kashmir.

The refusal of All India Radio to allow the Chief Minister of Kerala to broadcast over AIR's Trivandrum Station on the first anniversary of his Government should be noted by all democratic forces. It has been accompanied by a lying propaganda to mislead the people. This should not be dismissed as an isolated incident. The tendency of the Congress(I) Government to concentrate more and more powers in the hands of the Centre at the cost of the rights and powers of the States has been gaining strength. This, as in the past, is part of the drive towards authoritarianism, curtailing States' autonomy.

The acuteness of the crisis and the bankruptcy of the Indira Government are further witnessed in the breakdown of law and order in the Congress(I)-ruled States.

The regular looting of trains, the dacoities and murders in the capital of India and the capitals of the States, the kidnapping and rapes of women by gangsters and at police stations, the lack of

security for women and the rule of vast areas of cities and their slums by gangster gangs who are able to extort money from the people speak of the crisis of the administration and society.

The people suffer from the unruly and gangster behaviour of the police whom the Government is unable to control. The Bihar blindings, the firing and killings inside the Samastipur Jail, and instances like Baghpet and Dabhoi, and the Government's failure to punish the criminals place the people at the mercy of the police and anti-socials. As a result even the silent non-political crowd has started surrounding police stations.

The communal situation in the country has deteriorated seriously. The Government has failed to check communal incidents in various parts of the country. Communalists, and specially the rabidly communal RSS, are mainly responsible for the wipping up of communal tensions. The same reactionary RSS in connivance with the Congress(I) in Kerala is attacking the CPI(M) and the State Government with the aim of disrupting the communal unity prevailing in the State for decades. Fighting and isolating the RSS and other communal forces has become an urgent task before the democratic movement to protect the minorities and safeguard their rights, to develop the unity of the people and to ensure the advance of the democratic movement.

The anti-authoritarian forces are gathering strength and are preparing to meet the offensive of the forces of authoritarianism. The authoritarian party, weakened by its own inner divisions, alienated from the people, can be easily defeated, its plans for a Presidential form of Government scotched, if the Left and democratic forces correctly head the battle for the broadest possible resistance to the forces of dictatorship. It is only the growing unity of these forces that can bring about and strengthen such resistance.

Already the broad front of resistance of several parties, starting with the national convention of six parties in Delhi, has succeeded in unleashing an urge for political resistance and unity. It is intervening to place itself at the head of the peasant unrest. The kisan demonstration of March 16, called by the Kisan Co-ordination Committee, will be yet another step in mobilising and unleashing the peasant urge for justice, for demands like remunerative prices

and wages for agricultural workers. A big push will be given to the movement if all organisations of workers and employees, professionals and others join in solidarity with this demonstration and support its demands. The Central Committee calls upon the entire working class and the trade unions to lend support to the peasants and calls upon the working class of Delhi and nearby areas to actively participate in the demonstration.

The Central Committee calls upon all parties and forces to understand the gravity of the situation, to realise that a coup against democracy may be organised any day. It further urges them to strengthen the six-party solidarity and firmly march forward as an irresistible force against the authoritarian regime.

It calls on the people and their organisations to defeat the conspiracy of the authoritarian Government against the three State Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura; to carry forward the peasant upsurge for securing the demands of the peasants and agricultural workers; and to fight all taxation burden and the growing burden of high prices. It calls on all the trade union centres to unite to resist the coming onslaughts on the workers' and employees' rights and living standards. It calls on all democratic forces to protest against the denigration of the Judiciary and the attempt to reduce it into a subservient agency of the Executive, calls on the people to defend democratic rights and civil liberties and scotch the authoritarian Government's conspiracy to impose a Presidential form of Government on the people.

Resolutions Adopted By The Central Committee In its Meeting Held in New Delhi on February 4-8, 1981*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi from February 4 to 8, 1981.

The C.C., at the outset, mourned the deaths of Comrade Alexei Kosygin, outstanding leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people, and Comrade P. C. Joshi, former General Secretary of the Communist Party of India.

Apart from the Communiqué†, the C.C. adopted resolutions on the LIC Ordinance, the strike of the loco running staff, the strike of the Bangalore-based public sector employees and the Bangalore circus fire.

Text of the resolutions follow:

(a) On The LIC Ordinance

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemns the Ordinance promulgated by the Government of India to empower itself to arbitrarily and unilaterally change the terms and conditions of service in the Life Insurance Corporation.

The objective of the Ordinance is to circumvent the verdicts and directives of the Supreme Court and violate its own plighted word that it would abide by the verdict of the Court and pay bonus to the employees according to the earlier agreement.

Through the Ordinance, the Government has usurped authoritarian powers to impose on the employees whatever wages and conditions of work it arbitrarily decides, denying the employees any say regarding the conditions under which they work, their

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 15, 1981.

†The Central Committee's Communiqué is given under Item No. 33 of this Volume.

right to collective bargaining and their right to approach courts for justice. Even their organisation, which in the past has fought and defended their living standards, has been rendered redundant since the Ordinance deprives it of any say in the matters of salaries and conditions of service of the employees. The Ordinance is an open declaration by the Government that it does not accord with sanctity to settlements and agreements that have been signed.

Though directed at the moment against the LIC employees, the Ordinance presages similar attacks on the wages and conditions of all employees, all those who are described as "high-wage islands" and ultimately against the entire working class. The rules framed and announced under the Ordinance in regard to dearness allowance and bonus in the LIC indicate the kind of savage attack planned on the emoluments of employees. The C.C. congratulates the LIC employees for the stiff resistance they are already putting up to the Ordinance and calls on them to strengthen their unity and organisation to defeat this monstrous measure. It calls upon all trade union organisations to take it as their common task to defeat this Ordinance, as every worker, every employee, is the Government's target.

Coming as it does in the wake of the National Security Act, the denigration of the Judiciary, the campaign for a Presidential form of Government, the attacks on the freedom of the Press and the mounting repression on all agitations and movements, the Ordinance constitutes yet another milestone on the road to Emergency rule. It becomes the common task of all parties and groups and individuals opposed to authoritarianism, all those who cherish democracy, to stand by the workers and employees and denounce and defeat this Ordinance.

(b) On Loco Struggle

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is shocked to witness the manner in which the Government of India has unleashed a calculated and deliberate attack on the loco running staff, unjustly refusing to implement the agreement arrived at with them in August 1973. The

C.C. strongly protests against this anti-working class policy of the Government and condemns it for the ruthless repression let loose on the locomen, including the use of the obnoxious National Security Act, contrary to all promises that it would be used only against the anti-social elements. The C.C. congratulates the locomen all over the country who are in the midst of a bitter struggle in defence of their just demands.

More than seven years after the 1973 agreement, there is still no ten-hour duty for the loco staff. Though a Loco Running Staff Grievance Committee had been set up, it has been made infructuous by the authorities, barring the way to any negotiated settlement of the demands. Though restructuring of pay scales was agreed to, that also has not been implemented.

While the agreement thus remains non-implemented, the working conditions have sharply deteriorated, age-old privileges earned through years of struggle are being withdrawn. Any protest is met with victimisation. In a further attack, in Talcher, where women were raped by anti-social elements in the Railway Colony, protesting workers were victimised. The authorities thus forced the present agitation on the loco running staff all over the country. In addition to repression and use of the Territorial Army, the authorities are recruiting retired and inexperienced persons to keep the trains moving. As a result accidents are on the increase and the lives of passengers are in peril.

The C.C. considers it unfortunate that a section of the leadership of the recognised Federations of railway workers is opposing this just struggle of the loco running staff. The C.C. calls on all organisations of railway workers to rally to the support of the loco running staff who are fighting against violation of agreements and victimisations. It calls upon all the working people, all democratic forces to extend all support to the fighting locomen.

The C.C. calls on the Government of India to end the repression on the locomen forthwith and open talks with the All-India Loco Running Staff Association to redress their grievances and settle their demands.

(c) **Public Sector Strike**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) conveys its greetings to the 125,000 employees of the Bangalore-based public sector industries such as HMT, BEL, BEMIL, ECIL and others, who have been on strike since December 29, 1980, demanding parity of wages with the employees of BHEL. This just demand arises out of the provision in their agreement that the management would give a wage-rise to these employees if any public sector undertaking gave wages higher than provided in their agreement.

Though the BHEL agreement was signed in January 1980, the managements did not negotiate with the trade unions the question of wage-rise to the employees in the Bangalore-based industries. After waiting for over nine months the trade unions in these industries were left with no alternative but to prepare for an indefinite strike to win their demand.

The Central Government has disowned any responsibility of implementing the relevant provisions of the agreement and once again shown utter disregard to the commitments solemnly made in agreements with the unions. The offer of the Government to refer the dispute to arbitration or a tribunal cannot be taken seriously by the trade unions in the wake of the Government's refusal to honour the Supreme Court judgement relating to the employees of the LIC. C.M. Stephen, Union Minister of Communications, has made several statements which have considerably brought down the credibility of the Government in regard to implementing the commitments given to the workers.

The Central Committee condemns the repression on the workers in Bangalore and Hyderabad resulting in the killing and injuring of several workers.

Despite the complete strike continuing for 45 days resulting in a loss of production of Rs. 100 crores, the Government took an adamant stand during the negotiations on February 7 and 8 in New Delhi as a result of which no settlement could be arrived at. Even the INTUC leaders found the Government offer unacceptable which clearly shows its frivolous nature.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) fully supports the central trade unions and the unions in the Bangalore-based industries in their decision to continue the strike till their demands are met. The C.C. appeals to the working class and trade unions of all affiliations to rally in support of the workers in the Bangalore-based industries so that the Government is forced to concede their just demands.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) calls on the Government to realise that its wage-freeze policy will not be accepted by the working class. It demands that the Government restart negotiations with the trade unions on the basis of the proposals made by the workers so that the long-drawn strike is settled without any further delay.

(d) **Bangalore Circus Fire**

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its deep sense of shock and sorrow at the large number of deaths, mostly of school children, in the tragic circus blaze in Bangalore. Many seriously injured people are fighting for their survival in hospitals.

The C.C. extends its sympathy and deepfelt condolences to the grief-stricken families of the dead and injured. It demands that the Government pay adequate compensation to them.

Central Committee's Appeal for Rupees Five-Lakh Fund*

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has decided to launch a fund drive for collecting Rs. five lakhs to its central fund. This is necessary for meeting the annual expenditure on the normal organisational work of the Party.

The State, district and lower committees of the Party too, require funds for their organisational expenditure. The State Committees would, therefore, be collecting for their own funds over and above the quotas which they pay to the Central Committee's fund. The C.C. appeals to all members of the Party to do their utmost to make the fund drive completely successful. It appeals to all members and friends of the Party to contribute liberally to the fund.

Members and friends of the Party are aware of the decision adopted by the Party at its all-India Plenum on Organisation of the Party and to streamline its ideological and organisational work. The Plenum, as is known, was a continuation of the Tenth Congress held about a year earlier which laid down the line of building the unity of Left and democratic forces and developing a broad platform of struggle against authoritarianism. The discharging of these tasks it was pointed out at the all-India Plenum on Organisation, "demands an unprecedented growth in the organisations and struggles of all sections of the working people in the movements of all these who are interested in the preservation of the country's freedom and democracy. A rapid growth in the number and unity of the fighting working class, the

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 8, 1981.

peasantry and the other sections of the working people as well as of the patriotic and democratic elements in all classes, strata of society, is the basis and essence of the Left and democratic front".

The Plenum went on: "This in its turn requires an enormous growth in the strengthening of the Party of the working class—the number of its members in different States, the militant activity in which they are engaged, their unity with all other anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, anti-monopoly and democratic forces. Lakhs of new members drawn into the trade unions, Kisan Sabhas and other organisations of the working peoples, tens of thousands of active cadres working in these fighting organisations and drawn into the ranks of the Party of the working class; an uninterrupted process of educating the new and re-educating the old members of the Party; a system of inter-relationship between higher and lower units of the Party as well as within each unit on the basis of the revolutionary principles of democratic centralism—these are the essential pre-requisites for the role to be played by the Party of the working class. The Political Resolution of the Tenth Congress, therefore, calls for the expansion of the Party in a big way."

Although the work of carrying out the decision of the Tenth Congress and the all-India Plenum started in right earnest in the first-half of 1979, it was interrupted by the political crisis that broke out in the middle of July 1979. It could be resumed only after June 1980 when the January elections to the Lok Sabha and the May elections to the nine State Assemblies were over. We are, therefore, behind schedule in the implementation of the Party Congress and Plenum decisions. The C.C., at its meeting just concluded, has decided to complete the process by the end of June this year and then to start the work of preparing for the Eleventh Congress.

Even in spite of this interruption, the Central Committee could successfully complete some of the tasks that had been laid down. The central organ of the Party in Hindi was started within less than two months after the all-India Plenum was over. This has now been followed by the starting of the fortnightly organ of the Party in Urdu. One Central School for leading cadres from all the

States in English, another for the cadre from the Hindi-speaking States in that language, and a third for Party members working among the students, were conducted in this period. The P.B. is also trying to give more systematic guidance to the work of the Party in various States and in various fronts. The State Committees, too, have started paying attention to the problems of unity of action with all other Left and democratic and other anti-authoritarian forces, developing mass struggles and consolidating mass organisations, etc. The P.B. and C.C., as well as the State Committees, are conscious of the various failings and short-comings that have cropped up in the course of all this work. The C.C. reviewed all this and decided on the ways and means of consolidating the advance registered and removing the failings revealed in the course of the work by the Central and State leaderships of the Party. On the basis of this review, it was found that a minimum of five months more is required to complete the work that began immediately after the all-India Plenum on Organisation.

It would, however, be acknowledged by all—friends as well as opponents of the Party—that though the time schedule fixed has been upset, the Party has successfully intervened in the political developments that have taken place in this period. The realignment of political forces that occurred in the latter half of 1979 and in the whole of 1980 have, by and large, been along the lines indicated by the Party at the Tenth Congress and at the all-India Plenum. While on the one hand, the authoritarian Congress(I) has been able to come back to power both at the Centre and in the majority of States, exploiting the failures of the Janata Government, and although this party and the Government it leads are threatening to subvert democracy, the forces which can bar the path to authoritarianism are also growing.

Resistance to the authoritarian drive is growing from a broad spectrum of society including intellectuals, professionals, jurists, etc. Resistance is also building up from the side of the organised working class and the salary-earning population. The peasants, too, have been forced to come out against the policies of the Government which defraud them of securing remunerative prices for their produce.

While the peasant upsurge is sought to be channelised in a wrong direction by the vested interests, these efforts are being increasingly thwarted by the intervention of the mass of peasants, including agricultural labourers. This growing peasant upsurge as well as the organised movement of the working class and middle class employees, together with the democratic movements of the students, the youth, the women, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, backward castes and minority communities, etc., are sought to be guided and directed along democratic lines by the Left and democratic forces which are increasingly uniting themselves against authoritarianism. The Central Committee is proud that the CPI(M) is playing an important role in strengthening all these mass struggles.

The three Left-led Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala are playing a vital role in developing and consolidating resistance to growing trends of authoritarianism. The policies and practice of the Left-led Governments are in marked contrast with the policies and practice of the Congress(I) Governments in the States. The more the people see the contrast, the more are the leaders of the ruling Congress(I) and its Government getting uneasy and launching attacks on these Governments as well as on the Left and democratic parties that have come together in forming these Governments.

However, not only are the Left-led Governments of these three States under attack but the widespread movements and struggles of all sections of the people also face repression. Legislations such as the National Security Act are being enacted one after another, and are being used on a large scale against the people's struggles. Resistance by the fighting organisations of the working people and by the Left and democratic parties against these repressive measures and moves is joined by jurists, professionals and intellectuals.

The Left and democratic forces, however, have also to counter the various disruptive forces that are raising their head and helping the ruling classes by breaking the unity of the fighting people. The secessionist agitation in Assam, its counterparts in several other States of the North-Eastern region, the communal

riots and the attacks on the weaker sections of society and the rousing of chauvinist passions on a linguistic, provincial and local basis—these are proving great dangers to the emerging unity of the people. The Left and democratic forces, therefore, have to join together in resisting these disruptive forces and in fighting for the unity and integration of the various nationalities and sections of the people inhabiting our country.

This and the fight against the forces of authoritarianism, however, cannot be carried out unless the Party grows in a big way, which means fully implementing the decisions adopted by the Tenth Congress and the all-India Plenum of 1978. The C.C. of the CPI(M), therefore, appeals to all those who are interested in the preservation of democracy, in the resistance to the growing trends of authoritarianism, in the defence of the working people, to come forward to help the Party in every possible manner, contributing liberally to the Party Fund that is being collected now.

These national tasks of defending democracy and strengthening the mass movements have to be carried out in an international situation which is fraught with great danger to the cause of world peace, of the freedom and sovereignty of all countries in the world. Our own country is today faced with the threat of intervention by the U.S. imperialists who are stationing their naval forces in the Indian Ocean, trying to transform Pakistan into a bastion against India. It is unfortunate that some political parties of the opposition as well as non-party politicians, are giving support in this respect to the U.S. imperialists through their anti-Communist and anti-Soviet campaigns. The CPI(M) will, always, join hands with all those who are prepared to resist the inroads of U.S. imperialism to safeguard world peace and the independence of nations.

The C.C. is proud of the role that the CPI(M) has played in the ideological and political struggle inside the world Communist movement. Firmly adhering to the principles of defending the Socialist world and striving for the restoration of unity in the world Communist movement, the CPI(M) throughout its existence had refused to adopt positions hostile to either of the

two major Socialist States or to any of the Parties in the world movement. The expansion, consolidation and strengthening of the CPI(M) along the lines indicated in the Tenth Congress Resolution and the all-India Plenum documents, will thus be a major contribution to the unity of the Indian revolutionary movement and also of the world Communist movement.

The three journals that the Central Committee is bringing out have to be heavily subsidised because they cannot be run on a purely commercial basis. The Central Office of the Party requires a certain number of wholetimers without which no work can be properly organised. Also, some of the weaker State Committees have to be helped by the Central Committee till they are able to stand on their own feet. The work of guiding the State Committees which has been earnestly taken up, involves a great deal of travelling by Polit Bureau members. In these days of spiralling prices of everything from essential commodities to newsprint, the expenditure on the journals, on wholetimers, on travelling is also rising very fast. The Central Committee knows that the Party's sympathisers and friends are also hit hard by the crisis, but it is sure that they realise the urgency of adequate financial requirements of the Party to carry on its tasks.

The C.C., therefore, appeals to all Communists, to all Left and democratic forces, to all those who are prepared to fight the growing trends of authoritarianism to liberally contribute all help to the CPI(M) to carry out the task which it had undertaken in pursuance of the Tenth Congress and the all-India Plenum documents. Send your contributions at the earliest.

A Dangerous Game*

Polit Bureau Of CPI(M) On Indira Gandhi's Tirade Against Marxism

Speaking before the lawyers' forum, Smt. Indira Gandhi launched a tirade against the Marxist ideology and slandered the Left Front Governments of West Bengal and Tripura. This unseemly attack is a sign of desperation of a party which has failed to tackle people's problems and is feeling its growing isolation from the common man. The Left Front Ministries of West Bengal and Tripura have stood solidly by the people, protected democratic liberties, refused to use the National Security Act and thrown their weight on the side of the downtrodden in economic struggles. This is their crime. The entire speech will only encourage her party's followers to create law and order problems in these States. The people of these States will no doubt see the game and frustrate all attempts to undermine the two Ministries.

But this slanderous attack is also a warning to the democratic forces all over the country that the authoritarian party is steadily preparing its conspiracy to scuttle parliamentary democracy and establish one-party rule. To defeat attempts to destabilise the Ministries is the common concern of all democratic parties.

By opening the attack on the Marxist ideology Indira Gandhi has started the dangerous game of appealing to anti-Communism—the ideology of the most reactionary forces. This is how authoritarianism everywhere starts its attack on democracy. And her charge that the Left Front Ministries are appointing partymen to judicial posts or her concern for education in Bengal is just part of a political stunt. She dares not say a word against the economic

*Polit Bureau issued a statement dated March 17, 1981 in New Delhi Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 22, 1981.

reliefs given to the people by these Governments. One only marvels at the doing of the leader of the Congress(I) whose regime is notorious for corruption and nepotism and whose passion for appointing partisans and partymen has shocked the people.

Talks Between Leaders Of JCP And CPI(M)*

A delegation of the Japanese Communist Party consisting of Tomio Nishizawa, Vice-Chairman of the Presidium of the Central Committee, Hiroshi Ide, member of the International Commission of the C.C., and Masana Wada, Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Foreign Editor of *Akahata* and alternate member of the C.C., was in New Delhi from March 8 to 11, 1981 and held talks with a delegation of the CPI(M) consisting of General Secretary E.M.S. Namboodiripad and Polit Bureau members B. T. Ranadive, M. Basavapunnaiah and Harkishan Singh Surjeet.

The talks covered a wide range of subjects, including issues of bilateral interest, the international situation, the world Communist movement, the internal situations in Japan and India, the policies and activities of the two parties, etc. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the talks and decided to continue bilateral contacts to strengthen the fraternal relations between the two Parties.

*Report published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, March 22, 1981. JCP means Japanese Communist Party.

On Violence Of Congress(I) In West Bengal*

Statement Dated April 8, 1981 Issued by
The Polit Bureau Of CPI(M) In New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its grave concern over the report that Prime Minister has given the green signal to her party in West Bengal to continue its present agitation.

The Congress(I) agitation in West Bengal, especially the march to the Assembly on March 30 and bandh of April 3, has been marked by unprecedented violence against innocent men, women and children and burning of buses and trams. The Prime Minister till now has not had a word of condemnation for these depredations by her partymen. The reported directive to continue their campaign is not only to condone the violence that has already taken place but to encourage further violence in West Bengal. To the people who have never seen a Congress(I) agitation in West Bengal without resort to bombs and lethal weapons, the Prime Minister's reported advice to her partymen to be "peaceful and disciplined" is utterly hypocritical.

The authoritarian Congress(I) in West Bengal is desperately going ahead with a plan to create a law and order situation in the State. It is amazing that the Prime Minister gives encouragement to this.

The people of West Bengal, the working class, the employees and others have successfully been foiling the Congress(I) plans, and the impressive silent march in Calcutta on April 5, was a strong rebuff to that party by the people.

The Polit Bureau calls upon all Left and democratic forces, all the Opposition parties which have already declared that they will

not allow the Congress(I) to dislodge the Left Front Government of West Bengal, to determinedly and unitedly bar the path of the Congress(I) towards authoritarianism and defeat the conspiracy against the West Bengal Ministry.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 12, 1981.

CPI(M) Polit Bureau Communiqué*

Issued Following Polit Bureau Meeting
In New Delhi On April 16-18, 1981

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) at its three-day meeting in New Delhi from April 16 to 18, 1981 made a general survey of the international and national situation. It came to the conclusion that the threat to world peace is on the increase and the country is faced with a very serious threat to its external security, internal unity and national integration.

The aggressive postures adopted by former President Carter and his successor Reagan on questions of detente and world peace are endangering the peace of the world and the security of our own borders. Hectic preparations for war, arming the allies of American imperialism, issuing threats to freedom and peace-loving countries throughout the world—these moves have brought the danger of armed conflicts to our borders.

Arrogantly rejecting the proposals made by the littoral States and supported by the Socialist countries for making the Indian Ocean region a zone of peace, American imperialism is transforming this region into an arena of armed conflicts. Intervening in the internal affairs of the West Asian countries, it is instigating the reactionary ruling circles of the Arab countries to make brother fight brother in West Asia. Defeated in the earlier game of using the Shah regime of Iran for this purpose, it is using other countries in this region for the same purpose.

Occupying as Pakistan does an important place in this plan, American imperialism proposes to supply the military regime of that country with conventional arms and helping it to acquire its own atomic bomb. It may in this context be recalled that the 1954

agreement between the United States and Pakistan was the beginning of an era of conflicts on the Indian sub-continent. It led to tragic developments in India and the then West and East Pakistan. The moves made by the Reagan regime now are calculated to multiply the danger several-fold.

Further to the East, the ASEAN countries and the Pol Pot reactionaries are being used to threaten the independence and sovereignty of the Indo-Chinese peoples. Never before has the threat of aggressive conflicts on India's borders been as serious as now.

The P.B. noted that British imperialism was fully supporting all the aggressive moves of American imperialism and, besides, is adopting a rabidly racial policy. The recent visit of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher indicated to everybody concerned that, far from trying to change, the British ruling circles are determined to pursue their policy of support to American imperialism and racial hatred.

The P.B. noted with regret that Socialist China was not only not discharging its responsibility of helping the people concerned in resisting imperialist aggression but is justifying the aggressive moves of U.S. imperialism. It expressed the hope that the leaders of that great Socialist country would extend to their foreign policy the process of self-criticism and correction which they are applying in a large measure to the field of internal policy, so that the People's Republic of China will once again occupy its honoured place in the Socialist world and among the anti-imperialist freedom-loving countries.

The P.B. regretfully noted that some Opposition parties are adopting positions helpful to the American, British and other imperialists. They, like the imperialists, see in the Soviet Union and the Socialist world the major threat to the freedom and sovereignty of the non-aligned peoples. They have become such close camp-followers of the imperialist circles that they do not even see in the arming of Pakistan a direct threat to our security.

The P.B. appealed to the democratic, freedom and peace-loving elements in all political parties to see the harm that will be caused to the national interests of our people by this blind hatred for the Socialist world. It appealed to all the Left, democratic and patriotic

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 26, 1981.

forces to build a powerful movement which will rouse the patriotic consciousness of our entire people, rally them against the danger that is coming from imperialism and the militarist ruling circles of some of our neighbouring countries who are sought to be armed by American imperialism.

The P.B. conveyed its warm greetings to the people of Pakistan who are courageously fighting the military dictatorial regime in their country and hoped that their arduous struggle will lead to a strengthening of its friendship among the peoples of the sub-continent.

While taking note of certain moves by the Indira Gandhi Government to counter the threat coming from American imperialism, the P.B. desired to warn all sections of our democratic people that this threat from outside cannot be met unless positive democratic and pro-people internal policies were pursued. For nearly 34 years—regardless of whether they were led by the undivided Congress party or by the Janata and Lok Dal in the past or by the Congress(I) now—the Indian people today stand so divided among themselves that they cannot take a united stand on the defence of their country's freedom and sovereignty. Spokesmen of the Government including the Prime Minister continuously talk of the serious situation in the North-Eastern and North-Western borders of the country arising out of incitement from outside but they are unwilling to take effective measures to foil the conspiracies hatched by foreign agencies. They talk of the need for popular unity to solve the problems of the nation but they themselves adopt policies which frustrate rather than help all serious moves to democratic unity and advance.

Worsening Situation

The P.B. is of the view that what lies behind the rise and growth of fissiparous forces which has admittedly become a factor for destabilisation, particularly on the North-Eastern and North-Western borders of the country, is the complete failure of the socio-economic policies pursued by successive Governments at the Centre. As during the last three decades and more so now under

the new Congress(I) rule, the economic situation is going from bad to worse.

The promise to bring wholesale and retail prices down, with which the ruling party secured its massive majority of seats in Parliament has proved to be as hollow as the promises of the earlier Congress and Janata-Lok Dal Governments. The fifteen months of the new Congress(I) Government has been a period of steady growth in the price-level which stand today at its highest level since Independence.

The equally serious problem of unemployment has been assuming more and more serious proportions. Five-Year Plan after Five-Year Plan was formulated and implemented but during the period of no Five-Year Plan was the level of unemployment reduced in comparison to the period prior to the formulation of that particular Plan. At the end of 33 years of Independence, the number of those who are registered in the Employment Exchanges but have not found employment stands today at over 160 lakhs. This excludes the lakhs of Jobseekers who do not find it useful even to register themselves in the exchanges.

The discontent gathering among the working people—employed as well as unemployed—is sought to be so channelised as to release various forces of destabilisation. Caste conflicts, communal riots, disputes among different linguistic and ethnic groups, passions of a provincial and regional character—all these are sought to be utilised by anti-national forces with the full support of imperialism. The P.B. appealed to all patriotic forces in the country, interested in defeating the conspiracies hatched by foreign agencies to bring about destabilisation, to realise that the forces of destabilisation cannot be fought back and national unity preserved unless the anti-people policies of the ruling classes are reversed.

The P.B. desired to draw attention to the danger inherent in the increasing dependence on the World Bank and other imperialist agencies, together with the private multinationals for finding Plan resources. The tall talk of "self sufficiency", "dispensing with the need for foreign aid", etc., has proved to be not worth the paper on which it is written. The Government's dependence on the "aid" givers for Plan resources together with the increasing tie-ups

between the Indian monopolies and foreign multinationals, has become a means to our economic independence and political sovereignty.

Resistance is Developing

The P.B. expressed satisfaction that the broad movement of resistance to these anti-national and anti-people policies was developing. It conveyed its warm greetings to the workers in various industries and middle-class employees who have increasingly been coming together in united struggles for defending their working and living conditions. The moves towards trade union unity have now developed in the preparations for an all-India convention to be held in June, which will seek ways and means of developing the rights of the working class of India. The convention will be participated in by the major trade union centres except the one led by the ruling Congress(I) party. The P.B. expressed the hope that the unity of the working class will get immensely strengthened.

The P.B. expressed its satisfaction at the great peasant upsurge which has become the major factor in the political life of the country during the last several months. The massive kisan rally held in the country's Capital on March 26 was a magnificent demonstration of the fighting unity of various sections of the peasantry, including the landless rural poor, among themselves, and with the industrial working class and middle-class employees in the urban areas. This was a fitting answer to those who seek to set the worker and the peasant against each other—the rural and urban poor against one another. The class unity manifested in the rally, preceded by the arduous work at the grassroots level by the cadres of the major Left and Opposition parties should be followed up by organised work among the working class and the peasantry.

The P.B. noted with satisfaction that in developing this fighting unity of the workers and peasants, the Left parties have played a positive role. Unity of the Left parties among themselves and with other Opposition forces which are prepared to defend the interests of the working people, was seen in several Statewise actions and in the National Convention held in Delhi in September 1980. Such continuous united actions culminating in the kisan rally are of

tremendous political significance since they offer the only way in which the anti-national and anti-people policies of the ruling classes can be effectively fought.

The united action in which the Left parties made their distinct contributions has brought on them the ire of the ruling circles.

Attack On Left

The fifteen months of Congress(I) rule at the Centre have shown that as in the past so now, the ruling party finds in the emerging Left and democratic forces the main danger. While the Prime Minister talks of the need for unity and makes calls for co-operation from the Opposition, she has trained her guns against the Opposition in general, the Left Opposition in particular. The full-scale ideological attack she launched on Marxism and the continuous slander campaign unleashed by her against the State Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura show that true to the anti-national class approach of the big bourgeoisie, she is prepared to sacrifice the interests of the nation in her hatred for the Left.

The P.B. desired to draw the attention of all the democratic forces in the country to the fact that the party headed by the Prime Minister was hand-in-glove with all the forces against national integration in the Left-oriented State.

In their hatred for the Left Democratic Front of Kerala, the leaders of the ruling party had no hesitation to forge an electoral alliance with the BJP whose guiding spirit is the RSS; known RSS men were put up both in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislature elections of January 1980 as common candidates of the Congress(I)-led anti-Marxist Opposition. Today, too, the RSS-led BJP finds an honoured place in the anti-Left Democratic Government campaign spearheaded by the Congress(I). It is not without significance in this context that, speaking at Kozhikode within hours of a bomb-throwing by the RSS on the CPI(M) MLA of Tellicherry, the Prime Minister had no word of condemnation for the RSS either for that particular incident or for the general campaign of the RSS. Both in her Kozhikode speech, and in all other pronouncements of Congress(I) leaders in Kerala, the RSS is given a clean chit while the words of condemnation and denunciation are reserved for the CPI(M), and the Left Democratic Kerala Government.

The P.B. expressed its appreciation of the measures taken by the Chief Minister and Home Minister of Kerala, by the State Committee of the Left Democratic Front, by the State leadership of the CPI(M), to put an end to the politics of armed conflicts and clashes. It approved the political stand adopted by the recently held State Plenum of the Party that the RSS violence cannot be met by the mere use of the police or by organising measures of self-defence but primarily by routing the democratic consciousness of the people for restoring normalcy and making it possible for the people to lead a peaceful life. It hoped that all the constituents of the Left Democratic Front would make their contributions to the implementation of the decisions adopted by the Co-ordination Committee of the Left Democratic Front.

In Tripura where the CPI(M) and the Left Front headed by it had made a positive contribution to the unity of the tribal and non-tribal sections of the State's people, the Congress(I) has been encouraging such disruptive forces as are headed by the TUJS and Amra Bangalee. The violence and mass killings let loose by the TUJS extremists and Amra Bengali in June last year were used by the leadership of the ruling party at the Centre to conspire against the State Government. The Central authorities are, at the same time, starving the Government and people of their essential requirements for foodgrains and other essential commodities and failing to help this State out of the general socio-economic backwardness into which it has been sinking. The Central leadership is today trying to woo the TUJS extremists with a view to bringing about a new alignment of forces within the State and throw the elected Government out.

While trying to destabilise the Left-oriented Government of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala, the ruling Congress(I) has found it impossible to find solutions to the various socio-political problems which are used by fissiparous forces to destabilise the regimes where their own party is running the administration. Atrocities on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, communal riots, the depredations of dacoits and other anti-social elements—these have become the normal feature in State after State presided over by Congress(I) Chief Ministers. Gujarat under the Congress(I) has

just had a prolonged conflict between the Scheduled and upper castes of Hindu society which created conditions of near civil war. The Prime Minister, however, has no time, or does not care, to discharge her responsibility as the Prime Minister of the country and as the President of the ruling party, to tackle the serious problems faced by the people in States ruled by her own Chief Ministers. She and her colleagues reserve their holy anger for the "breakdown of law and order" in the non-congress(I) particularly the Left-oriented States.

Assam Situation

The P.B. noted with concern that the situation in Assam continued to be serious. Fifteen months of Congress(I) rule—the major part of which was under direct President's rule and the rest under the minority Congress(I) Government in the State—has not made any change for the better.

The CPI(M), like the other Left and democratic forces in the country, is of the view that the problems posed by the Assam agitation cannot be dealt with through the police-military administrative measures, or by organising defections from other parties to the Congress(I). The problem being political, the solution, too, should be political. Mobilisation of all those democratic patriotic forces who put up a firm resistance to the secessionist-chauvinist elements among the agitators, rousing the patriotic conscience of the people against the machinations of imperialism from abroad, uniting the Assamese and minority sections against the agitators' policy of violence and terrorism—this alone will bring normalcy back to Assam.

The Congress(I) leaders, however, are more interested in playing politics with the Assam problem, trying to instal and maintain their own minority Government at any cost. This led the ridiculous position where the Assembly session convened by their majority Government had to be adjourned without transacting even the minimum business that it was expected to transact—adopt a motion of thanks to the Governor for his address and pass a vote on Account Appropriation Bill.

The Janata-led Opposition, too, has proved its utter incapacity to find solutions for the burning problems of Assam. They share with the agitators their determination to divert the legitimate

grievances of the Assamese-speaking people towards hostility for the minorities, thus preparing the soil for imperialist intrigues in the region. They are not prepared to find peaceful solutions to the problems of relations between the various linguistic and ethnic groups inhabiting the State.

The P.B., therefore, approved the line adopted by the Assam State Committee and the Legislature Group—the line of dissociating the CPI(M) from the minority Congress(I) Government on the one hand and those Opposition parties which are giving full support to the secessionist agitators.

The P.B. expressed its grave concern that the situation in the other States/Territories of the North-Eastern region is also becoming a serious threat to the external security and internal unity of India. Imperialist-sponsored agencies of various kinds are using fissiparous forces to destabilise the entire area, so that imperialism can play its game. The P.B. appealed to the democratic and patriotic sections of all parties in that region and in the rest of the country to beware of this danger.

In The North-West

The P.B. noted that, at the other end of the country, in Punjab, a new threat was arising. The old and discredited slogan of the Sikh nation and the Sikh State is being resurrected and agitations are sought to be developed around it. While taking note of and appreciating the fact that sober voices have been raised by several leaders of the Sikh community itself, the P.B. would like to warn all democratic and patriotic elements of the danger inherent in the very fact of the slogan of Sikh nationhood having been raised at the present moment. This cannot be seen in any other light than as part of the U.S. imperialist conspiracy of which the arming of Pakistan and other measures adopted in West Asia are an important part.

This new danger arising in the North-West cannot, in the P.B.'s view, be faced unless the secular democratic forces in the country give a rebuff to the similar slogan raised by Hindu revivalists—the "Hindu Rashtra". It should be noted that the BJP which aspires to become the alternative to the Congress(I), is closely allied to the

RSS with its systematic campaign in favour of "Hindu Rashtra". The P.B. hoped that secular elements in all political parties would see the danger inherent in this.

The P.B. noted another divisive slogan that is becoming strong—the slogan of "sons of the soil". The ruling Congress(I) as well as many bourgeois Opposition parties have been and are using this along with other divisive issues to strengthen themselves against the political Opposition and, in their own internal (factional) squabbles. The P.B. appealed to the Left and democratic elements in all parties to see that these problems of national disintegration can be resolved only if they unitedly fight for the class and political unity of all sections of the working people for a complete restructuring of the socio-economic system.

In this struggle for restructuring the socio-economic system, the struggle against the authoritarian moves of the ruling Congress(I) forms a very important part. The enactment and liberal use of the National Security Act, the attacks on non-Congress(I) State Governments, the attempt at making the Judiciary a subordinate arm of the Executive, the campaign for changing the political system—all these are threats to the civil liberties and democratic rights of all sections of the people.

Appeal For United Fight

The P.B., therefore, appealed to all political parties, groups and organisations, regardless of differences on socio-economic issues, to fight unitedly against these authoritarian moves and in defence of the people's civil liberties and democratic rights.

It appealed to all patriotic forces in the country to see the intimate connection between the struggle for civil liberties and democratic rights and struggles for the presentation of the internal unity and external security of the country from the attacks of imperialism and its agencies in the country.

The P.B. appealed to all members and units of the Party to carry on a wide-spread campaign—independently as well as in unity with other patriotic, democratic and Left forces—against imperialist machinations; for the preservation of India's security and national unity; and for the defence of civil liberties, democratic rights and the living conditions of the working people.

CPI(M) Polit Bureau On West Bengal Situation*

Statement Dated April 18, 1981 Issued in New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) congratulates the people and the working class of West Bengal for rebuffing the Congress(I) call to paralyse the State's economic life. The working class did a marvellous job in keeping the factories, mines, tea gardens and concerns running giving a complete vote of confidence to the Left Front Ministry. Calcutta's tramways and bus workers played a splendid role in this all-important battle when they kept their vehicles running in the midst of showers of lethal bombs, despite injuries to themselves. Government employees defied the organisers of the bandh and reported for duty.

The Call Was Ignored

The villages with their mass of peasants and agricultural workers ignored the bandh call in contempt. In cities and towns alike, the main mass refused to give any support to this anti-democratic call.

The agencies of the Central Government—the railway authorities, managements of nationalised banks, many officers of the Central Government—all joined in this treacherous game and worked for the success of the Congress(I) call. The railway authorities, the previous day, announced changes in train timings to suit the Congress(I) bandh, which were readily broadcast by the Radio to create an atmosphere for the bandh. The railways cancelled a number of trains without any reason, closed ticket counters; the bank officials refused to open the establishments

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though the employees were present to move in. The Radio broadcast false news and the T.V. did its best to give it the appearance of success.

Aware of their isolation from the people, the Congress(I) leaders relied on terror tactics and incendiary attacks, preparations for which were made over a period.

The bomb attacks against the people started a night earlier. They were intensified on the bandh day with none spared. Crowded trams and buses, passers-by—all were the targets of these heinous attacks which killed several persons including five women. Several buses and trams were burnt out and more than a hundred buses were damaged.

Climaxing Operation

The bandh call with its burnings and killings was to be the climaxing operation of the earlier campaigns to bring down the Ministry. By organising widespread disorder, it was intended to give the Centre an excuse to dismiss the Ministry.

The entire game misfired for lack of participation by the people. What the people saw on the streets of Calcutta was the raw violence organised by the anti-social elements from Calcutta's underworld who acted as the vanguard force of Congress(I) protesters. The citizens of Calcutta knew now who would rule if the Congress(I) came back to power in the State.

The complicity of the Central authorities and the Central Congress(I) party in this incendiary affair was clear for all to see. The participation of Central agencies was open and unconcealed. There were public announcements that the Prime Minister and President of the Congress(I), Mrs. Indira Gandhi, had given her sanction to the bandh. She has not uttered a word in condemnation of the violence and killings organised by her followers in West Bengal, she has not expressed a word in sympathy for the victims of the violence.

But these foul deeds of the West Bengal Congress(I) have created deep revulsion amongst the people and the Congress(I) stands isolated from them more than before.

Prepared Plot

The bandh was a completely prepared plot to besmirch the Left Front Ministry, the CPI(M) and create a facade of mass sanction against the Ministry. The plot has failed. The people of West Bengal—the democratic forces and the Left parties together—gave it a big rebuff for which they deserve the warmest congratulations from all over the country. By defeating the Congress(I) attack they have not only served the Left Front Ministry, they have strengthened the anti-authoritarian forces all over India.

But the plots and attacks will continue. The authoritarian party is determined to use every opportunity to reach its objective and utmost vigilance of the democratic forces all over India is required to frustrate this game. It is a matter of high satisfaction that all Opposition parties in Parliament have expressed their opposition to this destabilisation operation of the Central Government. The continued existence of the Ministry, and the role it is playing in unleashing the democratic forces in the State, are matters of vital importance for India's democratic forces in their fight against the forces of dictatorship.

Calling for a broad front of resistance against these attacks, the CPI(M) appeals to all political parties to realise that the attack against the West Bengal Ministry constitutes the beginning of the attacks against the Parliamentary system itself. It was so in 1972 when semi-fascist terror was unleashed in the State and the Assembly elections were rigged, though very few political parties realised it then. It is, therefore, not accidental that simultaneously with this attack, there should be a growing conflict between the Supreme Court, the Judiciary and the Executive. Dictatorship seeks to achieve its aims in a number of ways. The Polit Bureau is amazed to find that in this critical hour, State units of parties like the Congress(U), Janata should join hands with the Congress(I) in West Bengal in its game of toppling the Ministry.

Every honest citizen knows that the cry of breakdown of law and order is a hypocritical cry. There is growing breakdown of law and order in a number of Congress(I)-ruled States, but the Congress(I) shows no concern about it.

What the Congress(I) means by breakdown of law and order is easily understood when one sees what the Left Front Ministry headed by the CPI(M) has been doing.

Everyone knows that law and order is preserved best in West Bengal giving real protection to the common man against the depredations of the exploiting classes and their hired anti-socials. But this is precisely the grievance—that under the excuse of maintaining law and order the common man is not repressed to bolster capitalist profits and landlords' exploitation. The crime is that the West Bengal does not use the National Security Act to put down the democratic forces; the crime is that it did not effect arrests of the locomen under this new MISA; the crime is that the CPI(M) Chief Minister and the Left Front Ministry threw the weight of the administration on the side of the downtrodden in all economic disputes. They saw to it that the jute barons gave bonus to the jute workers, they helped textile and engineering workers to secure their demands without a strike, and ensured democratic rights for the State Government employees and sanctioned increased emoluments for them. They gave a sense of new life to the sharecroppers through operation barga; they wrote off Government loans given to small farmers, and exempted wet and dry lands up to four and six acres respectively from payment of rent. The Government has already passed a new Agrarian Bill which is now awaiting the assent of the President. The anarchy that has prevailed in the sphere of education has been ended, and a healthy academic atmosphere established; education has been made free up to the twelfth standard, and in consultation with educationists and other experts, the syllabus for the primary stage has been reorganised. They introduced unemployment relief to the unemployed, executed with maximum efficiency the food-for-work programme; and provided for old age pensions for peasants. Thanks to this, the number of man-days lost during strikes has been drastically reduced in 1980. And this is the real charge-sheet against the Left Front Government. This is the long list of 'crimes' in the eyes of the capitalists and landlords. And the Congress(I) is giving expression to their desperation and chargin. This is what they call breakdown of law and order.

The Congress(I) party, as the representative of bourgeois-landlord interests, is opposed to these measures of giving relief to the people and protecting their democratic rights. It will stand completely unmasked if it were to oppose them openly. It, therefore, raises the cry of law and order in danger. When members of Congress(I) factions kill each other, it holds the CPI(M) responsible for it; when wagon-breakers are arrested or injured in police firing, it again raises the cry of breakdown of law and order.

These hypocritical cries and false alarms will continue for there is no limit to the unscrupulousness of the Congress(I) leaders. The people of West Bengal must remain vigilant against these assaults.

The P.B. congratulates our Party leaders, our ranks and followers on the heroism with which they have been fighting one assault after another of the Congress(I). Their role in the recent bandh, the discipline and consciousness shown by them, have won fresh laurels for our Party. They are now in the forefront of the struggle against authoritarianism and there is no doubt that they will continue to play their historic role. The CPI(M) congratulates the Left parties and their followers for the unity, steadfastness and courage shown by them in the fight.

The Polit Bureau calls on all democratic forces in the country, our common people, to realise the gravity of the situation. Unless the attack of the authoritarian party on the West Bengal Ministry, the citadel of the democratic forces, is defeated, the attack will be extended by the ruling party at the Centre to the entire parliamentary democratic system, all democratic rights. Aware of this danger, the anti-authoritarian forces in the country have to act in concert to defeat the deep conspiracy in which the Congress(I) is engaged.

Statement Of Kerala State Plenum Of CPI(M)*

The Salkia Plenum had laid down that the task of the Party in Kerala was to bring about a major change in the correlation of political forces in the State.

The Salkia Plenum had said, the anti-Marxist front formed in 1969 still continues as a stumbling block to the advance of the Left and democratic forces. While uniting and strengthening the growing mass movements to build a well-organised and revolutionary party of the working class, this weakness should be specially borne in mind.

It is true that this weakness has, in one sense, been rectified. The anti-Marxist front collapsed, a Left Democratic Front took shape in the State, it won the election and formed the Ministry. The Plenum records its satisfaction and pride in this.

But the Plenum is aware that what the Salkia Plenum visualised was not just a change in the relations between political parties at the top level. What we understand by a change in the correlation of political forces is the building of an organised mass movement, extending the influence of the Left and democratic forces among the workers, peasants and other toiling masses and widely propagating the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint. It was as an effective means to realise this that the Party called for the forging of the unity of Left and democratic forces.

The Plenum self-critically examined whether we participated in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections fifteen months ago and in the Ministry afterwards, whether we directed the Party's organisational activities to achieve this aim.

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We have had creditable achievements in this work. While we recall them with satisfaction, the Plenum at the same time considers that the shortcomings were not negligible. The Plenum pledges to overcome these shortcomings as quickly as possible and further consolidate the gains. The Plenum calls on the Ministers and State Committee leaders to fulfil their individual responsibilities and function collectively in such a way as to help this task. The Plenum appeals to the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee to give them leadership and guidance at every stage.

What helped us to break the anti-Marxist front here and build the Left Democratic Front were the political changes that took place at the all-India level. Our all-India leadership played a correct role in bringing about these changes. And we tried to work according to the situation prevailing in the State. The resolution of the Jullundur Congress of the Party, calling for united struggle against the authoritarian forces represented by the Congress(I), had said:

"It will be erroneous to ascribe loyalty to democracy and commitment to resist dictatorship to a particular group or party. The struggle against dictatorship will see many vacillations and change-overs from one camp to another, groups and sections changing their positions quickly under the pressure of the economic crisis and the developing mass struggles and the need to protect their own interests against the rival combination. The main question for them is to secure possession of the State machinery and that decides their attitude.

"Today, the main vehicle of this challenge is the Congress led by Indira Gandhi and her cohorts who openly justify the Emergency and are not ashamed to advocate the 'gains' of the Emergency. In the Janata Party also authoritarian elements and trends are manifesting themselves. This is natural in view of the character of the party and the urgent need to hold on to Governmental power".

The Jullundur Congress thus rejected the line of relying on the Janata Party to fight the authoritarian forces. The Jullundur resolution also gave the following warning against the RSS and other reactionary forces which were part of the Janata Party: "Already the RSS which continues to be separately organised is

emerging as a strong force forecasting ominous developments. Obscurantism is being promoted in State policies and progressive books are being banned. The Party cannot ignore the RSS and its grip over the Janata Party. These forces are being resisted from inside the Janata Party by the democratic and Left elements".

When the faction fights inside the Janata leadership began to get intense in the following months, in opposition to the posing of the alternative as one between the Indira Congress and the Janata, the move began to independently mobilise, with a clear perspective, the democratic and progressive forces belonging to different political parties. In this the leadership of our Party played a constructive role. Simultaneously, there was also a change in the attitude of other Left parties, including the CPI, and certain sections in the Janata and the Congress.

The Plenum examined the work of the Party leadership in the State to accelerate the process of this change. Though there were some weaknesses here and there, it was the correct line followed on the whole that brought into the Left Democratic Front the CPI, RSP, Kerala Congress and the Congress(U), parties which were with the anti-Marxist front till the second half of 1979.

But it will not be correct to conclude that with this the whole problem has been solved. For, this is a front consisting of parties which were for a decade in the anti-Marxist front and our Party. It should be remembered that the KPCC(U) which even to day considers that there was nothing seriously wrong with the Congress policies pursued between 1947 and 1978 is one of the constituents of the front.

In fact, this is a political front on the basis of a definite programme, of some parties which participated, in a greater or lesser measure, in implementing the policies of the bourgeois-landlord classes. The Plenum considers that it would be mistake to ignore this while dealing with Kerala politics.

The Plenum reminds all comrades and friends that the formation of this front and the efforts to ensure its continuance are extremely helpful to defend the interests of the workers, peasants and other masses. For, if this Government is subverted as the Indira Government at the all-India level and the position parties

here want, would mean the restoration of the Karunakaran regime which was overthrown.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that there will be conflicts between the constituents of the front which have different policies. Serious note has to be taken of the differences that arose on a number of issues like the Land Gift Bill, *dies non*, etc. These had their impact on the functioning of the Ministry.

There are differences still between our Party and parties like the Congress(U) on many issues like the demands of the workers, peasants and other masses, their struggles, the attitude of the Government to them, etc. Our Party has differences on certain issues even with Left parties like the CPI and RSP, with whom our Party works jointly on national issues.

If there are tendencies in our Party and the other constituents to either ignore these differences or exaggerate them, it should not be surprising. Only through struggle can the front and the Government be strengthened even while maintaining the separate identity of each constituent party. That is what has been indicated by the criticisms in the Plenum of our Party's Ministers and all the Ministers. The Plenum calls on the State Committee to accept the essence of this criticism and improve the functioning of the front and the Ministry through bilateral discussions and constant collective discussions in the committee.

All constituent parties of the front have a responsibility in this regard, especially the Congress(U) and our Party. For, the Indira Congress and its allies are trying to make these two parties fight each other to disrupt not only the front in Kerala but also the anti-authoritarian front that is taking shape at the all-India level. Congress(U) leader Sharad Pawar has exposed how the Central Intelligence department is carrying on a campaign of lies to facilitate this. Congress(U) President Devraj Urs and other leaders of that party like Y. B. Chavan, K. P. Unnikrishnan, A. K. Antony, etc., have denied news-reports aimed at spreading this lie. We are confident that all the constituent parties of the front will strive to foil this conspiracy of the Indira Congress and its Central Government, defend the Left Democratic Front and Government and extend the front to the all-India level.

The incidents following the attempt to kill M. V. Rajagopalan Master with a bomb in Tellicherry a week ago are of equal concern to the CPI(M) as to other constituent parties of the front and the people. The Party will fully cooperate with every effort to end the tension and normalise the situation. At the same time, it has to be noted that the Prime Minister in her speech in Kozhikode a few hours after the bomb-throwing in Tellicherry not only did not condemn the RSS but utilised the occasion for attacking the CPI(M).

Simultaneously, the Prime Minister has given the green signal to a liberation struggle type of subversive movement against the Left Front Government in West Bengal. And in Kerala she blessed the violent activities of her own followers and the RSS.

Naturally, the question arises whether the Central Intelligence is only spreading lies as pointed out by Sarad Pawar, or whether it is directly giving active support to RSS Naxalite violence to help the cry of "breakdown of law and order".

The Plenum appealed to the Constituent parties of the Left Democratic Front to effectively rebuff the attempt of the Opposition parties to make out that the Home Minister in charge of the police or his party is responsible for the present situation in Kerala. Central Ministers including the Minister of State for Home Affairs are trying to pit Government officials including in the police department against the Left Democratic Front Government. The Plenum appeals to all constituent parties of the front to cooperate in organising public opinion against the violent activities of the RSS and its semi-military parades, etc.

The CPI(M) does not think that the violent activities of the RSS and Naxalities can be met with police measures of self-defence. The only way to meet them is to organise public opinion by mobilising the peace-loving forces in all political parties and not belonging to any political party against the politics of daggers and bombs.

The Plenum appeals to all comrades, friends of the Party and Left and democratic forces to rally unitedly to mobilise the people against the provocative activities of the RSS and ensure the peaceful life of the people, to defeat the moves under the

leadership of the Indira Congress to subvert the Left Democratic Government, to solve the differences among the constituent parties, further strengthen the front and enable the Government to function more effectively and take more measures in favour of the people.

For Holding By-Elections Immediately*

Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M)

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on April 17, 1981:

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly protests against the further postponement of the by-elections in West Bengal to the State Assembly and the Lok Sabha. The Election Commission has done this in the name of working out a common programme for all the pending by-elections.

The P.B. notes that never since 1952 was any by-election postponed under this plea. It is pertinent to point out that the Election Commission did not put forward any such plea when by-elections were held in Rajasthan, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh to enable the nominated Chief Ministers to enter the State Assemblies. And only recently four by-elections to the Andhra Pradesh Assembly were held. The only conclusion possible is that the Election Commission's present pose is deliberately intended to postpone as long as possible the by-elections in West Bengal.

It is well-known that the faction-ridden Congress(I), with its growing isolation from the people, is not prepared to face any election in that State. Last time also, it was under pressure of the Congress(I) that the Election Commission postponed the by-elections, even though the Commission itself had rejected the Congress(I) plea of irregularities in the electoral rolls.

The Election Commission has again succumbed to the pressure of the ruling party at the Centre.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 26, 1981.

The Polit Bureau demands that the Congress(I) stop using the Election Commission to further its partisan interests. It demands that the Election Commission assert its independent status and hold the by-elections in West Bengal immediately.

The Polit Bureau appeals to all democratic forces and political parties to protest against this blatant violation of all democratic norms and abuse of power by the Election Commission at the behest of the Congress(I).

On Bihar Riots*

Statement Issued by The Polit Bureau of CPI(M)

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on May 5, 1981:

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) expresses grave concern at the tragic developments in Biharsharif and the neighbouring villages in Bihar.

As in several previous cases of atrocities against the weaker sections, in these communal riots, too, the local administration and the Congress(I)-led State Government in Bihar have completely failed in their elementary duty to protect the minorities. The Prime Minister rushing to the area after four days of rioting cannot whitewash the criminal responsibility of the State administration and the ruling party in this respect. The Polit Bureau notes that the Biharsharif riots are a continuation of the Aligarh, Jamshedpur and Moradabad riots—all of them occurring in Congress(I)-ruled States. This underlines the total unreality of the ruling party's talk of national integration.

The Polit Bureau draws the attention of all the democratic and secular forces in the country to the atmosphere of communal tension created by those who are committed to such disruptive ideologies as Hindu Rashtra, Islamic fundamentalism, Khalisthan, etc. The forces representing these ideologies had been and continue to be busy setting one community against another and thus pave the way for the riots. The ruling Congress(I) and its Central Government are using their control over State-owned

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, May 10, 1981.

media like All-India Radio and Doordarshan not to fight but to encourage these ideologies. While calling upon the Government to stop this disastrous course, the P.B. appeals to all secular forces to unite against the fissiparous forces and completely isolate those who instigate the riots.

Message To Kampuchean Party Congress*

**Sent By The Central Committee Of CPI(M)
On May 18, 1981**

The following is the text of the message of greetings from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to the Fourth Congress of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) extends its warmest greetings to the Fourth Congress of the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party opening in Pnom Penh on May 26, 1981.

Communists and democrats in India watched with admiration, and extended all their solidarity and support to the glorious struggle of the Kampuchean people, along with the people of Vietnam and Laos, first against French colonialism and then against U.S. imperialism. The U.S. aggressors brought untold destruction to Kampuchea and its people with their carpet bombings and inhuman tortures and massacres.

When after the historic victory, the Communist Party, the working class and the Kampuchean people should have devoted themselves to held the wounds of the genocidal war and to Socialist construction, the revolution was derailed into anti-people terroristic regime by the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique. More sufferings and hardships, more loss of lives, complete collapse of the economy, polity and society became the lot of the Kampuchean people.

In the last two years, after overthrowing the despotic terroristic regime, with fraternal help from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Kampuchean people, led by the People's

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY". New Delhi, May 31, 1981.

Revolutionary Party, are exerting all their efforts to restore the economy and rebuild their society so that Kampuchea can advance on the path of Socialism. Two members of the Polit Bureau of our Party, during their visit to the Indo-Chinese countries at the beginning of this year, saw for themselves the ravages of the war as well as of the Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime and the arduous work which the Kampuchean people have undertaken for reconstruction. They were also happy to see the successes that have already been achieved.

At a time when the Kampuchean people need peace the most for speeding up their reconstruction work, the U.S. imperialists are again intervening in Kampuchea, using the reactionary Thai regime and some other South-East Asian Governments, as well as the Kampuchean reactionaries thrown out by the people. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is sad to note that the People's Republic of China also, instead of extending help to the Kampuchean people in their struggle against imperialism, is creating more problems and difficulties for Kampuchea.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) extends its fullest support to the People's Revolutionary Party and the people of Kampuchea in their struggle against U.S. imperialism and the Pol Pot remnants. It extends its fullest support to the demand that the Heng Samrin Government of Kampuchea be accorded its rightful place in the United Nations and the non-aligned movement. It extends its support to the correct position that the Association of South-East Nations should hold direct talks with the Government of Kampuchea, as well as the Governments of Vietnam and Laos, to normalise the situation in the region without any imperialist interference.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) once again extends its revolutionary greetings to the Fourth Congress of the People's Revolutionary Party and wish it all success with the confidence that its deliberations and decisions will lead to rapid advances in Kampuchea.

CPI(M) Polit Bureau Document On Major Developments Since The Central Committee Meeting Of February 4-8, 1981*

The induction of Ronald Reagan into the office of the President of the United States meant a further intensification of the drive against detente initiated by imperialism earlier. This has endangered world peace, threatening the external and internal security of every country in Europe, Asia, Africa and America. The people of every European country face the threat of a military confrontation involving the use of deadly weapons including the neutron bomb. Millions inhabiting the West Asian-Indian Ocean region are facing the terrible prospect of direct American intervention supplementing Zionist aggression against the Arab peoples. The Indian sub-continent faces the prospect of destabilisation in the region arising out of the collaboration among the Pakistani militarists, the feudal ruling circles of some of the neighbouring countries and, above all American armed intervention. The peoples in Africa have in their midst the White racist regime in South Africa which is bent on defying the U.N. resolutions on Namibia and perpetuating its brutal regime there. South and South-East Asian peoples, too, face the prospect of the renewed activity of American imperialism and the reactionary ruling circles of the countries in the region who are posing a direct threat to the courageous people of the Indo-Chinese countries. El Salvador and other countries in South and Central America are threatened by the aggressive American imperialism.

This newly reinforced aggressive course of imperialism has its roots in the crisis of the economy and politics of world capitalism. The year 1980 belied all the expectations and forecasts of bourgeois analysts, and heralded the onset of a new recession. Britain, Canada, Spain, Australia, France, Italy and, above all, the United States,

*Published as a booklet in May, 1981.

witnessed a drop in the volume of industrial production. The Gross National Product of the industrialised capitalist countries increased in 1980 only by 1.5 per cent in real terms. And the volume of industrial production went up by as little as one half of one per cent. Even leading circles in the USA and other capitalist countries say they are having the most severe crisis since the 30s. Unemployment in the developed capitalist countries, not to speak of chronic unemployment and under-employment in the Third World, is mounting. Added to the alarming rate of growth in inflation, this poses a serious threat to the capitalist economy.

The crisis of the world capitalist economy is leading to political instability and the advance of extremist forces among the ruling circles of several countries. The electoral victory of Ronald Reagan in the United States, preceded by that of Mrs. Thatcher in the United Kingdom earlier, is the culmination of the process of the most reactionary circles in the ruling classes getting hold of State power in the two countries. President Reagan's much-publicised campaign against what he calls "international terrorism", coupled with the racist policy of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, indicates the growing threat posed by imperialism to the national independence of countries in all continents. At the same time, the working class in the capitalist countries faces the threat of fall in real wages, unemployment, etc. They have to engage themselves in various class battles even for maintaining the existing levels of living.

American imperialism, with the cooperation of the British ruling circles, is trying to find a way out of this economic and political crisis through its old and discredited policy of cold war and anti-Communism. It resorts to all forms of provocation to reverse the process of detente, pressurises the ruling circles in several countries to start a drive to arms, provokes armed conflicts. It uses even the outer space for military purposes. This, however, is opposed and resisted by the ruling circles of such capitalist countries as the FRG, France, etc., which find this policy detrimental to their economies. At the same time, the common people everywhere resist the drive towards war and come out in defence of peace. Popular movements against the aggressive policies of imperialism, for preserving peace,

for reducing defence expenditure and using the amounts saved for developmental activities, are growing and are bound to gather still further strength. Our Party should be behind none in helping this movement to grow further.

The Soviet Union and other socialist countries are playing an important role in helping the movement for preserving and further carrying forward the process of detente, for resisting the aggressive policies of imperialism. The proposals made by the Central Committee of the CPSU at the 26th Congress of the Party for a dialogue leading to the peaceful settlement of all disputes brought into sharp focus the contrast between the policies of imperialism and Socialism. It is unfortunate that the Chinese People's Republic and its ruling Communist Party have not fallen in line with the rest of the Socialist world in resisting the imperialist offensive. They, in fact, are continuing to pursue the policy of justifying the aggressive actions of the imperialist Powers, denouncing the Socialist Soviet Union as the most aggressive Power in the world. This foreign policy, still pursued by the Chinese Government and the Party, would be detrimental to the very process of correcting the mistakes of the "Cultural Revolution" initiated by them since 1976-77. It should be the endeavour of the rest of the world Communist movement to help the Chinese comrades correct themselves in this regard so that China once again occupies its honourable place in the international Communist movement, Socialist world and among the anti-imperialist freedom-loving countries.

The above development in the international arena are of direct relevance to India and its people. For, since imperialism suffered its fiasco in South-East Asia at the hands of the courageous peoples of the Indo-Chinese countries, it has been trying to develop the West Asian-Indian Ocean region as another base of operations. Following the second fiasco it suffered when the autocratic regime of the former Shah of Iran was overthrown by the people of that country, imperialism has been hatching other plots. Arrogantly rejecting the proposals made by the peoples and Governments of the region and supported by the Socialist countries for turning the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace, imperialism is turning the

India Ocean into a base of military operations. The zionists of Israel are being used against the national liberation movement of the Arab peoples, while the reactionary ruling circles of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, etc., are also being enticed into the imperialist net. Coming closer to India's own borders, the military regime of Pakistan is being helped to arm itself against the Pakistani people themselves and against the neighbouring countries. The so-called "problem of Afghanistan" is used for this and a hysterical anti-Soviet campaign unleashed, even though the Governments of both the Soviet Union and Afghanistan have been repeatedly making constructive proposals to arrive at the much-desired political settlement of the problem. These moves of imperialism on the western borders of India, together with the similar moves (though in smaller proportions) on other borders being India into the orbit of direct imperialist aggression.

The threat this poses to the security of India is further accentuated by the socio-economic and political policies pursued by the ruling classes during the thirty-four years of Independence and the mass discontent generated by them. The thirty years of planning for developing the Indian economy along the capitalist path, in alliance with the landlords, has further strengthened the positions of Indian monopolies who are collaborating with the imperialist monopolies while impoverishing and weakening the workers, peasants and other patriotic sections of our people. Furthermore, Government policies on such social-political questions as official language and medium of instruction, protection of minorities, a secular socio-cultural policy, protection and strengthening of State autonomy, etc., have been such that, instead of uniting the various socio-cultural and ethnic groups that inhabit this vast country, they are made to fight against one another. The discontent arising out of the anti-people economic policies, and the disruption caused by the anti-democratic policies in the socio-cultural and political spheres provide fertile ground on which imperialism can operate and is operating. The former and present ruling parties at the Centre—the undivided Congress party for thirty years, the Janata for three years and the present Congress(I)—should all share the responsibility for this state of affairs.

Despite the tall claims made on behalf of the Government and the planning authorities, there has been a yawning gap between the promises made by and the performance of the ruling party in the field of planning. The Sixth Plan that has now been approved by the National Development Council itself admits that "except in the First and Fifth Plan, the actual growth rate has been less than the higher targets specified in the plans". The targets and actual performance for the growth rates of national income were 2.1 per cent and 3.6 per cent respectively in the First Plan; 4.5 per cent and 4.0 per cent in the Second Plan; 5.6 per cent and 2.2 per cent in the Third; 5.7 per cent and 3.3 per cent in the Fourth and 4.4 per cent and 5.2 per cent in the Fifth.

Still more serious is the fact that the "fruits of development" are increasingly appropriated by a narrow upper stratum of the society, while the mass of a working people are left to fend for themselves. Figures quoted in the Sixth Plan show that the poorest thirty per cent of the population had 13.1 and 13.2 per cent respectively of the consumer expenditure in the rural and urban sectors in 1958-59. It rose only to 15.0 per cent and 13.6 per cent respectively in 1977-78. How does this act on the life of the people? An estimate of "nutritional inadequacy for 1971-72 based on a calory norm of 2300 calories and protein norm of 57 grams shows that the percentage of population suffering from either calory or protein deficiency (or both) was 28.8 per cent in rural areas and 32.6 per cent in urban areas".

As opposed to this steady decline in the conditions of the common people are the continuation of land monopoly in new forms and the alarming growth of monopoly capitalists and the rapid penetration of multinationals. "The net sales of 658 companies increased by 16.6 per cent to Rs. 15,637 crores in 1977-80 from Rs. 13,416 crores in the previous year. Gross profits rose by 29.5 per cent to 1,114 crores from Rs. 880 crores from the previous year. The ratio of operating profits to net sales improved although marginally from 10.0 per cent in 1978-79 to 10.8 per cent in 1979-80" (*Commerce*, April 11). This, at a time, when unemployment is admittedly increasing, inflation is growing, the

phenomenon of "sick industries" is becoming chronic and assuming more and more serious proportions, etc. The former undivided Congress, the subsequent short-lived Janata and Lok Dal and the present Congress(I) Governments have all been pursuing the same class policies with the same results.

The monopoly capitalists who are thus growing fast at the expense of the common people, are doing so in collaboration with foreign monopolies. The Government, too, has been, and is still, relying on foreign "aid" as one of the major means of finding resources for plan outlay and investment. The inflow of external assets and the charges of debt-servicing have, therefore, been steadily going up. Between 1970-71 and 1980-81, for instance, gross disbursements of external assets increased from Rs. 791 crores per year to Rs. 2,341 crores. Out of this gross disbursement, Rs. 450 crores had to be spent for servicing the debts previously contracted in 1970-71; this amounted in 1980-81 to Rs. 882 crores. This means that the need for getting more and more external "aid" makes the burden of debt-servicing still more heavy. The Sixth Plan contemplates net external assistance of nearly Rs. 10,000 crores which would reach a much higher figure if the debt-servicing charges are also added; the total foreign borrowing for the plan period may have to be in the range of Rs. 20,000 crores. Borrowings of such magnitude would mean that the import-export trade is determined by the need to produce for the western markets which makes a farce of planning itself.

It is significant that the first three quarters of the year 1980-81 had a record number of foreign collaboration agreements. Approvals for the year reached 596, surpassing the previous peak 403 in 1961. Foreign collaboration, approvals as well as those involving foreign capital participation, in 1980, doubled as compared with those in 1979. As in the previous year, the majority of collaboration approvals was with three countries, namely, the FRG, U.K. and USA (*Commerce*, April 11). This too, at a time when the multinationals were defying Government legislation regarding the dilution of equity. The Government has come to such a pass that the violations of its laws by the multinationals have to be tolerated.

This heavy dependence of the Government and private capitalists on foreign "aid" and collaboration cannot but lead to vacillations, compromises, etc., on questions of foreign policy. Even though some sections in the ruling circles see the danger and want to resist imperialist pressures, they are unable to take a firm stand on questions in which imperialism on the one hand and Socialism and the national liberation movement on the other, are in confrontation. There are, at the same time, sections within the ruling circles who do not conceal their eagerness for orientation towards the imperialist Powers, hostility to the Socialist world and the militant forces of national liberation. The latter denounce the former for their alleged "tilt" towards the Socialist camp. The former, on their part, call for cooperation and support for their entire policy which includes dependence on foreign "aid" and collaboration with multinationals. The contrast between these two is visible above all in the postures adopted by the ruling Congress(I) and some opposition parties.

According to a section of the leaders of opposition parties, particularly the BJP leaders, there is no direct threat to India's security arising out of the American policy of arming Pakistan. Among the non-BJP opposition leaders, Janata's Morarji Desai has gone on record that Pakistan has every right to get arms from the United States while the latter has the right to arm Pakistan. Sections of the opposition represented by these leaders joined the imperialist chorus that the threat to India came from the Soviet Union. This political line of a section of the bourgeois opposition is a great impediment in the way of mobilising the people in defence of the country's security. This section of the leadership conceals from the people the fact that the unsettled conditions in the North-Eastern region in general, and the prolonged agitation on the "foreign nationals" issue in Assam, provide fertile soil to the various agencies of imperialism to carry on its intrigues for destabilisation. They, in fact, give all sorts of direct and indirect help to the Assam agitationists and to such disruptive forces as the TUJS extremists in Tripura. Some of them also take direct part in the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat. The RSS which bases itself on the "Hindu Rashtra" slogan, and which exerts its influence on the BJP, gives support to all fissiparous forces. Demands for division of U.P.,

Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, etc., are raised. Everyone of these creates division among the people and facilitates the intrigues of imperialism.

The forces which serve the purpose of creating division among the people are (a) the RSS; (b) a section of tribal leaders in Eastern India who raise separatist slogans including Uttarkhand and Jharkhand; (c) the Jamaet-e-Islami which bases itself on the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism and fans communal feelings all over the country; (d) a section of the Akali leadership which, though representing only a small section of the community, has the powerful support of imperialist forces in raising the slogan of Khalistan; (e) some Christian missions operating with foreign funds, particularly those which function in the North-Eastern region. Everyone of them raises divisive slogans, and would be dangerous even in normal circumstances. All the more so are they today when imperialism is making all-out efforts to destabilise as many border areas of India as possible so that its intrigues from outside may succeed.

Countering the manoeuvres of imperialism and its agencies operating under various garbs requires the reversal of the anti-people socio-economic policies pursued by the Government since Independence, and the adoption of alternate policies. For, the discontent among various sections of the people arising out of the steady pauperisation of the bulk of the people, going hand in hand with the rapid enrichment of a narrow upper stratum of the society, prevents the development of the people's consciousness that they have a stake in the defence of the country. Rousing the patriotism of the common people requires such a reversal of socio-economic policies as would give employment to the unemployed, enhance the emoluments of the wage and salary-earning people, assure remunerative prices to the peasants and handicraftsmen, provide essential commodities to the common people at low prices through the public distribution system, etc., while the profits and incomes of the big landlords and monopolists are reduced. Since such policies are not only not pursued, but their very opposite is happening, the forces fighting against imperialism get weakened.

There is thus an inter-connection between the external situation created by imperialism and the internal forces that have been generated by the nearly thirty five years of bourgeois-landlord rule. The former undermines all efforts at solving the internal problems, while the latter weakens the efforts at unifying the people for the defence of the country. The radical, democratic and patriotic forces should, therefore, dedicate themselves to the task of discharging all the tasks arising out of the new dangers to external security and the continuing dangers to internal unity and national integration.

In discharging these tasks, it is heartening to see that the Left parties and other democratic forces are increasingly coming closer together. Despite the still continuing basic differences among them, the CPI(M) and the CPI and other Left parties have started acting together and cooperating with other democratic forces. The year 1980 and the first months of 1981, i.e., the period that followed the January and May elections to the Lok Sabha and nine State Assemblies, saw the new phenomenon of the growing unity of action among several opposition parties on a limited number of issues. Such broad unity developed on a Statewide scale to begin with, and was given an all-India form in the National Convention of six parties against high prices, against communal riots and for civil liberties. This, in its turn, was followed by still stronger united actions at the State level and the emergence of a widespread peasant upsurge in State after State. These Statewide kisan actions were sought to be consolidated in the Delhi rally held on March 26 which turned out to be the biggest political development of this period.

The magnificent turn-out in the rally, the participation of the rural masses from Bihar to Punjab, as well as of the industrial workers and middle class employees in and around Delhi, indicate the depth of the mass discontent against the class policies of the Congress(I) Government. It shows the urge for unity among the Left and other opposition parties who are trying to find ways and means of mobilising the people and fighting the authoritarian trends manifesting themselves in the ruling party.

The carrying out of the decision to hold the rally on March 26 faced several difficulties. There was, on the one hand, the orchestrated propaganda indulged in by the monopoly Press and

leaders of the ruling Congress(I) to the effect that the demands formulated by the organisers of the rally were against the interests of the rural and urban poor. The ruling Congress(I), at the same time, organised its own "kisan rally" and tried to mobilise the rural poor under its own banner, with a view to creating the impression that the interests of the rural poor were safe in the hands of the ruling party. Among those who initially agreed to have the rally, too, there were hesitations, vacillations and in some cases outright opposition. Overcoming the obstacles put by those who were showing these hesitations and vacillations was a tough job for our Party which, as is known, had the clearest idea of the direction of the movement and had to fight every inch.

This tough battle against those who raised doubts, objections and obstacles, however, yielded results in the end; the participants in the rally included peasant organisations and several political parties which are known for their struggle against authoritarianism. Even in the case of the Lok Dal, whose main leadership (Charan Singh, Madhu Limaye and George Fernandes) had openly opposed the rally in the last days, a section of the leadership helped the successful carrying out of the programme.

Special reference should be made to the differences in approach between the CPI and our Party. The former tried to reduce the combination to one of the Left forces, underplaying the role of such parties as the Congress(U), the Lok Dal and the Akalis. We, on the other hand, tried to make it a broad mobilisation of the Left and other opposition forces. At every stage of the preparation for the rally up to the last ten days, the CPI was giving expression to its apprehension that this might turn out to be a "Rightist" show; they made public pronouncements which indicated that they might have to withdraw from the rally if some Rightist forces were also participating. This apprehension was belied by the Charter of Demands as well as by the wide participation of the rural and urban masses.

It is now obvious that if we had kept out of the growing peasant upsurge (as was advocated by sections within our own Party) on the ground that the initiative and leadership for it came from the landlord elements, the landlords would, in fact, have been able to

carry the entire peasantry. That would have also set the rural poor against the urban since, according to the organisers of the landlord lobby, the urban sector is the enemy of the rural people. Our intervention and the cooperation of other Left and opposition parties culminated in the evolution of a programme of championing the cause of the industrial and agricultural workers, the mass of the peasantry as well as the broad mass of consumers.

Parallel with this development of the kisan movement was the increasing unity of the trade union movement in struggle. The loco running staff, the public sector employees, the LIC employees and the workers of several industries had to go on prolonged strike-struggles in many of which the trade union organisations affiliated to various all-India centres actively and unitedly participated. Seeing the great danger that such united action posed to them the employers prevailed upon the Government to pursue a policy of severe repression. Undaunted by this, however, the workers and employees are working for still broader unity and fighting still more militantly. This trend towards united working class action has made the major trade union organisations in the country, except the INTUC owing allegiance to the ruling Congress(I), decide to hold a national convention in June.

These two streams of the developing mass movement—increasing unity of the trade union movement, the emerging militant movement of the rural masses—provide the guarantee that effective forces will be unleashed to foil the imperialist plots against our security and sovereignty, defeat the internal forces of disruption and destabilisation, preserve democracy against authoritarian onslaughts. Had it not been for the growing unity of the urban and rural poor as seen in these militant movements, the political scene in the country would indeed have been bleak. For the electoral defeat suffered in January and May last year had made all the bourgeois opposition parties completely frustrated. None of them was finding it possible to put up an effective resistance to the authoritarian forces. All of them have been talking of providing a viable alternative to the ruling Congress(I), each claiming that it is the alternative. However, far from uniting other opposition forces and providing a united opposition to the ruling party, these parties

are finding it difficult even to maintain their own internal unity. Soberly-thinking sections among the leaders of these parties feel that the only way in which they can play a positive role in the struggle against authoritarianism is to unite with the Left and with other anti-authoritarian forces.

This, however, is not shared by the entire leadership of any of these parties. Many of them are swayed by various considerations and vacillate on the question of cooperation with the Left. Some go to the extent of cooperating with the Congress(I) and fighting the Left. These differences on questions of policy plus the personal and group equations of individual leaders weaken the internal unity of several opposition parties. This to a limited extent can be and is being overcome by forging the unity of the trade union movement and developing united peasant actions. This, in fact, is the political significance of the above-mentioned trend towards unity of the trade union movement and the kisan rally of March 26.

As opposed to this unity of action which has been slowly developing is the emergence of several fissiparous forces, such as the agitation in Assam and the adjoining States and Territories of the North-East. This is an area where imperialism and its agencies have for a long time been busy inciting conflicts among the various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. Separatist sentiments are being consistently fostered among the various tribal groups while the linguistic and communal divisions among the plains people are also used to destabilise the entire region. The notorious "Project Brahmaputra" worked out by the imperialist agencies shows the active interest shown in this region by those who work towards destabilisation. Situations of insurgency arose and have been continuing in Nagaland and Mizoram for several years. This is now extending itself to Manipur. Meghalaya, too, is restive. Assam has become a State where the writ of the Central Government has virtually ceased to run. In the only State in the region, Tripura, where, thanks to the correct policies pursued by the Left Front led by the CPI(M), unity of the two major ethnic groups—the Tribals and the Bengalees—have for long been maintained, it has now been shaken by the activities of the two major forces of disruption—

the TUJS among the tribals and the Amra Bangalee among the Bengalees. Situated as the entire region is on India's borders with its neighbours in the East, this creates an extremely explosive situation which can be and is being utilised by imperialism for its plans of destabilising the Indian Union.

Similarly, on the Western borders of the country, two sinister forces have recently raised their heads. The Jamaet-e-Islami has become very active and so has a section of the Akalis who have resurrected the slogan of Sikh nationhood and Khalistan. The Jamaet-e-Islami with its slogan of an "Iran-type" revolution has become instrumental in facilitating the entry of foreign agents and foreign money on large scale. This movement and the Khalistan movement together raise the threat of destabilisation in the West as seriously as in the North-East. No patriot can afford to underestimate the seriousness which this poses.

In fighting the menace of Islamic fundamentalism and Sikh revivalism on the West, together with the activities of foreign-aided Christian missionaries in the North-East, the concept of "Hindu Rashtra" is increasingly becoming a big obstacle. It should be noted that the BJP which aspires to be the one and only alternative to the ruling Congress(I) is, in fact, committed to this dangerous slogan through the association of the bulk of its leaders and members with the RSS. The BJP leaders claim that their party has nothing to do with the RSS since the latter is a "cultural organisation". The leaders of this cultural organisation, however, do not conceal their commitment to the ideology of Hindu Rashtra which, according to its undisputed leader, means that patriotism means not only the will to sacrifice everything one has in defence of the territory of India, but also commitment to "ancient Indian" (Hindu) culture. This would automatically eliminate not only the Muslim, Christian and other non-Hindu communities but also the mass of Hindus who, according to the ancient Hindu culture, belong to the "lower castes". Nobody who makes the slightest concession to this Hindu Rashtra concept will be in a position to fight the divisive slogans raised by the Jamaet-e-Islami, the proponents of the Sikh State, foreign-aided Christian missions, etc. Commitment to secularism in the real sense of the term, i.e., complete separation of State and

religion, is in other words, the essential pre-requisite for a successful struggle against all these divisive trends and movements.

Still another development of a divisive character is the anti-reservation movement which assumed serious proportions in Bihar some time ago, and recently in Gujarat. While the ruling and several opposition parties give formal expression to their adherence to the principle of reservation, many of them give encouragement to those who raise their voice against it. It is well-known, for instance, that one section of the ruling Congress(I) in Gujarat used the anti-reservation movement for its own factional purpose. Some of the opposition parties like the BJP cover up their support to the anti-reservationists by paying lip-service to the "principle" of reservation while proposing such "modifications" as would make the weaker sections lose whatever gains they have made. Thanks to reservation. Although at the moment confined to Gujarat, this has the dangerous potentiality of spreading to other areas. The Left and democratic forces, therefore, should adopt the principled position of explaining to the people that the mere continuation of reservation would not solve the problems of the masses belonging to the weaker sections, while no modification or even the abandonment of reservation would help the solution of problems faced by the masses belonging to the forward communities. What is required is the continuation of reservation as a transitional measure, while effective measures are adopted, through a radical restructuring of society, to provide educational-cultural advance and employment opportunities to the weaker sections as well as to the forward communities. Such a programme of complete restructuring of the society which is needed for both the "weaker" and "forward" communities cannot be carried out unless the working people—the industrial and agricultural workers, peasants, middle-class employees, etc.—are united in their common organisations cutting across caste, communal and other differences. The agitations and movements launched around questions like reservation are disruptive of this democratic unity which alone can save the common people belonging to the "weaker" and "forward" communities.

The very complexity of these problems, and the growing unity of the working class and the peasantry, of the Left and democratic

political forces, make the continued existence of the three Left-oriented Governments of West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala a danger to the authoritarian moves of the ruling Congress(I). Hence the concerted offensive launched by that party and its Government, particularly the Prime Minister, to destabilise these Governments. "Break-down of law and order", "partisan use of the administrative and educational institutions in the interests of the CPI(M)", "repression against opposition parties"—all these accusations are hurled against these Governments in order to prepare the ground for direct intervention. Facts are distorted and lies spread to denigrate these Governments and to prepare the soil for toppling them.

In West Bengal, these moves reached the proportions of a violent agitation which ended in the March 30 violation of law and April 3 Bandh. On the former occasion, the demonstrators broke their pledged word that there would not be any violation of the law, suddenly resorting to the very course which they had promised not to adopt. On the bandh day, finding very little support from the people, they resorted to arson and murder, destroying public property and killing women in a gruesome manner. Our Party leadership, the Left Front and the Government exposed this whole game and refused to be provoked. This for the time being defeated their game. It would, however, be a great illusion to imagine that the danger of Central action is over. On the contrary, the deeper the crisis of the ruling Congress(I), the more complex the problems that the Union Government has to deal with, the deeper the Left Front Government's roots among the people, the more the Congress(I) sees in this Government a danger to its very existence. There is, therefore, need for the Party and its allies in West Bengal to be vigilant against the machinations of the ruling Congress(I), to broaden the Front still further, to win over the support of the democratic movements in the entire country.

In Kerala, too, efforts are being made to create a situation in which the Centre can intervene. To this end, they are openly colluding with the RSS and giving all manner of help to the Naxalites. Clever use was made of the differences that exist among the various constituents of the Left and Democratic Front,

particularly between the two parties which have the largest number of representatives in the Assembly—the CPI(M) and the Congress(U). Sections within the leadership and ranks of the Congress(U) were unable to see the extent of the conspiracy hatched by the ruling Congress(I) and the game being played by the RSS and the Naxalites. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that all the constituents of the Coalition, including our Party and the Congress(U), do their utmost to preserve and strengthen the unity of the front which is a necessity not only for Kerala but for the development of the Left and democratic forces throughout the country.

In Tripura, as in certain other States/Territories of the North-Eastern region, the central leadership of the ruling Congress(I) is making all efforts to win over the extremist elements among the tribals while giving encouragement and help to the Amra Bangalee. The unity of the two ethnic groups behind the CPI(M), the Left Front and its Government is the biggest impediment to their plan of destabilisation in the State. Here again, therefore, the struggle to defeat the plans of toppling the Government should be integrated with the all-India political struggle for mobilising and uniting all the Left and democratic forces throughout the country.

Our Party, everyone of its members, every unit from top to bottom, should immediately go into action by activating all the class and mass organisations, developing unity of action, carrying on an unceasing ideological struggle against divisive forces, forging the broadest possible unity of political action in defence of the Left Front and Left-Democratic Front Governments and further strengthening the struggle against authoritarianism.

Homage To Comrade Soong Ching Ling*

With deep grief, the Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) pays its revolutionary homage to Comrade Soong Ching Ling, an outstanding personality of the Great Chinese Revolution and of the People's Republic of China.

Immediately after her student days, Comrade Soong Ching Ling threw herself into the work of the democratic revolution in China along with China's great democratic leader, Dr. Sun Yat Sen. When Chiang Kia-shek betrayed the democratic revolution, Comrade Soong Ching Ling, guided by revolutionary ideals to which she remained loyal all her life, had no hesitation, notwithstanding close family ties, in rallying to the alliance of the revolutionary forces of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China, and strengthening that alliance for the success of the Chinese Revolution. She devotedly served the cause of the Chinese people and China's revolution in various capacities, and was respected the world over as a great patriot, democrat, internationalist and Communist.

After the liberation of China, Comrade Soong Ching Ling became a prominent State leader and was, at the time of her death, Honorary Chairman of the People's Republic of China.

The Polit Bureau, once again, pays its revolutionary homage to the departed leader of the Chinese people and the People's Republic of China and extends its deepfelt condolences to the Communist Party of China.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 7, 1981.

Polit Bureau On India-Pak Talks*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on June 12, 1981:

Democratic forces in India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) especially, have always stood for amity and friendship between Pakistan and maintaining their integrity. Any step towards improving the relations between the two countries is welcome. The Indian Foreign Minister's recent visit to Pakistan was undertaken in an extremely difficult situation. The joint statement issued at the end of the visit and the bilateral talks, has said that "the process of confidence-building called for patient and continuous effort", that "the strengthening of friendship between India and Pakistan served the interests of both people and was indeed a good political imperative", and both sides have reaffirmed their commitment to the Simla Agreement. All this will be welcomed by all those who want to see the improvement of relations between the two countries. Such good and friendly relations between India and Pakistan will be the best guarantee against all evil designs of imperialism against both the countries.

But the P.B. wants to remind the people that one of the main issues bedeviling the relations between the two countries is the Pakistani military dictatorship's decision to stockpile arms with the help of U.S. imperialism. The Indian Foreign Minister's visit and talks have not led to any change in this decision of Pakistan's ruling clique. Pakistan has reasserted its decision to acquire U.S. arms and it has been clothed in the very vague statement of the

right of every country to buy arms for its defence. Freedom has to be defended against the imperialists, but Pakistani military dictatorship is collaborating with U.S. imperialism. It is this collaboration of Pakistan's ruling classes with U.S. imperialism since the early fifties, that has been responsible for the continuing abnormal situation in the sub-continent. Even though the Pakistani military dictatorship is an ardent advocate of Islamic unity, right when the talks with the Indian Foreign Minister were going on, the U.S. imperialists inspired Israel to bomb out Iraq's nuclear installations. But that has no lesson for the Pakistani dictatorship.

On the Afghan question, the Pakistani military clique is playing the U.S. game of allowing Pakistan to become a base of activities against the democratic regime of Afghanistan. The Pakistani regime is not for ending such activities to enable a political settlement on Afghanistan.

Thus on both the questions of U.S. arms and Afghanistan, Pakistan has not only not made the slightest change, but is bent on continuing its dangerous course.

Not a vestige of democracy is left in that country under the military dictatorship. The Opposition parties, the people, the various nationalities inhabiting the country are all under brutal attack. They are continuing their struggle, expressing their opposition also to the acceptance of U.S. arms. The officially controlled media are whipping up hatred against India. The military clique ruling Pakistan is not prepared to do anything to pave the way for friendship between the two countries: in fact, with its collaboration with U.S. imperialism, it is mounting a threat to India from across the border.

India and Pakistan are both members of the non-aligned movement. Pakistan becoming a recipient of U.S. arms spells danger to both the countries and their peoples. It will only help U.S. imperialism's game of creating tensions between the two countries and of making Asians fight Asians. While every step to improve relations is welcome, the dangers flowing from the reassertion of the Pakistani ruling clique's decision to get U.S. arms, should not be underplayed. Any lulling of the vigilance of the people helps only the imperialists, neither India nor Pakistan.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, June 21, 1981.

Report On Political Developments*

Adopted In The Meeting Of The Central Committee
Of CPI(M) Held In Calcutta On June 24-28, 1981

The results of the recent by-elections have revealed two different tendencies. They show the outstanding victory of the Left forces headed by the CPI(M) in West Bengal. They simultaneously reveal the defeat of the bourgeois opposition parties at the hands of the Congress(I) outside West Bengal—in Orissa, Bihar and U. P. These successes of the Congress(I) were also partly the result of misuse of State power, rigging, bribery and coercion. Nonetheless, it cannot be said that the bourgeois opposition parties have rendered a good account of themselves in the midst of widespread suffering and privations of the common man, imposed by the Congress(I) regime.

The West Bengal victories of the Left Front, headed by the CPI(M), constitute an inspiring achievement of our Party, of the Left Front and the people of West Bengal against the challenge of the authoritarian forces. They climaxed the struggle of the Left forces against the campaign of slander, murder and arson sedulously conducted over months by the Congress(I), aided by the Central Government. The decisive victory of our Party and the Left forces, the virtual rout of the Congress(I), has not only enhanced the prestige of our Party, it has strengthened the democratic forces all-over India, and the desire and urge for Left unity.

The CPI(M) nominee of the Left Front for the Sreerampore Lok Sabha constituency, and one CPI and five CPI(M) nominees for the Assembly constituencies won the election with big and increased margins. The Polit Bureau statement on the election

observes: In contrast to the Congress(I)-ruled States where also by-elections were held, the percentage of polling in West Bengal was much higher. This is obviously the result of the people in West Bengal looking upon the Left Front and its allies as a reliable political force in the State with its own alternative policies, while in the States where other opposition parties are stronger, they have been unable to project such an image.

The defence of people's interests over four years, the help rendered to the working class to improve its living standards, the protection of democratic liberties and refusal to use preventive detention measures and the National Security Act, the freedom of strike and trade union movement guaranteed to the workers and employees including State Government employees, the agrarian legislation which has shaken the countryside and given new confidence to the oppressed bargadar, the relief from debt, etc.—these were the instruments of the Left victory.

As against this what is the source of the Congress(I) victory in other States? The statement of the P.B. correctly observes: "The P.B. notes that the by-election results are no cause of rejoicing for the Congress(I). The low polling—as low as 25 per cent in a highly political constituency like Allahabad—is an index of the tremendous dissatisfaction of the people with the Congress(I), who, in the absence of a viable alternative, abstained from exercising their franchise".

The P.B., besides, noted the unscrupulous use of the administrative apparatus by the ruling party in the elections. This was the case in Bihar, and was most blatantly seen in the Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency where armed policemen were brought from outside the State to intimidate the voters, booths were captured and the election rigged.

Such is the contrast between the two victories.

Attack On Left-Oriented Ministries

The months since the last meeting of the Central Committee saw a concentrated offensive of the ruling party against the Left Front Ministries of West Bengal and Tripura and the Left Democratic Front Ministry of Kerala. The battle between the

*Published as a booklet in August, 1981.

forces of authoritarianism and the forces of democracy was finding expression in the three States with the Congress(I) unscrupulously using slander and lies, entering into unscrupulous alliances with forces it considered reactionary, and organising violence with the aid of anti-social gangs to create law and order problems in these States.

The aim of these manoeuvres and slanders was to create an atmosphere of destabilisation of the Ministries, by isolating them from the democratic public opinion in other States and undermining their base in their own States.

These attacks failed miserably exposing and unmasking the anti-democratic practices of the Congress(I). The people of West Bengal refused to respond to the April 3 bandh call, the working class kept the wheels of industry moving, and the bandh only demonstrated the isolation of the Congress(I) from the people. The raw violence exhibited on the streets of Calcutta on April 3, the burning of buses and trams, and the killing of women and children sent a wave of revulsion throughout the country and compelled the organisers of the bandh to disown and repudiate them. But nothing could save the Congress(I). The people of Calcutta had seen the anti-social elements organising the bandh and throwing hundreds of bombs on passing vehicles.

So deep was the revulsion and anger in West Bengal, after tens of thousands saw the exhibition of burnt buses and trams, that the Congress(I) got cold feet and decided to 'boycott' the municipal elections.

The incendiary violence discredited the Congress(I) party, and the big bourgeois Press itself had to comment on it and denounce it. Perhaps, since the return to power of the Congress(I), there was not such universal condemnation of the ruling party by the Press.

To quote one such editorial: "Perhaps never have buses and trams with passengers in them been subjected to such systematic and savage attacks. The pattern of violence showed elaborate preparations. Not all of those responsible may have been Congress(I) supporters, anti-social elements must also have taken a hand. But little distinction could be made between their apparent aims. Surely, the Congress(I) leaders knew the likely

consequences of their bandh plan, they may have even calculated that violence, even resulting in deaths and injuries, would serve their purpose of increasing tension, that further disorder would strengthen their case against the Left Front Government". (*The Statesman*, April 5)

Following the defeat inflicted on April 3, the people of West Bengal inflicted another crushing defeat on the Congress(I) and its allies in the municipal elections in May. Though the Congress(I) boycotted the elections, the organisation and its allies were straining every nerve to secure the popular vote. They were routed. The Left Front and its allies captured 66 per cent of the 1409 seats and secured absolute majority in 68 out of 87 municipalities for which elections were held.

The Tripura Left Front Ministry was also under continuous pressure from the Centre and the Congress(I). In both States, the Centre misused its power and starved them of supplies of essential articles including food. In Tripura, besides, the Congress(I) elements entered into open alliance with a secessionist tribal group which, encouraged by help from across the border, was organising raids and assaults on the non-tribals. The Congress(I) also joined hands with the notorious Amra Bangalee organisation which had played a gruesome role two years ago in attacking and murdering tribal citizens.

In Kerala, the Congress(I) has been unscrupulously attempting to exploit RSS and Naxalite activities to undermine the Coalition Ministry and create an all-India atmosphere to bring it down.

Smt. Indira Gandhi during her visits to Kerala would not utter a word against the murder campaign of the RSS; on the other hand, she maligned the Ministry and held it responsible for alleged breakdown of law and order. Similarly, the murders and violence organised by the Naxalites were used to condemn the Ministry and make out a case for collapse of law and order.

The campaign was carried on to dizzy heights by the Union Home Minister for State, Sri Makwana, who virtually called for a liberation struggle. This inciting call was initially given by the State Congress(I) leader Karunakaran, who called on several parties to join together for such a struggle. But with the counter-

offensive from the partners in the Ministry, the Congress(I) retreated from its call and Makwana denied that he ever gave such a call. Once more, popular forces compelled a temporary retreat on the authoritarian forces. The Central Government is now planning to interfere in the affairs of the State by appointing a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the "spirit" scandal.

It must be realised that the survival and continuance of the Ministries in the midst of the deepening crisis of the economy constitutes a signal achievement of the democratic forces. No Left Front Ministry or Communist Ministry of an earlier period could survive for more than a couple of years despite the fact that the crisis was not so all-pervading and the authoritarian forces had not yet fully revealed their dictatorial ambitions.

Today, if the Ministries continue despite repeated conspiracies, it is because of the wide sympathy of the democratic forces with them, and the Party's efforts to harness broad resistance to authoritarianism, and a general sense of awareness among the advanced sections all over the country that the existence of these Ministries is connected with the survival of parliamentary norms.

This support, of course, would have been unthinkable without the achievements of these Ministries, their alternative policies, their defence of the democratic rights of the people and our Party's principled stand on the national and international issues facing the country.

The understanding of the Party that broad sections of the people, including bourgeois opposition parties, are interested in stemming the advance of one-party rule, the understanding that intense conflict for governmental power drives opposition parties to take a stand against assaults on parliamentary norms, has helped it to unite these forces on a number of important issues. The Left-oriented Ministries could survive and fight back because Indira Gandhi could not succeed in her efforts to isolate them from the democratic forces in the country; she did attempt to capitalise on anti-Communist prejudices, appealed to the short-sighted and selfish policies of some sections of bourgeois parties in some States, but she failed.

Those who thought that with the return to power of Indira Gandhi, the fate of the Ministries was automatically sealed, underestimated the strength of democratic forces, of the opposition to authoritarianism.

This aspect of the situation was highlighted during the no-confidence motion against the Government in the Lok Sabha when speaker after speaker from different political parties, keeping aside their differences on many questions, concentrated on exposing the Government's attacks on democratic rights and its anti-people economic policies.

Changed Circumstances

Notwithstanding these achievements, the fight against the authoritarian forces takes place in changed circumstances, not all of which are favourable to the unity of democratic forces. The situation gets complicated by the assault of divisive forces on toilers' unity, on the unity of the democratic forces. These challenges partly arise out of the capitalist path with its compromise with the pre-capitalist relations in existence, which provides material conditions for sectarian caste and communal outlooks. These challenges are partly the result of direct imperialist conspiracies.

The concept of national unity is being assailed from all sides. The assault of divisive forces renders difficult the task of mobilising all democratic forces in the struggle against authoritarianism.

The situation gets complicated by the opportunism of some bourgeois opposition parties which exploit the divisive and obscurantist appeal in their conflict with the Government to get cheap popularity and electoral advantage.

Along with internal fissiparous tendencies, the country is facing a direct challenge from U.S. imperialism which is feverishly arming Pakistan's military rulers.

The divisive challenges, the threat to national unity, comes in the midst of a worsening economic situation, an unprecedented rate of inflation, imposing extreme suffering on the people. The crisis-ridden economy has to seek more and more foreign help,

with the grip of multinationals and the World Bank tightening over it. This leads to greater and greater attacks on democratic rights, sharpening the authoritarian attacks on the people.

The mass struggles against the effects of the economic crisis and impoverishment, which witnessed a period of lull immediately after the return of Indira Gandhi to power, are now showing an upward trend.

The massive peasant struggles of last year ending in the gigantic Kisan March made the new rise evident. This was accompanied by the struggles of students and other sections of the people.

During recent months, the lull on the working class front has been broken. The loco strike and the Bangalore public sector strike are the warning shots of things to come. The Bombay Convention with its proposed call for a one-day token industrial strike may mark a new stage in the development of the workers' struggle after January 1980. While the rising mass discontent expresses itself against the regime in several ways, the Left forces and their mass organisations are active in the field to channelise it into a democratic anti-authoritarian direction. The Left-oriented Ministries, their achievements, become big weapons to stabilise and direct this discontent into the required channels.

The bourgeois opposition parties continue to have their conflict with the ruling party. But they are not only unmindful of the divisive challenges, but are also not choosy about the means to fight the ruling party. Thereby they contribute to the disunity of the democratic forces.

In recent months, their rivalries have intensified and they have shown their incapacity to unite their forces to confront the ruling party in the several by-elections. Their common front on the no-confidence motion was followed by contests among themselves in the elections. The Congress(U) seems to be passing through an inner crisis. Unable to live without power, sections of Congressmen seek peace with Indira Gandhi to be admitted to the Congress(I) table.

The Six Parties' Coordination got gradually frozen. But the efforts for joint action did not end with it. They found new

ways—Kisan March, etc. And now the trade union leaders from these very parties have come together for common action.

Left Unity Strengthened

In this period, with all the zig-zags, the urge for Left unity has grown. Left unity is strengthened. The CPI still has its own inhibitions in relation to the development of a broad forum of resistance.

The CPI has undergone an inner convulsion with the expulsion of Dange. Though very few people have left along with him, there are quite a number of his supporters functioning from inside the party, which is bound to lead to vacillations on important issues.

Indira Gandhi, in pursuance of her game of organised disruption of the Left, has floated a new FSU to checkmate the CPI and its control of the Soviet friendship organisation. This is a serious attempt to wean away certain sections from the CPI and growingly push forward the Congress(I) friendship organisation as the main organisation.

The ruling party is systematically pursuing its efforts to undermine parliamentary democracy and install one-party rule. It has been frustrated repeatedly in its efforts by the united voice of the Opposition and democratic forces. But its efforts continue. But it is leading itself into a more and more difficult situation. It has not only been unable to offer any economic relief, it cannot offer even the good and functioning administration which it had promised. In fact, the administration has totally collapsed and compromises the security of the ordinary citizen.

The bureaucracy and the police run amuck. To forestall popular resistance, the Congress(I) is taking one dictatorial step after another—the NSA, attacks on the Judiciary, grabbing more powers for the Centre, open defiance of the courts, attacks on the Left-oriented and other non-Congress(I) Governments.

To keep itself in power, it relies on divisive forces, on the backward sections, on Muslim communalists, and is afraid of exposing the divisive conspiracies of the imperialists. The ruling party endangers the unity of the country and makes the country dangerously vulnerable to imperialist conspiracies.

The continuance of the authoritarian party in power means not only danger to democracy, it means an invitation to internal and foreign anti-national forces to prevail over the people. The Party, therefore, must address itself to these various tasks in the fight against authoritarianism.

Bourgeois Opposition Parties In Disarray

The process of bourgeois opposition parties drifting away from each other continues. In Parliament, they join in common opposition to, and exposure of, the Congress(I) Government, their unity was shown on the no-confidence motion.

But outside, in recent months, they have hardly shown any interest in united activity and have embarked upon consolidation at each other's expense.

Their incapacity to give a combined fight to the ruling party in the by-elections speaks for itself. But the Party had foreseen these vacillations and wanderings and warned against them. Notwithstanding that, these same parties united in launching a 'mass' movement in Gujarat against the ruling Ministry, involving thousands; such is the contradictory character of the situation. And it is so because the opposition bourgeois parties are in dire need of governmental power and are unable to strike a bargain with the ruling party. Their conflict continues, it is more and more attuned to parliamentary heroics, but also can, and does, take the form of appeal to the masses.

The Central Committee's review of the Assembly elections of May 1980 had significantly observed: "Defections, betrayals, crossings-over from the Congress to the Janata have taken place in recent times. In the Rajya Sabha, the Congress(I) was in a minority. Only at its last session, the Rajya Sabha adopted an amendment to the President's Address disapproving any action against non-Congress(I) Governments, despite Congress(I) opposition. But now the Congress(I) has secured a majority in the Upper House to endorse the dissolution of nine Assemblies.

"The Congress(U) is getting weaker everyday. Sri Swaran Singh is again wearing the Congress(I) badge. Sri Devraj Urs is endeavouring to seek an understanding with the Left. In Kerala the

Congress is part of the broad alliance which supports the Coalition Ministry. . ."

The C.C. review of the Lok Sabha election of January 1980 observed: "Indira Gandhi's victory of Chickmagalur boosted the prestige of the organisation. At this, a large number of Congressmen walked over from the Congress. . . . But then a reverse process started for some time. Devraj Urs, the Karnataka Chief Minister, fell out with Indira Gandhi, joined the Congress and gave it a big boost. A number of Congress(I) members of Parliament went over to the Swaran Singh Congress (Congress-S) raising its strength to 74, reducing the Congress(I) to 70. The Congress(S) was recognised as the official Opposition and its leader Y. B. Chavan as the Leader of the Opposition". The 1978 Assembly elections in five States demonstrated the strength of the Congress(I) and again there were crossings-over.

The 1980 election which gave the Congress(I) an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, was marked by poor showing of the Congress(U). And crossings-over were inevitable. Those who had lost all hope of coming anywhere near power by opposing the Congress(I), now decided to make a bee-line to it. Chavan had planned his desertion for a long time and has succeeded in taking away the bulk of the Maharashtra Congress(U) leadership with him. To a certain extent this was inevitable, the Congress(U) position being thoroughly untenable. Its dominant leadership did not favour an understanding with the Left. Chavan's remark that in the Kisan March he saw nothing but a sea of red flags, was nothing but a protest against joining hands with the Left. Jagjivan Ram shares this view with Chavan. At the same time, being 'genuine' Congressmen, they could join hands with neither the BJP nor the Janata. They knew their followers were extremely vulnerable to the anti-BJP and anti-Janata appeal. This meant ploughing a lonely furrow and some of these leaders were not prepared for it. Chavan's defection is no doubt a windfall for Indira Gandhi and has disorganised the Congress(U).

Whether Devraj Urs and Jagjivan Ram will carry on a fight to maintain the organisation is to be seen. Obviously, it cannot be liquidated just for the asking. There are democratic elements in

the organisation seeking greater cooperation with the Left and more earnest than their leaders to fight the authoritarian forces. The resolution of the Jullundur Party Congress noted: "The leadership which now controls the Congress was deeply involved in the installation of the Emergency rule and imposition of the notorious 42nd Amendment Act on the people. Many of them had compromised their honour and conscience to prostrate themselves before Indira Gandhi and Sanjay to continue in their ministerial posts. Recently, they have been critical of the 'wild excesses' of the Emergency though parading its gains as well.

"Simultaneously there are other elements who are forthright in their denunciation of the Emergency rule, the anti-democratic functioning of the Congress, and support the demand for democratic advance and uphold anti-imperialist, anti-monopolist, anti-landlord and non-alignment policies. They also stand for expanding friendly relations with the Socialist world." It will be an obvious error to ignore these elements and not help them to consolidate themselves despite defections of top leaders. We must, however, be prepared for further defections and crossings-over after the results of the by-elections.

The other bourgeois opposition parties except the BJP also reveal inner stresses and loss of grip.

The Lok Dal was faced with disintegration, with the threatened action against Devi Lal and Kumbharam Arya. The issue here was direct association with the Kisan March. Though peace is now made, the dictatorial and whimsical functioning of Charan Singh has become an obstacle to the expansion and maintenance of the organisation. That is why both Madhu Limaye and George Fernandes had to withdraw from the Six Parties' Coordination and the Kisan March respectively. However, Charan Singh and his Lok Dal do continue to maintain a mass base in U.P. Karpoori Thakur continues to have his mass influence but he also is not pulling on with Charan Singh.

While the Janata Party is just marking time, the BJP is vigorously projecting itself as an active party intervening in the day-to-day issues affecting the people. This it does through the big bourgeois Press which gives it wide publicity and presents it as the

alternative to the Congress(I) or the only parliamentary opposition to the ruling party.

The BJP, with its hard RSS core, is playing a very treacherous game. In its hunt to acquire the status of an alternative to the Congress(I), it unscrupulously supports Congress(I) candidates where its candidates have no chance. It adopted this tactic in the 1980 elections, it also supported the Congress(I) candidate against Bahuguna in the Garhwal Lok Sabha by-election. The RSS in Kerala, with its campaign of murders, acts as the spearhead of opposition to the Kerala Ministry.

All these parties lose no opportunity to speak against the Left-oriented Ministries and attack them for failure to maintain law and order, or partisanship in the conduct of the Ministry. Not on a single occasion do they refer to the many progressive steps the Ministries have taken.

Despite all these vacillations and wanderings, they do not support the Congress(I) game of toppling the Left-oriented Ministries. They express themselves against destabilisation of non-Congress(I) State Ministries.

Campaign For Reactionary Stand

A new situation that has developed in relation to these parties is that they are now actively campaigning for their reactionary stand on a number of issues related to foreign policy and certain important internal developments.

Not that these parties have suddenly changed their stand. But, hitherto, these issues were not in the forefront and they were not actively campaigning for their viewpoint. The BJP, Janata and other bourgeois opposition parties, except the Congress(U), have been lashing at the Soviet Union and the Government of India on the Afghanistan issue. The BJP and the Janata have been screening the U.S. moves against India and belittling the consequences of the pouring of American arms into Pakistan. On Kampuchea, on Afghanistan, these parties adopt anti-Vietnamese, anti-Soviet positions which facilitate U.S. objectives; on Diego Garcia, which directly affects India's security, the BJP's position is one of covering up U.S. designs. This opportunist oppositional politics

found its expression on the internal issue of Assam. All these parties virtually sided with the secessionist leaders. We had to oppose them in Assam—our comrades heroically carrying out the Party's mandate to fight the U.S.-inspired secessionist agitation. We refused to join this opportunist crowd in its no-confidence motion against the Government, but we moved our own cut motion against the Government.

The BJP is the spearhead of this reactionary agitation. Being deeply anti-Soviet, it is the BJP which organised anti-Soviet demonstrations during Brezhnev's visit to sour Indo-Soviet relationship under the excuse of defending Afghanistan. It is the BJP leader, Vajpayee, who chided the External Affairs Ministry for mentioning Diego Garcia in its document to the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers' Conference. It is clear whose interests are being served thereby. Internally also, it is the BJP that is the most vociferous advocate on behalf of the secessionist movement in Assam. The BJP made full use of the anti-Harijan movement in Gujarat to rouse caste feelings.

The anti-non-alignment sorties of the BJP are directed towards undermining the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation—the objective of U.S. foreign policy-makers. Anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism constitute the cornerstone of the BJP's foreign policy outlook. We should not forget that when Vajpayee was the Foreign Minister, secret talks were held with Israel—that stooge of the imperialists.

The net of the imperialist conspiracy is being spread far and wide, and its immediate objectives are internal disunity and disintegration and a shift towards the imperialist camp in the country's foreign policy.

The struggle against authoritarianism cannot be divorced from a consistent fight against this danger and all shades of opportunism which try to conceal it.

The opportunist attitude of the bourgeois opposition parties leaves the initiative for propaganda against the imperialist danger in the hands of the authoritarian party; it aids and abets the Congress(I) to consolidate its hold and to present itself as a

patriotic party concerned with the safety and integrity of the country.

Fight For Realignment Of Forces, Broader Resistance

It is obvious that the rapidly developing situation, with the changing positions of the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties, should witness diverse forms of cooperation and action in the struggle for broader resistance, for a new realignment of political forces. After January 1980, when Indira Gandhi was restored to power, it took the form of the Six Parties' Convention.

The communique issued at the end of the November C.C. meeting said: "The recent coming together of the six parties—the Lok Dal, the Congress(U), the RSP, the Forward Bloc, the CPI and the CPI(M)—on the issues of price-rise, communal harmony and civil liberties shows the possibilities inherent in our work along the line laid down in September 1979." The political significance of the unity of action among the six parties was spelt out in the P.B. report to the C.C. as follows: "The realignment of political forces for which the P.B. and the C.C. have been working has thus assumed the form of minimum joint action on the three issues, which can step by step be developed into the unity of anti-authoritarian, secular-democratic forces."

The six parties' combination emerging at a time when the morale of the bourgeois oppositional forces was at a low level did good service to the cause of broad mobilisation and rousing the people to activity.

Under its impulse several conventions were held, and joint demonstrations against price-rise, gheraoes of Assemblies were planned.

Rise Of Mass Discontent—Differentiation Inside Bourgeois Parties

However, it was clear from the beginning that this form of cooperation would not last long. The Janata Party would not join because the BJP was not invited. It was not clear till the end whether the Congress(U) was officially participating or not. The

representative of the Lok Dal who took a prominent part in the formation of the combination, himself, lost his enthusiasm under the pressure of his leader Charan Singh.

There were weighty reasons for this change after the initial success of the move. The conservative leaders in many parties—Charan Singh, Chavan, Jagjivan Ram, even Devraj Urs in the beginning—were not keen on going along with the Left.

This hesitation coincided with the rise of mass discontent, and especially the peasant unrest. But the Six Parties' Convention had given a momentum to the movement which could not be checked.

"The Six Parties' Convention in the last week of September 1980 gave an impetus to these movements. Many forms of united actions were resorted to in different States strengthening the united movement of the peasantry. The Six Parties' Memorandum submitted to the President at the beginning of the Winter Session of Parliament gave fillip to these movements. These movements embraced all sections of the peasants irrespective of their political affiliations. The demand of the peasantry regarding remunerative prices was focused during the Winter Session and was supported by a large number of MPs including those belonging to the Congress(I)".

The waning enthusiasm of the leaders of the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties led to differentiation and the threat of split. The Lok Dal officially withdrew from the Kisan March but the leader of its Kisan Sammelan (Devi Lal) continued to support and organise the march. Chavan looked askance at this growing association with the Left and the peasant demands raised, while his follower Sharad Pawar, heading the Six Parties' Combination in Maharashtra, led the long march which resulted in the arrests of thousands of peasants; he insisted on the inclusion of agricultural workers' demands in the all-India charter and accepted the chairmanship of the All-India Kisan Coordination Committee. The achievements of the kisan agitation in different States have already been detailed in the February C.C. document. The All-India Kisan Coordination Committee was the new form of cooperation and it has to be vigorously pursued. Some difficulties may crop up because of the vacillations of some parties but the

peasant discontent will not be allayed, and organisations with a peasant base will have to take note of it. The CPI(M), helped by the other Left parties, should be able to coordinate the activities of the Left and democratic parties and extend them on a broader scale.

The Kisan March

The peasants' response to the agitation created panic in ruling party circles and the Congress(I) was forced to demonstrate its peasant strength in the capital. It decided to organise a demonstration in support of Indira Gandhi, spent crores of rupees (Rs. 100 crore, it is rumoured), and employed a huge number of trucks and buses to bring the demonstrators to the capital. It did succeed in bringing large numbers, but everyone could see that it was not a spontaneous demonstration of the peasants. The Press noticed it; the citizens took note of it. And they also noted the difference when, a few days later, the Kisan March organised by the six parties walked the streets of the capital with waving banners and angry slogans.

The March 26 rally was the biggest achievement of the Party's struggle to mobilise larger and broader sections against the Government. Now all sections of the peasantry, including agricultural workers, were brought in and the participation of the largest number of organisations was ensured.

As the editorial of *People's Democracy* put it, "The Convention against Price-rise, Communalism and attacks on Civil Liberties held in New Delhi six months ago; the local and Statewide demonstrations, bandhs, etc., which preceded and followed the convention; the historic long marches in Maharashtra and Karnataka; the Assembly gheraoes in Maharashtra and Punjab; the demonstrations and bandhs in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar—these were the forerunners of the Kisan Rally held in Delhi on March 26. Parallel to this mass action of the fighting peasantry were also the actions of the working class and middle class employees, such as the eighty-day-long strike of the Bangalore-based public sector employees; the one-day solidarity strike of all public sector employees throughout the country; the railway loco

running staff strike, etc. The entire organised working class of Delhi and its neighbouring region, therefore, came out in support of and joined the Kisan Rally." As Comrade E.M.S. said in his statement: "The convention was of six political parties, the March 26 Rally was participated in by Kisan Sabhas, agricultural workers' organisations and trade unions connected with these six parties and also other parties." Among those who worked for the success of the rally were Congressmen led by Sri Sharad Pawar, Lok Dalmen under the leadership of Sri Devi Lal and Sri Kumbharam Arya, Akali Party leaders, democratic elements under the leadership of Sri Bahuguna and Sri Chandrajit Yadav, CPI(M), the CPI, and other Left parties.

Broader Basis For Opposition

Today, formal functioning in the name of the six political parties is not in evidence; however, the broader mass activities at the same time must increase in the background of the upsurge of discontent among the people. The opposition is no longer confined to the three minimum issues of communalism, high prices and attacks on civil liberties, but extends to the immediate economic demands of the masses. Throughout this period the independent mass activity of the Party and its Left allies has been on the increase. Along with calls for one-day strike for immediate demands of the workers, demonstrations against unemployment, against price-rise, organised singly or jointly by Left parties, there have been huge agitations against raising of bus-fares in which students and the mass of people participated, leading to police firings; there have been joint gheraoes of Assemblies or protest demonstrations in front of Assemblies. Apart from this, doctors, engineers, teachers and nurses have carried on prolonged struggles on their own.

The Party seized this link of growing discontent in several States and basing on it, was able to advance the task of broadening the resistance and involving many organisations. Students' participation in broad democratic agitations like opposition to increased bus-fares has already been mentioned. They, besides, have fought for their own specific demands and also have been the victims of reactionaries as in Aligarh. They have to face unheard of brutalities

sometimes, brutalities unimaginable by the people. Young school children are chosen for atrocities.

The *Indian Express* editorial (January 9, 1981) observed: "We seem to be running out of adjectives to repeated outrages on the most vulnerable sections of society. After the burning of Harijans, raping of women, gouging of eyes of innocent men and lathi-charge on them, it is now the turn of the school children to be at the receiving end of police brutalities. More than a hundred boys of the high school of Angul in the Dhenkanal district of Orissa were severely lathi-charged and actually made to march naked to the local police station a kilometre away carrying headloads of bricks and stones. These boys were forced to kneel down for about one hour, still carrying the heavy loads on their shoulder".

These forces of mass resistance have been gathering in the recent months, breaking the lull of the immediate post-election period. And now the working class unrest is bursting forth in new anger promising prolonged and united battles. The number of strikes and loss of working days was lowest in 1980 after the return of Indira Gandhi to power. It took some time to overcome the lull.

The Government, on its part, offered some baits to certain sections of workers led by leaderships which it could trust. It announced bonus linked with productivity to the railway workers, and the leadership surrendered the principle of bonus as deferred wage. The mass of railway workers not only did not protest but a large section avidly grasped what was given, though a militant section did realise that the workers' interests were compromised. This grant of bonus was intended to boost the NFIR leadership to consolidate its hold. There was not a word of sympathy for the loco men, not a word of protest against the repression of loco workers from either the NFIR or AIRF leadership.

The Government also attempted to cultivate the Central Government and defence employees by accepting their demand for bonus, once again, linked with productivity. The Communications Minister, in an effusion of generosity, also accepted some other demands—two promotions for P & T, etc., for which he was pulled up by the Cabinet and he is now virtually repudiating his acceptance.

But the opportunities for manoeuvring through concessions were extremely limited in view of the intensity of the crisis, and the Government decided to come out with a heavy hand on every agitation for wage-increase, or for continuance of favourable agreements already entered into.

The wages and incomes policy enunciated in the Sixth Five-Year Plan document made it clear that the Government would disfavour all claims for wage and salary-increases. The blow, therefore, fell heavily on those who fought for their demands. All the three important struggles against which the Government took exceptional measures were led by the Left. The loco and LIC struggles were led by our comrades and the Bangalore public sector struggle broadly by the CPI-led AITUC and HMS.

In the meantime, the lull on the industrial front has been broken. Inflation and high prices brought the workers on the street, their condition becoming unbearable in many industries. Some State Governments like the U.P. Government resorted to illegalisation of strikes but the strikes became prolonged. In general, the policy of the Congress(I) State Governments is to use the full repressive machinery against the CITU-led unions. In U.P., Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, CITU unions have had to face intense repression, and, in many places, goonda attacks with the aid of the police. In Haryana, the workers had to face murders, rapes and imprisonment.

In U.P. and many other States, the Congress(I) Governments ask the employers not to negotiate with CITU unions. The Rampur textile strike in U.P. was prolonged for over 181 days because the employer, encouraged by the Government, refused to negotiate with the CITU union which led the workers.

Karnataka, Haryana and Punjab have seen increase in our independent activity. In Assam, where CITU unions had to fight in a hostile atmosphere because of the secessionist movement, our plantation unions have registered significant advance despite brutal repression. In Delhi, Maharashtra and several other States united activities with other central organisations have been developing. The CITU, for the last year and a half, has been endeavouring to forge a front for joint action, leading several strikes and agitations

on its own, working for united actions on the local scale. These efforts for unity ended in a representative all-India convention of central trade unions and federations to fight the anti-labour policy of the Government. The loco strike, the LIC strike and the Bangalore strike all growingly brought the central unions together.

The struggle for broader resistance now rests on the solid foundation of the rising working class struggles and peasant struggles. The Party and its State Committees and all our trade unions must seriously take the call for Statewide conventions and prepare for the one-day all-India token strike in industries. The achievement of this all-India one-day action would be a historic development, placing the initiative for the anti-authoritarian resistance in the hands of the Left and radicalised forces of the working class.

The Experience Of Gujarat Agitation—Attack Of Divisive Forces

The Gujarat anti-reservation agitation, which led to mobilisation of the masses in hostile camps, was led by all the bourgeois opposition parties, and our Party had not only to demarcate itself from it, but actively oppose and expose it.

Here was a contradictory phenomenon. The Harijans and Adivasis whose reservation, we were protecting, represented the backward mass which loyally supported the Congress(I) during the Emergency. The mass which had lent its support to fighting the Emergency was in the anti-reservation camp.

Conscious of the monstrous injustices involved in the practice of untouchability, knowing that without decrying it the minimum democratic strength for their own emancipation could not be forged, the bourgeois leaders of the National Congress called for special attention to this problem, and proclaimed the observance of untouchability to be a sin. After Independence, they guaranteed equal rights to the untouchables and made the practice of untouchability a criminal offence. In pursuance of the objective of equality, they made a special provision for educational facilities to the Harijans, provided for reservation of seats in Parliament and in the Assemblies and jobs in Government services.

No political party dared oppose or criticise these concessions. They all became part of a common policy accepted by all. Here was what might be called a "national consensus" among bourgeois-landlord parties.

End Of Consensus

The consensus lasted three decades and there were three reasons. First, it was part of the National Congress heritage and outlook towards the Harijans, part of a 'national' tradition. Secondly, it was necessary for all parties to accept it as they required Harijans' support in the elections. Thirdly, the situation regarding jobs and unemployment had not become so acute as in recent times and could not be used to whip up opposition to reservation and secure electoral support in the bargain.

But the Gujarat agitation with its death toll and mass frenzy shows that the national consensus among the bourgeois parties has ended. The intense struggle among the bourgeois-landlord parties for Governmental power has now ended the unwritten understanding that special concessions to Harijans should not be made a point of conflict in the electoral battle.

Divisive Mobilisation

If the Congress(I) party, because of the State patronage in its hand and the concessions it can give, can tie the Harijans' vote to itself, the opposition bourgeois parties consider it legitimate to rouse the other sections against the Harijans, presenting the latter as recipients of partisan Congress(I) patronage. In Gujarat, besides, the Ministry was based on the support of Harijans, Adivasis, Muslims, etc., while the traditional holders of power were kept away from the Government.

This direct appeal to caste and anti-Harijan feelings is a sinister development dividing the toiling sections for the benefit of the ruling classes.

The agitation lasted three months. In the course of it, almost all major towns came under curfew at one time or another. Repeated firings were resorted to by the police. The total toll of lives was 45.

The Harijans were the worst sufferers from police brutalities in the beginning. Later on, perhaps, the police beat everyone they came across.

The big bourgeois Press, the capitalists, millowners, the medical profession, all non-Harijan university students, professors, teachers, Central and State Government employees, the trading community and mill workers supported the agitation. Some leaders of the Central Government employees' organisation and some leaders of the All-India Insurance Employees' Association under our influence waged a heroic battle for unity and refused to succumb to the anti-reservation mood. Some of them were removed from office-bearership of the AIIEA, but, later on, were restored to their position when the call for LIC strike came.

As against this 75,000 Harijan mill workers employed in the spinning departments of the mills went on strike to support reservation. On this the Sawarana Hitrakshak Samiti called on the Sawarana workers to go on strike and the caste division among the workers was complete.

This divisive mobilisation, this confrontation between two sections, both of whom are victims of bourgeois-landlord rule, was rendered possible because of the deteriorating situation and the mounting mass unemployment of recent years.

New Situation

Reservation in services, introduced as a measure to attenuate social discrimination, drew in the beginning the attention of upper-caste elements who monopolised the services. The Harijans themselves considered it to be an antidote to the top-caste monopoly in the services.

But, in recent years, things have rapidly changed. While the Harijans and Adivasis living below the poverty line constitute 21 per cent of the population, others living below the poverty line constitute not less than 27 per cent. These backward communities which were nowhere securing a share in Government services, are now in the field looking to Government jobs for the educated sections.

Besides, the last three decades witnessed a process of utter ruination of the people. The first sufferers were the tribals who

lost their land despite the so-called protective legislation, and the Scheduled Castes.

But, later on, under the Congress land reforms legislations, lakhs of other toilers were evicted from land or ousted from their traditional occupations by the march of 'modernisation' and competition.

As a result, the rural areas carry a huge number of landless and jobless besides Harijans. The cry for the protection of the interests of the backward castes, and provision for reservation of jobs for them, is now a familiar cry in certain parts of the country. The competition for land, for jobs, for financial concessions and loans and educational opportunities gets immensely intensified leading to easy diversion into casteist channels. In the cities, where the jobless flock, where educated unemployment is acute, the discontent is widespread, ready to be diverted into disruptive channels.

In this background, when the Congress(I) made exaggerated claims about facilities and concessions offered to Harijans, it became easy to divert the economic discontent against them. Though the Gujarat agitation has been temporarily withdrawn, and its spread to other States stalled, the challenge will come again and again.

It will come because the unemployment situation will worsen every year, because the opposition bourgeois parties are ready to use the divisive appeal in their struggle to get electoral support. The working class, the CPI(M) and the advanced Left have to find ways and means to combat it.

The reservation question can no longer be presented as a question of Hindu social reform. It is directly linked with the common struggle against the antiquated land relations, against unemployment and for rapid industrial development under a new socio-economic order.

Break Walls Of Separation—For Common Struggle

The Communist Party since its foundation had a correct understanding about the problem of untouchability when it linked with the question of agrarian revolution. But the failure to develop a revolutionary movement in agrarian areas and in the country as a

whole prevented the development of a common struggle in which both Harijans and non-Harijans could participate and through which the deep gulf that separated them could be bridged.

The day-to-day common struggles led by our mass organisations were insensitive to the special problems of Harijans, to the problems of Harijan toilers, and this created indifference in the minds of these sections to the common class struggle. These weaknesses have to be overcome if this democratic section is not to act as a reservoir for the authoritarian party. The biggest obstacle is the casteism of wide sections of the mass who observe untouchability. It is because of this that the Harijan mass is alienated.

Our Party and the organised trade union movement led by our Party did not succeed in inculcating a strong anti-caste feeling among the mass of workers in the spirit of proletarian consciousness. It is no surprise, therefore, that our kisan and agricultural workers' organisations also could not succeed.

The anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat, and the support it started getting in other States, have underlined the danger of the antipathy that can be created against Harijans among other sections of the toilers—a fact which Harijan leaders must take note of. By propagating excessive claims about concessions and facilities to Harijans, the Congress(I) presents Harijans as favourites of the Congress and rouses the anger of other toilers and pits them against the Harijans.

The emancipation of Harijans will not be achieved through reservation of jobs ensured by a bourgeois-landlord Government. It cannot be achieved in opposition to other toiling sections but in alliance with them in the common fight against the bourgeois-landlord classes, and the Congress(I) which represents them—this fact the Harijan leaders must note.

Reservation and a minimum educational advance have created a thin stratum among Harijans which is interested in supporting the ruling party, and thereby the present social order, for further petty concessions and which uses all its influence to ensure that the Harijan masses do not join the common movement to change the social order.

Whether it is working class strikes, struggles against high prices, movements of peasants and agricultural workers, fight against

Emergency rule or the class movement for socialism, the Harijan masses, whose emancipation is linked with the success of the movements, are kept away from them.

This makes the Harijan mass an appendage of the Congress(I) which maintains and protects the property relations which sustain untouchability and the sufferings of Harijans.

Ruling Classes and Reservation

It is, of course, wrong to oppose reservation. Harijans, it must be noted, have not derived even the full benefit of reservation. Besides, the main mass of Harijans is totally unaffected by it.

While reservation and special facilities do make for minimal progress and have produced a vocal intelligentsia, the ruling classes and the ruling party use this device to tie down the 'untouchables' to their apron-strings and prevent them from joining the common struggle against the present regime.

The ruling classes have succeeded all these years in isolating this downtrodden mass and keeping it as its reserve force. The question is how to break this isolation, how to foil the efforts of the ruling party to pit this mass against other toilers.

Unless the weaknesses in the approach of mass organisations are removed, and the Party is able to tell the Harijan mass the real truth about reservations, accompanied by ideological propaganda against untouchability and the caste system, divisions are likely to be intensified by the ruling party and other bourgeois parties. In the struggle against authoritarianism, this backwardness of the Harijan mass acts as a big drag adversely affecting the movement.

Islamic Fundamentalism—The Reactionary Agency Of Imperialism and International Muslim Reaction

The problem of the Muslim minority in our country dogged the national struggle at every step, ultimately leading to the partitioning of the country. The partitioning showed the failure of the bourgeois leadership of the anti-imperialist movement to overcome religious barriers and absorb the Muslim mass into the mainstream of the anti-imperialist struggle, as also its failure to win over the Muslim

mass from the influence of the vested interests in that community. The problem dogs the country and the democratic movement even today. The ruling bourgeois-landlord classes have failed to integrate the Muslim minority with the common current; and the advanced democratic movement including the working class movement has also failed to score any significant success in this direction.

The Party Programme states, "In conditions of capitalist competition, the guaranteed rights to the minorities provided in the Constitution are also not implemented. The bourgeois-landlord State thus fosters centrifugal and disruptive forces and fails to build the unity of the country on secure foundations".

Regarding our Party's attitude, it is stated, "While defending the right of every religious community—whether it is the majority or minority—as well as of those who have no faith in any religion, to believe in and practise whatever religion they like or to remain irreligious, the Party should fight against all forms of intrusion of religion in the social, economic, political and administrative life of the nation. Equally opposing the efforts of leaders of all religious groups to interfere in the public life of the country, we should concentrate fire on the chauvinistic leaders of the majority religious community—the Hindus. At the same time, we should continue to point out to the minority religious groups that their legitimate rights can be defended and protected only on the basis of a consistent application of the principles of secularism".

This outlook has been guiding our Party all these years. Naturally, our sympathies lay entirely with the Muslim minority and we defend it against all communal attacks and discriminatory attacks of the bourgeois-landlord Government.

Hitherto our Party looked upon riots and Hindu-Muslim conflicts as a "communal" problem—a strife between followers of two different faiths, because of obscurantism, a weapon of internal communal reaction, mainly Hindu chauvinism. It had branded the Hindu chauvinist forces led by the RSS as mainly responsible for organising pogroms and hunting the minority.

Our Party has also been criticising the bourgeois-landlord Government for its failure to protect the life and property of the Muslim minority, for its treatment as a second class citizen and the

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fake secularism it stood for. Our Party had denounced such concessions to Hindu fanaticism as prohibition of cow-slaughter. We had also laid stress on the miserable economic plight of the Muslims, discriminatory treatment in matters of employment, etc.

Our sympathies lay entirely with the Muslim minority masses and we defended them against all communal and discriminatory attacks.

But, as in the case of the Harijans, the other part was not sufficiently stressed—that without freeing themselves from the bondage to the minority communal outlook, without joining the mainstream of democratic struggle, their liberation will not come. There was failure to warn and educate the Muslim masses against their own communal leadership, steeped in an anti-Communist, anti-democratic outlook. Hitherto, it was regarded only as a problem of internal understanding and adjustment.

The Muslim mass, because of its dire economic situation and the discrimination practised against it, is getting extremely vulnerable to the obscurantist appeal of fundamentalism. This appeal is intended to create a permanent wall between the Muslim masses and the democratic forces and undermines the unity of the country and makes it helpless against imperialist pressures in times of crisis. It inhibits the Muslim mass from joining the common struggle against unemployment, dire poverty, against economic enslavement, and does the biggest disservice to the minority masses.

It is no longer the old Hindu-Muslim problem; the old separatism is being exploited by the imperialists and communalists to plot against the democratic movement, the Communist movement and the freedom of the country.

The ramifications of this plot have spread far and wide and the secessionist forces in Kashmir have gathered strength, and may soon get out of control.

And here comes the weakness of the Indira Gandhi Government. It is not only unable to fight this conspiracy; it placates these forces to secure their electoral support. Growingly isolated from the main democratic mass, the Congress(I) relies on backward sections like Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims. Some of those who are in possession of the Muslim mass are acting hand in glove with Islamic

fundamentalists abroad and are now in a position to blackmail the Government and force it to make reactionary concessions. These, at present, consist of freedom to carry on separatist and anti-India propaganda. It is no surprise, therefore, that Indira Gandhi sent a message to the Jamait-e-Islami Conference in Hyderabad and the Congress(I) Government of Andhra Pradesh spent a few lakhs of public money to make this reactionary conference success.

This is the new dimension of the communal problem. The Party must make serious endeavours to rescue the Muslim masses from the influence of the fundamentalists and expose and unmask their propaganda.

The Indira Gandhi Government is afraid to do it because it does not want to give offence to the reactionary rulers of certain oil-producing countries. In the dire condition of our economy, it relies on the influx of petro-dollars into the country.

The mobilisation of progressive intellectuals, of democratic opinion and simultaneously greater intervention to defend and protect the rights of the Muslim minority are steps necessary to combat this menace.

In these circumstances, the chauvinistic appeal of the RSS in terms of a Hindu nation becomes a provocative agency of imperialism to drive the Muslim mass into the camp of the fundamentalists. The RSS brand of Hindu chauvinism now not only unleashes riots, terrorises the Muslims with the help of the bureaucracy as in Bihar Shareef, it objectively plays the game of completely partitioning off the Muslims from the Hindus, the Muslim toilers from other toilers, and works havoc with the unity of the country. The appeal of Islamic fundamentalism will be drastically reduced but for the aggressive RSS communal propaganda which endorses from a different direction the fundamentalist appeal that the Muslims are a totally separate entity distinct from the rest of the people.

The mass organisations also have a role to play by making special efforts to draw the Muslims into the day-to-day struggle and also intervene in their problems as a minority.

The raising of such slogans as Khalistan, Sikhs a separate nation, Amritsar a holy city, are part of this same process of national disintegration under Congress rule. Known imperialist agents now raise the disruptive slogans with impunity and are backed by obscurantists.

The Tribals and Foreign Missionaries

Three decades of Congress rule have created an explosive situation in the tribal areas, providing readymade ammunition to imperialist conspirators. As in the case of the untouchables, the Government of India provided reservation in services for the Scheduled Tribes. It also provided for special facilities for education and reservation of seats in educational institutions. But all these provisions have proved farcical and the Scheduled Tribes have been less successful than the Harijans in reaping minimum benefits from reservation.

Meanwhile, the process of expropriation from land has gone apace, notwithstanding pious legislations preventing transfer of land to non-Adivasis. The Adivasi, driven from land, is forced to enter the labour market—the rural labour market—where regulation of labour conditions does not exist. The minimum wage legislation for the agricultural worker is not implemented in Congress(I)-ruled States. And a large number of Adivasis work as bonded labour or slaves on farms or far-off brick kilns.

In the Adivasi areas, endowed with rich mineral reserves, the Adivasis get the lowest paid jobs.

The Hindu society treats them as outcastes and an educated tribal has very little chance of getting a job. Money-lenders, traders, officials and the police rob and loot them and their women are objects of lust and outrages.

During the last thirty years, a generation of educated people has arisen from amongst them, they are vocal against this exploitation and inhuman treatment. The policy of the bourgeois-landlord Government is to bait an upper section with jobs, ministerial posts, expenditure of a few lakhs of rupees in Adivasi areas, but do nothing fundamental to improve the situation of this oppressed section.

Some foreign church missions have been working on this explosive material for the last three decades. The results are today seen in the North-Eastern tribal States where the writ of the Government of India hardly runs. Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram are areas where the ruling party at the Centre is forced to ally with anyone who, for the time being, has influence over the people. Tripura shows a different pattern because of our hold and influence over the people.

In the interior also, the slogan of separate State—Jharkhand, etc.—are being raised for a long time. But the Congress(I) Government would not think even of an autonomous district or region.

Today the discontent has spread far and wide and the Adivasis are vulnerable to the separatist appeal. This situation is being fully exploited by some foreign church missions which have firm roots among the Adivasis in some areas and work in collusion with imperialist Powers.

Our exposure of the misdeeds of these missions concerns their reactionary political activities against our country and in the interest of foreign imperialist Powers. It is not directed towards preventing any citizen of India from propagating his religion or faith. Thousands of toilers holding the Christian faith are in the forefront of the common struggle in several places and our Party and the democratic movement fully support the citizen's right to freedom of conscience and religion.

Their sinister hand in the Tripura developments was exposed by our comrades. In that State, they openly support an organisation of tribals (the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti), which under their influence takes a secessionist stand and concentrates on opposing the CPI(M) and the united democratic movement in the State.

The Baptist Mission is desperately trying to convert the entire tribal mass to Christianity, thereby it seeks to create a wall of religious separation between the converts and the rest. This is to be followed by the propaganda that tribals are distinct and separate from India and have nothing to do with the Indian people. This appeal of separation finds ready soil in the background of the horrible life conditions imposed by the bourgeois-landlord

Government on the tribals. It is reinforced by the conversion which is intended to draw the tribal mass near the Western Christian countries.

The Reverend Cunville of the Baptist Mission calls for a virtual invasion by the world churches to convert the Tripura tribals to Christianity. "All churches, not only from North-East India but around the world, should support and loan their best men and women for the disciplining of Tripuris as far as possible under the direction of the TBCU" (Tripura Baptist Christian Union).

Here Church leaders like the Rev. Cunville are openly speaking as Church leaders in the name of Christ and communion. But in other places, they pose to turn towards the Left, presenting a Left image, to fight the CPI(M) and sow the seeds of separatism among the tribals.

A report submitted by the Thane District Secretary of our Party, Comrade Khopkar, who is a member of the Party's Maharashtra State Committee, gives the following account of the activities of such Church agents in the tribal Warli area of the district: "Now the Church missionaries call themselves Kashtakari Sanghatana (toilers' organisation) and declare it as a progressive Left democratic organisation, and simultaneously a non-party organisation.

"In their study camps, their advice to Adivasis is as follows: (1) We Adivasis are a different people. The other people are exploiters. If we want to be liberated completely we must throw out all non-Adivasis from the area and we must have a republic of our own. Actually some of our people have established their own rule in Nagaland, Mizoram etc. (2) In the Soviet Union and China, workers are exploited and ill-treated and real democracy exists in the USA only. (3) Christ alone can bring justice." This is enough to show the wide ramifications of imperialist agencies exploiting the tribal problem.

"Drive out non-Adivasis from the Adivasi areas" is also the slogan raised in the Bihar tribal areas. In the Warli area, these agents of certain Church missions have organised assaults and attacks on our comrades. They indulge in slanderous propaganda and incite murders and clashes between Adivasis and non-Adivasis.

The inability of the bourgeois-landlord Government to liberate the tribals, followed by the worsening of their conditions and their slave status, is providing fertile soil to imperialist agencies to organise their plots. The most downtrodden section of the Indian society, instead of being rallied by the revolutionary forces, either hangs on to the tail of the authoritarian party or falls victim to imperialist wiles.

The bourgeois-landlord Government is unable to denounce the misdeeds of these foreign Church missions, fearing that it will be accused of religious intolerance by its western financiers who hold the purse strings. It, therefore, refrains from exposing the conspiracy to undermine the unity of the country. One more instance showing that the authoritarian party, relying more on backward sections, cannot protect the country against imperialist machinations.

The Challenge from the Religious "Left"

In this connection, it should be noted that a systematic offensive from the "Left" is being opened by some Church agencies against our Party, but it is done in the name of moving close to the Left, and especially the CPI(M). A big centre of these activities is Bangalore from where such innocent-looking organisations as the Centre for Informal Education and Development Studies, Indian Social Institute, etc., are working and spreading their nets.

They organise seminars, call our Party members and leaders to participate in them, the aim being to get a Left image and attract young people whom they offer research jobs, scholarships, etc., and convert them into their propagandists. It also appears that at least in Karnataka, they are trying to penetrate our Party.

Some of our Party members, throwing off their guard against imperialism and these foreign Church missions, and misled by the radical phrases of these agencies, participate in their manoeuvres and play their game. Both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu must take note of this situation. It seems that our Andhra Party being vigilant has taken action in time and asked our members to dissociate themselves from such organisations.

Needless to say that these foreign missionary activities are supported by the anti-Soviet "Left" elements in our country. Having warned against these agencies, and their efforts to penetrate our Party, we must also note that they are establishing ties with other Left groups.

Simultaneously, we must note that an ideological offensive against the Party is conducted by the Trotskyites, Naxalites and all sorts of "radical" intellectuals. The coordinating and guiding hand is provided by international agencies, and the most vociferous are those returning from the USA. Our Party, being busy with day-to-day problems, is unable to meet this challenge properly. It is a pity that our intellectual comrades—professors, teachers, lawyers—are unable to put up a fight, and stand paralysed before the offensive on every front. The Party must arm them to do this all-important job.

In its absence, a section of the radically minded younger generation is being corrupted by this "Left" ideology which ends only in counter-revolutionary anti-Communism. The menace of the Naxalite ideology, its changing tactics, must be systematically fought if this counter-revolutionary group is to be isolated and defeated.

Features of Acute Crisis

Certain features of the acute crisis of the system must be noted. Political protests, agitations, movements and strikes are the necessary accompaniments of a developing crisis. Its acute stage is represented by a general breakdown of law and order, of the administration, the violation of the rule of law with regard to the mass of ordinary people not involved in political or economic movements, and the incapacity or unwillingness of the administration to offer security and safety to the common people against anti-socials.

The looting of trains, the robberies in the capital of India and the capitals of States, the armed hold-ups and lootings of banks, the robbery of common citizens, widespread dacoities in the rural areas, the rapes of women by gangsters and policemen, the rule of vast areas of the cities and their slums by gangs who are able to extort money from the people, speak of an unprecedented crisis of administration and the society.

It is not known to the common man that when there is a coal shortage in the country, lakhs of tonnes of coal are regularly looted from Dhanbad and other mining areas by gangsters working in league with the police and mine officials. The existence of mafia operators in the Dhanbad area looting and disposing of lakhs of tonnes of coal is well-known and was recently owned up by a Cabinet Minister of the Central Government.

While gangsters spread terror and the police indulge in brutalities, the people's spontaneous anger also rises and they surround police stations demanding punishment of guilty officials for their collusion with gangsters or attacks on the people. These clashes result in police firings and deaths.

These are not outbursts of hunger; they do not arise out of high prices or other economic demands. They are against torture and rape in police custody, or refusal of the police to register complaints or take action against murderers, dacoits and rapists.

They are protests against the general breakdown of administration, against the breakdown of the law-enforcing machinery and the growing influence of anti-socials on it.

Collusion

The collusion between the police, the bureaucracy and anti-socials has been growing in recent years. It seems to have increased in the year and a half since Indira Gandhi's return to power. In fact, the Sanjay gang typified this collusion. The breakdown of law and order appears to be widespread in Bihar, no one knowing where the bureaucracy ends and the criminals take over. The collusion between the landed interest, the administration and anti-social elements—dacoits and others—is patent in the villages of the State. It shows that the conflict of agrarian interests has reached a high pitch of intensity in Bihar.

Congress(I) Link with Anti-Socials

But a recent and alarming feature of the situation is the manifestation of links between Congress(I) politicians and leaders with anti-socials. In West Bengal, this process has been in evidence for some time. The April 3 bandh again demonstrated visibly the anti-social character of the striking force of the Congress(I).

But now with the rapid and mounting discontent among the people against Congress(I) policies, outside West Bengal also the same process is in evidence. The links of certain Bihar Congress(I) leaders with dacoits were exposed some time ago. A dacoit in U.P. was shot dead by the police. In his pocket they found a letter written by a Congress(I) MLA thanking him for the help rendered during the election to ensure his success. The following report from *The Times of India*, dated June 8, should not cause surprise: "Agra, June 7: Mr. Sahai (Secretary of the U.P. Sarvodaya Mandal), who returned today after visiting several Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies, said that he had evidence that dacoit gangs were taking active interest in the poll campaign in the Tindwari Assembly constituency from where the U.P. Chief Minister, Mr. Vishwanath Pratap Singh is seeking election." Press reports recently exposed the links of the Andhra Home Minister with a known anti-social. Earlier the capital was scandalised by the report that a dacoit from Madhya Pradesh was taking shelter in the residence of a Congress(I) M.P.

Blackmarketeers and smugglers are already there in the ruling party.

It is necessary to remember that authoritarian rule will growingly mean the rule of anti-socials working hand in glove with the police and the bureaucracy armed with unlimited powers.

Surrender to Police

Another feature of the intensified crisis is the complete inability of the Ministers, the ruling party and elected representatives to keep the bureaucracy, especially the police, under control. Leave aside graft, the authorities are unable to take action against those who are guilty of loot, rape or murder. Any action proposed is immediately opposed by the policemen and the Government is blackmailed into hastily withdrawing it.

This has happened in Dabwali where some policemen were charged with the rape and murder of an orderly's wife. This happened in Baghpet where the Government hardly took any action against the daylight murder of three persons by policemen and the outrage on the wife of one of the murdered. This again happened

in Gwalior when policemen and Home Guards looted a sweetmeat shop and killed a chowkidar, but the Government dared not take action against anyone for fear of provoking police agitation.

This was also seen in the withdrawal of the action against the police personnel involved in the Bhagalpur blinding cases in Bihar. The policemen who were found guilty by the Mukdar Commission and charge-sheeted for the rape of Ramiza Bi and the murder of her husband in Hyderabad were let off by the court, the Public Prosecutor himself arguing more in defence of the culprits. The policemen who raped and killed Shakila and later murdered her husband in Hyderabad were also let off.

No law for the ruling party, no law for the bureaucracy, is the feature of an authoritarian State. The image of a police State run with the aid of the rough storm-troopers of the ruling party is slowly emerging in practice notwithstanding repeated assurances against imposition of Emergency rule.

And, finally, the hold of the ruling party over the border States has either slipped or is precariously held.

In Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and other States, the Congress(I) is forced to ally with the party which, for the time being, has majority in the Legislature. One Congress(I) Chief Minister was found to be in close touch with the rebels and had to be removed. The writ of the Central Government is dependent on the goodwill of local leaders and parties with secessionist sympathies.

In Assam, the local bureaucracy is working hand in glove with the leaders of the secessionist movement. Assam is once again under President's rule.

The Economic Situation

These developments are taking place in the midst of a worsening economic situation and its effects on the people. In fact they follow from the sharp struggles and conflicts arising from the challenging mass discontent.

The rate of inflation has reached as high as 14 per cent. The unchecked rise of prices continues and all the promises of the Finance Minister and the Government have turned out to be mere

words. A relentless drive against the living standards of the people is demanded by the World Bank (abolition of food subsidies, etc.), and by the compulsion of foreign borrowings. The Sixth Five-Year Plan, with its resort to commercial borrowing, will mortgage the economy still more to exports to Western countries. In the midst of this, the search for petro-dollars from countries with reactionary regimes, the open invitation to foreign investment and the search for joint ventures, all bespeak of a dangerous situation. Unemployment increases by millions every year and has reached explosive proportions giving a free field to anti-national agencies to carry on their nefarious work.

According to the Sixth Plan document, integrated steel plants were able to utilise only 69.2 per cent of their capacity in 1979-80; the aluminium industry 58.2 per cent; fertiliser(N) stabilised plants 76.6 per cent; cement 72.6 per cent; newsprint 68.2 per cent and so on. Commenting on this, the Sixth Plan document observes: "As is evident from the table, recent trends in capacity utilisation in several industries are discouraging. This is also true for agriculture. For example, the irrigation potential which has been created is not fully utilised. Levels of yield per acre for many parts of the country are far below what can be attained with known technology".

The Planners present this deep malady of the economy as a result of lagging infrastructure. They observe: "The poor utilisation of agriculture and industry stems from many factors but the major problem area can be located in the basic infrastructures of power and transport". But will they answer why utilisation of thermal power generation capacity has been below 50 per cent? In 1979-80, it was only 45 per cent.

Naturally sickness in industry grows. According to the Reserve Bank of India, at the end of June 1979, there were large sick industrial units in which bank credit amounting to Rs. 1011.72 crores was locked up. (This exceeds the value of the total investment in the public sector under the Department of Heavy Industry.) According to returns received by the RBI from commercial banks, the number of sick units in the small-scale sector was as high as 20,326. *The Economic Survey* (1980-81)

observed, "Industrial sickness involving both large-scale and small-scale industries is a matter of serious concern".

The most palpable manifestation of the crisis is the torrent of mounting unemployment. They were 22.1 million unemployed at the end of the Fifth Plan. These official figures are an underestimate. New entrants in the labour market will number 32 million during the Sixth Plan which claims to find jobs for 30 million. This will leave a backlog of 24.2 million. In reality the figure will be much higher, not less than 40 million, because the claim to find 30 million new jobs cannot be substantiated. The number of educated jobless alone is expected to rise by 11.85 million in 1985.

This huge jobless mass is bound to enter the active field of agitation and resistance in the near future. Already agitations for relief, for work, have started. There have been morchas and demonstrations of the unemployed youth. While the Left-oriented Governments are providing the unemployed with some relief, the Congress(I) Governments are deluding them with reservation and other gimmicks. Attempts are being made to divide the movement on caste lines by concentrating on the reservation issue. But this will not succeed.

A number of Congress(I) Governments had already recognised the explosive situation in the rural areas and started a rural employment programme—the food-for-work programme—to pacify the anger of the rural masses. But because of corruption in the administration very little relief could reach the people. Only the Left Front Government of West Bengal could make a success of the programme. Another manifestation of the crisis is the growing reliance on foreign collaboration agreements which were the highest in number in 1980-81. They were permitted at a time when multinational drug companies in India were defying Government law, and when foreign capital was refusing to carry out the FERA directive to dilute the foreign equity to 40 per cent. The Government acquiesced in their defiance.

India's large balance of payments deficit in 1980-81 does not seem to be a temporary phenomenon. As the report of the World Bank (April 1981) observed, "the deterioration of balance of payments prospects does not appear to be of short duration and

does require economic policy changes to manage the large deficits in the coming years. In the last four years, exports have financed a decreasing share of imports. The modernisation of industry and continued liberalisation of trade will lead further to growing imports". Growing reliance on exports to Western markets is thus emphasised.

The high inflation rate and the high prices that are dominating the economic scene despite the promises of the Finance Minister to relieve the situation, are part of this crisis, part of the mechanism to transfer the burdens of the crisis to the poorer sections. Allow prices to rise to curtail consumption, this has been the recipe of the World Bank. In its latest report also, the Bank observes that instead of allowing edible oils consumption to be curtailed through the prevailing high prices, the Government imported large quantities of oil to bring down prices. By May 9, 1981, the wholesale price index at 275.2 was 14.6 per cent higher than a year before.

This rise conceals the story of the indescribable suffering of the people, who are forced to go without daily necessities of life like oil, sugar, etc. The Government has no intention, nor will it succeed in bringing down the high prices, and people's protests are rising as the situation becomes unbearable and all hope of relief disappears. Housewives are again on the move to demand relief from the high prices and the Government has nothing to offer. The ruling high prices are bound to lead to big convulsions and confrontation between the Government and the people.

But the crisis is all-pervading and threatens to bring about the collapse of the public distribution system, imposing outright starvation on huge sections of the rural population. This is the direct result of the Government's pro-trader, pro-speculator policy as well as of the inflation which assures every speculator and trader that by cornering grain and other commodities, he will get a bigger return. In this period of uncontrolled rise in prices, the Government allowed the trader to have a free hand instead of nationalising wholesale trade in foodgrains. The result was that the trade cornered the wheat by offering slightly higher prices to the peasant-seller, while the better-off sections of the producers kept away from the

market. The produce of the small peasant having gone into the hands of the trader, the Government agencies could purchase very little. The Haryana and Punjab State Governments failed to procure the required quantity of wheat, and the Prime Minister undertook a journey to Chandigarh to discipline the Chief Ministers. But the target had to be scaled down.

And now a serious and explosive situation has arisen. Foodgrains stocks with the Government have dipped to below ten million tonnes and a high rate of procurement was essential. But it is not possible to reach the wheat procurement target of 9.5 million tonnes. In Punjab, by May end, the procurement was less than 25 lakh tonnes against a target of 47 lakh tonnes; in Haryana, it was less than ten lakh tonnes against a target of 17 lakh tonnes.

The country's food distribution system stands endangered. This may result in reduced rationing in the urban areas and outright starvation in the rural areas.

Besides, this means that the Government will have no food stocks for the food-for-work programme which offered some relief to the poorest section of the rural population. There was no allocation after October 1980, while in 1981-82, no foodgrains have been supplied to the States so far. In 1979-80, utilisation of foodgrains for the food-for-work programme was of the order of 23.6 lakh tonnes, while the employment generated was of the order of 5377 lakh mandays. With the end of this employment and relief, there are bound to be angry agitations in the rural areas.

Thus all the facets of the crisis are driving for a major confrontation between the people and the Government.

Inner-Dissensions, Loss of Credibility

The credibility of the ruling party is compromised by the inner-crisis of the party and the incompetence that dogs it. The ruling party has specialised in getting the most incompetent people as its Government functionaries. Never was the prestige of its administration so low as now. The Pahadias and Antulays are certainly not names which can bring credit to any public organisation. So mean is the moral, intellectual and political level of Congress(I) State Ministers that a Rajasthan Minister is found

guilty of violating the Child Marriages Act and giving away his ten-year-old daughter in marriage.

The notorious Antulay is starting Government newspapers in Maharashtra, and has no compunction in joining hands with the Shiv Sena whose followers indulge in looting the shops of non-Maharashtrians. Anjaiah had to be rebuked for distributing ministerial posts to almost every second MLA.

At the Centre also, Indira Gandhi has not been able to knock together a team of efficient and decent people. Never before was there such a weak Cabinet at the Centre, some of whose members are objects of ridicule among the people. Neither the bureaucrats nor the people seem to have any regard for this crowd. No wonder many portfolios still remain undistributed.

Inside the States, factionalism and inner-fights are taking an intensified form. Though the Sanjay group is now put on the shelf, in-fights over power continue to disarray the Congress(I) party. The expulsion of V.C. Shukla from the Central Cabinet, though it has temporarily shaken the dissidents in Madhya Pradesh, will intensify the differences to a breaking point.

In Maharashtra, Antulay, with his crude and vulgar methods of functioning, and his collusion with the Shiv Sena, will have to be replaced. Perhaps, that is the meaning of Chavan's defection which will strengthen the Maratha lobby and provide a leadership with better image among the people.

Chief Minister Jagannath Misra of Bihar is an extremely controversial personality. The way Supreme Court directives on the Bihar blindings were circumvented under his regime is known to all. He is the target of oppositional attack for corruption in administration, favouritism in appointments and casteism. Factionalism, intrigues and collapse of the administration are inevitable under the circumstances, and this is what has happened in the State.

In this situation, Indira Gandhi relies more and more on trusted men of the bureaucracy and devoted sycophants in the party. The circle of real rulers gets closer and closer making the establishment of a dictatorship a matter of necessity. The ruling party is, therefore, inevitably proceeding towards this objective under a facade of promises to the contrary.

Drive for Dictatorship

After the enactment of the National Security Act, which the Home Minister himself described as MISA with a "changed name", the Congress(I) Government is concentrating on two objectives—a subservient Judiciary and a Presidential form of Government.

In recent months, the conflict between the Judiciary and the Executive has assumed an intensified form.

In the LIC bonus case, the Government repeatedly defied or circumvented the decisions of the Supreme Court. Commitments made by the Attorney-General were repudiated by the Cabinet. But the Government had to retreat after the final verdict of the Supreme Court in favour of the employees and agreed to give the prescribed assurance on the question of bonus. Even at this stage, the Government was not willing to carry out the decision of the Court. They wanted the officials of the LIC to defy the verdict. Only when the latter demanded written instructions to disobey the Court's ruling, and in its absence threatened to resign, the Government yielded. The legality of the LIC Act is still under dispute, the Government is bound to resist the Supreme Court's verdict.

Meanwhile, in order to make the Judiciary subservient, the Government claimed the right to transfer High Court Judges from one State to another and ordered certain transfers. This was also challenged. The Government then resorted to the trick of seeking an undertaking from Additional Judges that they had no objection to being transferred to another State during the course of their service. This was a demand on those who were yet to be made permanent. The Additional Judges were being coerced to accept this condition if they desired a permanent post on the Bench.

This clandestine pressure led to loud protests both from the Bench and the Bar, but the Government would not yield. The terms of those who declined to accept the condition were not extended. This happened to two Judges of the Delhi High Court. A writ was filed on their behalf and the Supreme Court asked the Government to grant extension to them till the writ was decided. The Government refused. The Government is biding its time and hopes that with the retirement of a few Judges from the Supreme Court,

it will be able to pack the highest judicial body with its "committed men". Then the entire approach of the Court is bound to change.

In the meantime, partisans of the Government from the Bar like Ashoke Sen and others warn the Judges against interfering with the decisions of Parliament. Ministers and Congress(I) lawyers utter unseemly threats to them. The authoritarian party is dragging the bourgeois judicial system into the street, exploding the myth of its impartiality and independence and pronouncing it as a subservient instrument of the ruling party.

The fight against these attempts to create a subservient Judiciary forms an integral part of the fight against the imposition of one-party rule and provides the widest possible common platform of resistance.

It is gratifying to note that the resistance to the attack on the Judiciary is gathering strength. Some Judges are forthcoming in their statements and judgements affecting the issues. Lawyers and leading members of the Bar in many places have condemned the Executive's aggression on the prerogatives of the Judiciary and the Court. Two Chief Justices who were earlier transferred to High Courts in other States refused to accept their new assignments. This resistance, however, must be carried to the people to be effective.

Drive for Presidential System

The second objective, a Presidential form of Government, is also being relentlessly pursued. There is every danger that Indira Gandhi may succeed in reaching it through "constitutional" means, unless public opinion is roused against it.

The constitutional change required for the purpose can be introduced through the present Parliament. The Congress(I) has the requisite majority in the Lok Sabha for the purpose. But, at present, it does not have the requisite number in the Rajya Sabha. Next year the Congress(I)'s position in the Rajya Sabha will improve.

This is a big danger that faces the people and the threat can be executed behind their back, without involving them. The opposition to a Presidential form of Government again becomes the platform of the broadest resistance.

But, once more, appeal to the masses and their involvement are required to successfully combat this treacherous move.

The question of the form of Government has assumed importance because, in times of crisis, certain forms of bourgeois rule offer greater facilities for carrying forward the struggle. They become crucial points in the advance of the democratic movement at a particular stage.

Both the Parliamentary form of Government as it exists in Britain and the Presidential form as it exists in the USA are forms of bourgeois class rule. By themselves, they do not represent any fundamental change in the position of the masses with respect to political power or control over the State.

But in India, today, the Presidential system that is advocated in opposition to the present Parliamentary system is nothing but the embodiment of one-party rule, one-party dictatorship and ultimately the personal dictatorship of the leader of that party.

The question is raised by the ruling party today because the Parliamentary system with its opposition parties, with its freedom of exposure and criticism of Government actions and its capacity to bar unpleasant and reactionary measures, is an obstacle in the way of one-party rule and an open dictatorship against the people.

The Maharashtra Chief Minister, Antulay, one of the main crusaders of the Presidential system, openly identified it with dictatorship. He says: "Now in the Presidential system, the President within his ambit has powers where even the Supreme Court cannot interfere. And he is not removable by the Senate, nor the Congress, not even the two put together". An irremovable President who can pack the courts with his nominees, and cannot be removed by either House—this is the gist of the demand for the Presidential form of Government.

Basic Understanding

Similarly, in the fight between the Judiciary and the Executive that is going on now, we should not dilute our basic understanding of the class character of the Judiciary. As Marxists we do not hold that the Judiciary is independent of the class interests which the

State serves. Nonetheless, occasions arise when the two wings of the bourgeois State clash with each other and the stand of either may help the progressive forces. In 1969, the Judiciary took a reactionary stand on the question of right to property—in defence of this right—and attempted to declare illegal the bank nationalisation and abolition of Privy Purses measures of the Government. And we supported the Government measures and opposed the Judiciary's "independence".

The conflict between the Judiciary and the Executive is today linked with the people's struggle against authoritarianism, and every effort of the Executive to reduce the importance of the Judiciary must be combated. The present-day Judiciary—the Judges of the Supreme Court—have become an obstacle in the way of the arbitrary exercise of power by the Executive, they defend fundamental rights and protect them against interference by the Executive; they have blocked the way to arbitrary changes in the Constitution by enunciating the doctrine of the basic structure of the Constitution; so long as the Judges continue on this path, they will have the support of the democratic forces.

But we must be prepared for a sudden change in the situation and reversal of the role of the Judiciary after a few new appointments to the Court.

Heavy Responsibility of the Party and Left Forces

The development of the last few months, the changing correlation of forces, the vacillations of bourgeois parties and the rising struggle of the masses place a heavy responsibility on our Party and the Left and democratic forces in general. It is necessary in this connection to recall the Jullundur Party Congress resolution: "The Left and democratic forces stand in the forefront of the fight against the forces of authoritarianism. They endeavour in all possible ways to organise the broadest possible resistance to the authoritarian danger, they lend their support to the platform for democratic reforms and advance which bring together all anti-authoritarian trends, even those that are opposed to the economic platform of the Left democratic forces."

"Realising the terrible sufferings of the masses and the continuing danger of dictatorship, the Left and democratic

forces direct their fire against the monopolists, big capitalists and landlords and against the increasing influence of foreign capital.

"By putting forward a political and economic programme, distinct and sharply opposed to the platform and practice of bourgeois-landlord parties, by leading the masses to realise it, the Left and democratic forces enable them to move away from the bourgeois-landlord parties and increasingly rally round an alternative leadership." The Left-oriented Governments by their existence and the measures they take to defend the interests of the people—measures which distinguish them from all bourgeois-landlord parties—act as the spearhead of the Left and democratic forces. Their continued existence, despite the desperate efforts of the ruling party to topple them, is not only an outstanding achievement of our Party and the Left and democratic forces; it is an important element which accentuates the crisis, contributes to the instability of the ruling party and increases the strength of the anti-authoritarian forces. The defence of these Governments against Congress(I) machinations is the primary responsibility of the democratic forces and the working class if the conspiracy of the dictatorial forces is to be defeated.

The authoritarian party is preparing its attacks on these outposts, uttering slanders, abuse, charges of breakdown of law and order, holding out blackmailing threats and using Central Ministers to fan the agitation against the Left-oriented Ministries. But, at the same time, Opposition parties, democratic forces consider it necessary to ward off these attacks, they realise that these are attacks on democracy and that they jeopardise the democratic existence of all political opposition parties and constitute a prelude to a general onslaught of the forces of dictatorship against the people.

If immediately after the 1977 elections, the Janata Party and its Government were considered to be the main bulwark against one-party dictatorship, today that role, in the minds of large sections, is played by the Left Front and Left Democratic Front Ministries.

Indira Gandhi seeks to isolate the Left-oriented Ministries from this broad support before attacking it. It will be an impermissible

error if the Left-oriented Ministries and the Left forces neglect the task of mobilising wider support all-over India through their policies, pronouncements and actions for the common man, through their direct appeal to these forces to support them.

The wider support is, besides, practical and easy of achievement because the other opposition parties and forces also need the existence of the Left-oriented Governments in their struggle against the authoritarian party.

The struggle against the forces of authoritarianism now takes place in changed circumstances. In the present situation, the Left occupies a key position all-over India, though it is a weak force, because wide sections of the people want other opposition parties to ally with it. Reactionaries in these parties are fighting against this urge; and the big bourgeois Press is building up the BJP as the alternative to the Congress(I).

This imposes great responsibilities on the Left forces which have to act as the spearhead of the struggle against dictatorship and, therefore, to lead the fight for broad resistance in collaboration with all forces opposed to authoritarianism. Any mistake here will let down the struggle and pass on the initiative to disruptive forces.

Foreign Policy Developments

The Indira Gandhi Government's understanding of the international situation and its foreign policy are more realistic than that of other bourgeois parties. This has already been pointed out.

There is rapid worsening of the international situation and the danger of military confrontation can no longer be ignored.

The Party must note this and should know that it cannot discharge its responsibility without rousing the people to the danger of war and taking an active interest in the defence of peace.

The Reagan Administration has intensified the drive against detente initiated by the previous U.S. Administration. This is endangering world peace, threatening the security and peace of the countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and America. The people of Europe face the threat of a military confrontation involving the use of nuclear weapons and neutron bombs. The nations inhabiting the West Asian region are faced with direct American intervention.

Israel, with the aid of the Pentagon, is carrying on a regular war against Lebanon. And the same Zionist force, under the direct instructions of the USA, raided Iraq to destroy its nuclear reactor. The U.S. imperialism, though it has received a rebuff in Iran, is intent on firmly planting its feet in the oil region and is making Pakistan its military base under the excuse of helping the Afghan "freedom-fighters". The Soviet help to Afghanistan's progressive forces to ward off imperialist attacks is made the excuse to militarise the region.

The report of the External Affairs Ministry, placed before the Lok Sabha in March, notes the U.S. plans for a rapid development force of 110,000 personnel for use primarily in the Indian Ocean. The Diego Garcia base situated in the Indian Ocean makes it possible to carry on operations against the littoral States. It is a standing danger to India and all littoral States.

But the danger to India does not end there. The USA is bent on feverishly arming Pakistan's military rulers to create a constant threat of war between the two countries. The Pakistani dictator, unable to seize any issue to befool the people, is using the Afghanistan card, acting as the anti-Soviet spearhead of the USA, and is bent upon stockpiling arms to be used against India. The people of Pakistan are being poisoned by virulent anti-India, anti-Hindu propaganda, so that they can be used as cannon-fodder any time. The Pakistani media are openly speculating on war between the two countries. When the Afghan crisis started and Zia-ul Haq demanded military help from the USA, Agha Shahi was forthright in saying that the help was needed to protect Pakistan against India.

The USA is playing the Pakistan card to create the danger of war and danger to the security of India and to pressurise India to shift its foreign policy, especially its stand on Afghanistan.

These are pressures to weaken the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and the Government's policy of non-alignment. They are supplemented by other measures like refusal to supply uranium to the Tarapore nuclear plant, threat to cut off economic aid to countries not toeing the US line and so on.

These arms-twisting tactics coupled with the anti-Soviet, pro-American stand of bourgeois opposition parties like the BJP,

demand utmost vigilance on the part of the Party to fight back the offensive. A compromise by the Government is possible if the economic situation gets out of hand and rescue operations depend on US loans.

The Indo-Pakistan talks outlined the gravity of the situation as they showed the firm resolve of Pakistan's rulers to ally with the USA.

As the P. B. statement put it, "One of the main issues bedevilling the relations between the two countries is the Pakistan military dictator's decision to stockpile arms with the help of US imperialism. The Indian Foreign Minister's visit and talks have not led to any change in the decision of Pakistan's ruling clique. It is this collaboration of Pakistan's ruling classes with US imperialism since the early fifties that has been responsible for the continuing abnormal situation in the sub-continent".

Under these circumstances, the statement that each country has the right to buy arms for its defence constitutes an endorsement of Zia-ul Haq's reliance on the worst enemy of freedom—US imperialism. What does the Government of India accept thereby? That Pakistan has justified fears about Indian aggression? Or does it seek to purchase Islamic goodwill by accepting the existence of a Soviet threat to Pakistan? There seems to be more in the phrase than meets the eye, and it seems to masquerade an opportunist concession.

These developments directly affect the course of the democratic struggle in our country, and also call upon the Party to wage a relentless fight against the opportunism of certain bourgeois parties who objectively or knowingly toe the American line. They also call upon the Party as a whole to give more vigorous attention to the question of foreign policy and not leave the initiative to the ruling party. Neither the authoritarian ruling party nor the Opposition parties can be trusted with the task of effectively counteracting the imperialist manoeuvres. It is known that the ruling party is afraid of taking a forthright position of opposition to and exposure of imperialism on several issues and thereby softens people's vigilance.

International Complication—Chinese Policy

The division in the international Communist movement, its incapacity to take a common stand on vital issues of confrontation between the Socialist and imperialist worlds, enhances the gravity of the situation and demands utmost vigilance on our Party's part.

It is known that a large number of Communist Parties, including the Communist Party of China, have taken a hostile stand on Soviet counteraction in Afghanistan, describing it as Soviet expansionism or aggression. The same is their attitude towards the Vietnamese action in Kampuchea. Now, for many months, counter-revolutionaries are attempting to destabilise Socialism in Poland. The situation demands unity of the entire international Communist movement to ward off the attack of counter-revolution against a Socialist country. But some Communist Parties, the CPC and others, take an entirely different stand and do not support Soviet help to save the situation.

This outlook is now complicating the situation in India, giving a boost to the pro-American lobby in the country and creating obstacles to the fight against imperialist conspiracies.

The Prime Minister of China, during his recent visit to Pakistan, promised help to Afghan counter-revolutionaries operating from Pakistani soil and encouraged the Pakistani Government to support them. Above all, he fully supported the Pakistan military regime's demand for military aid from the USA as being necessary to defend the integrity and freedom of Pakistan.

Our Party denounces American military aid to Pakistan's military rulers as part of the US game to play Asians against Asians, as part of its conspiracy against our freedom. People's China takes a diametrically opposite stand. Our country which has experienced three regular wars with Pakistan cannot be complacent on this issue.

A victim of the theory of social-imperialism, of the understanding that the USSR is more dangerous than the USA, the Government of People's China pursues the policy of isolating the USSR in the region seeks to weaken the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. For our Party, on the other hand, the protection and strengthening of this treaty is a must if US

conspiracies are to be fought and the country's independence is to be protected.

While fighting these present-day aberrations of Chinese foreign policy, our Party does not forget that China is a Socialist country, that having gone through huge inner-convulsions, the leadership of the Party there has taken a number of correct steps to rectify the internal situation.

We earnestly hope that these steps strengthening the internal Socialist system will lead to a correct world perception and foreign policy based on the abiding interests of the Socialist camp. There is no doubt that strengthening of the Socialist system in China and its needs will lead People's China to take its place as a front-rank fighter against world imperialism in cooperation with other Socialist countries.

Our Party has always called for friendly relations between the two countries, we continued to demand it even during the days of the India-China conflict. We welcome all steps towards normalisation of relations.

In the meantime, we must note the damage that is being done to our fight here. A number of "China friends" in India—Naxalites and others—are busy peddling the idea of social-imperialism to spread anti-Soviet propaganda. A number of intellectuals toe this line and present it as part of a Left, revolutionary outlook. The line is presented as having the support of a great Asian nation—People's China.

Our Party, in the present situation cannot carry on a fight against the US conspiracies, its game of making Asians fight Asians, and defend non-alignment and friendship with the Socialist camp, without exposing and fighting Chinese policy in the sub-continent as outlined above and educating our cadres about it.

Ziaur Rahman's Assassination

The murder of Bangladesh President and military dictator Ziaur Rahman cannot be without its connection with the international conspirators against freedom and democracy. It is not possible to state precisely whose hand it was that struck against the Bangladesh President.

Certain factors, however, must be borne in mind. The Pakistani rulers had never reconciled themselves to the liberation of Bangladesh and would do everything in their power to restore Bangladesh to the sphere of Pakistan's influence. They urgently desire that the two should act in unison against India. At the same time, they have to reckon with the strong anti-Pakistani feeling among the Bangladesh people. Unless this is done away with or the army is effectively made pro-Pakistani, the objective cannot be achieved. Whether the Bangladesh developments were directly managed by foreign agents or not, they do seem to be influenced by a clash between elements in favour of Pakistan and those opposed to it.

In the recent Bangladesh developments, anti-Pakistani freedom sentiments seem to be coupled with anti-India hostility. Mujibur Rahman himself had to resort to an anti-India appeal to keep himself in power, and yet he was branded and felled as pro-India.

Those who destroyed Mujib were junior officers in the army and Zia was the only senior officer with them. They, in their turn, were defeated by senior officers who committed the fatal blunder of presenting themselves as defenders of Mujib. They were denounced as Indian agents and overthrown by the army ranks who had fought in the liberation army. They again reposed faith in Ziaur Rahman who soon consolidated himself and called back the officers who had been chased away by the soldiery.

It is known that, in these years, a conflict grew between the officers who were repatriated from Pakistan and those like Zia and Manzoor who were freedom-fighters. At the time of Zia's murder only Zia and Manzoor represented, among the Generals, the freedom-fighters. Both are now eliminated at one stroke and the army is now at the mercy of Pakistani repatriates. The composition of the army ranks also has changed with new recruitment.

Some recent developments may also have something to do with the murder. It is reported by *The Statesman* that Zia was getting closer to the Soviet Union, that Romania had offered Bangladesh a soft loan of 500 million dollars and that Zia was also showing signs of friendship towards progressive Islamic countries.

All this may indicate that, notwithstanding his anti-Indian hostility, Zia was perhaps getting inconvenient for forces of international reaction. It also means that those who planned the murder of the two Generals have also anti-India objectives. India will certainly be in a bad plight if Zia's murder leads to the ascendancy of pro-Pakistan elements in the army and the Government of Bangladesh.

The fight against imperialist manoeuvres, for a policy based on anti-imperialism, is obstructed and sabotaged by the internal policies of the Indira Gandhi Government. Enthusiasm cannot be created for national unity, for defending the country, under a Government which barbarously suppresses the people and their rights. All warnings and statements coming from such a source are treated as tricks of a selfish Government with no credibility.

Conclusion—Immediate Tasks

All this calls upon our Party to intervene in the complicated situation in a decisive way combining the fight against the new challenges with the fight against the authoritarian forces. The challenge of divisive forces, of imperialism to our country's freedom, the opportunism of bourgeois parties—all demand a determined struggle for a broad forum of resistance to forces of authoritarianism, while fighting opportunist tendencies in the ranks of the people.

The failure of bourgeois opposition parties in the recent election is, apart from other causes, due to the failure to develop alternative policies and impress the masses with them. The sober elements in these parties must grasp this truth if the common struggle is to be facilitated. It cannot be said that the democratic parties whom we have mentioned in the Jullundur resolution have discharged their responsibilities. The leadership of the Akali Party went along with us in the mass movement in Punjab and contributed its strength to the Kisan March. That was very good. But recently, some Akali leaders have shown vulnerability to such slogans as Khalistan, Amritsar is a holy city, etc. The DMK continues to be an appendage of the Congress(I) in its political fight against the AIADMK. The AIADMK leader concentrates on his fight with the DMK and does

not show much desire to take consistent anti-authoritarian positions. At the same time, reacting to the attacks being made on the AIADMK Government by Central Congress(I) leaders and Ministers, as also to preserve the image of a fighter for States' autonomy, the AIADMK takes an anti-Centre stand on certain issues. The AIADMK Government recently proposed an anti-labour Bill, which has been referred to a Select Committee. It seems the Government is prepared to extend cooperation to the Central Government's spirit enquiry commission which is an instance of wanton interference in the State's autonomy, while at the same time wanting the Commission appointed by it to continue its own enquiry.

The initiative of the Left forces is, therefore, urgently necessary to push forward the movement. The Left-oriented Ministries and their achievements form the foundation of the Left initiative for broader mobilisation. The bursting mass discontent and struggles form the dominant weapons of organising widespread resistance and forging resistance understanding at all levels.

The discontent of the peasants and agricultural workers, the anger against price-rise, the resistance of workers, the fights of students and youth and professionals and, finally, the growing upsurge of the women's movement in diverse forms, express people's resistance to the effects of the crisis and the economic situation. Along with this, explosive outbursts of popular anger take place against the breakdown of law and order, lack of security for the common man.

To lead all these struggles decisively, in unity with as broad forces as possible, to orientate them all in an anti-authoritarian direction, is the task before us.

The situation also provides opportunities for a broad mobilisation on two vital questions—the Judiciary and the Presidential form of Government. The Party and the Left forces must now take a lead in mobilising political parties and the people on these issues.

Immediately, there is every possibility of such mobilisation on the issue of fair elections and electoral reforms following the

experience of rigging and misuse of official power in the recent by-elections in U.P. and Bihar—especially in Garhwal.

As has been seen, the task is now complicated by the assault of the divisive forces. Only our Party leading the Left and secular forces can fight back this offensive. The reactionary stand of bourgeois opposition parties on the reservation issue in Gujarat is a warning of things to come. The Party has to educate its own ranks and masses on the question of untouchability and reservation. Simultaneously, we have to fight the secessionist challenges encouraged by imperialism. Our Party in Assam is heroically fighting this battle with consistency and courage. But it cannot be said that the Party everywhere is aware of this challenge, nor of the challenge in the tribal areas. Party journals and agitation must tune themselves to this responsibility. The entire Party and our mass media have to be educated about the new dangerous role of RSS chauvinism and Islamic fundamentalism and new efforts to win over the Muslim masses.

And, finally, the challenge of imperialism to our foreign policy, the pressures to weaken the relations with the Socialist camp through arming Pakistan's military clique, have to be taken seriously, because there is a concentrated propaganda from parties like the BJP which act as the vociferous anti-Soviet, pro-U.S. lobby. The internal pressure against non-alignment was never so great. This, as has been pointed out, is complicated by the stand of the People's Republic of China with its open support to the pouring of U.S. arms into Pakistan.

The task of getting these various threads together and weaving them into resistance against the authoritarian forces, without relaxing the battle against imperialism, is a difficult task which only our Party can discharge. Many Left parties themselves are bound to waver on this or that issue. But leading the mass discontent, defending the Left-oriented Governments, and working for the broadest mobilisation against attacks on the Judiciary, against the move for a Presidential form of Government, against authoritarianism, our Party must discharge its responsibility. In the measure it firmly adheres to a principled stand on these various issues, it will strengthen Left unity and enhance the capacity of the Left forces to organise widespread resistance to the authoritarian party.

Communique On Present Political Situation*

Issued By The Central Committee Of CPI(M) Following Its Meeting Held In Calcutta On June 24-28, 1981

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which met in Calcutta from June 24 to 28, 1981, paid homage to the memory of Comrade Soong Ching Ling, Honorary Chairman of the Peoples' Republic of China, who played a notable role in the struggle for China's liberation and in China's Socialist construction.

The Central Committee decided to hold the Eleventh Congress of the Party by January end 1982 in Andhra Pradesh.

The Central Committee reviewed the present political situation.

West Bengal Victory

The Central Committee hailed the West Bengal unit of Party, its Left allies and the people of West Bengal who gave a fitting rebuff to slanders, murders and carnage organised by the Congress(I) against the Left Front Government. The victory won by the Left Front and its allies in the municipal elections held in the last week of May and the by-elections on June 14 has convincingly showed the confidence of the people in the Left Front Government.

This stands in marked contrast to the by-elections in other States ruled by the Congress(I) where, too, by-elections were held on June 14. As opposed to the 65 per cent of the votes polled in the municipal elections of West Bengal the by-elections to the Assembly and the Lok Sabha election of West Bengal, by-election results in other States show very low percentage of votes polled,

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25 per cent for instance, in Allahabad. The Congress(I) won its victories in the four Congress(I)-ruled States not because the people continue to repose their confidence in the ruling party but because opposition was divided.

The Central Committee notes that the violent demonstrations and the Bandh organised in West Bengal, the attempt to organise a second "liberation struggle" in Kerala, the appointment of a Central Judicial Commission to enquire into the cases which are under investigation by the Kerala and Tamil Nadu Governments and other threats issued to the non-Congress(I) Governments are still other moves of the ruling Congress(I) party towards authoritarianism. The leaders of that party have made it unmistakably clear that they would not tolerate the existence of any non-Congress(I) Government. The Central Committee, however, noted with satisfaction that opposition parties in general are against these toppling moves of the Centre, though many of them (the Opposition parties) have differences with CPI(M) and other Left parties.

While this has forced the Congress(I) leaders to make public declarations that they have no intention to topple the non-Congress Governments, the Central and State leaders of the Congress(I) are showing through their practice that they would, if left to themselves, destabilise these Governments. The Central Committee, therefore, appealed to all the democratic forces in the country to show utmost vigilance against the moves of the ruling party.

The Central Committee congratulates the three Ministries of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura for successfully frustrating the designs of the Congress(I) by rallying growing popular support for firmly defending the people's interest.

Situation in Assam

The Central Committee expressed its concern at the continuing separatist agitation in Assam, the persistence with which the agitators demand the denial of the rights of the minorities in the State, the manoeuvres Congress(I) leaders had been making to maintain their minority Government in the State, and the failure of some all-India Opposition parties to look at the Assam

problem from the interests of the country's integrity and people's unity. The CPI(M) and other Left parties have consistently demanded a just political solution to the problem which will do justice to the Assamese-speaking people as well as to the non-Assamese-speaking people.

The Central Committee is confident that the Assam unit of the CPI(M) and other Left and democratic parties would continue to adopt this stand—independent of the Congress(I) and the agitators, and try to unite the Assamese people belonging to the majority as well as minorities for a correct solution of the "foreign nationals" problem.

Imperialist Moves

The Central Committee is concerned also with the situation in other States where the failure of the policies pursued by the ruling classes on the question of national integration is generating conflict on the basis of caste, religion, ethnic and linguistic groups, etc. The tension generated out of this is made clever use of by imperialism acting through various agencies of an apparently socio-cultural character. Never before in history has the country been under threat of disruption as it is today. Never before have imperialist agencies been so active to promote conflicts among the various sections of the Indian people to create disruption and destabilisation.

The Central Committee noted with concern the various moves of imperialism on the borders of the country which have brought the danger of war to our sub-continent.

The U.S. decision to supply to the military rulers of Pakistan those very means of warfare which were used by Israel against Iraq, poses an undisputed danger to the security of our country. While Pakistan's military rulers are thus being heavily supplied with arms, India is denied facilities to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. No patriot can look at these moves of American imperialism with indifference.

The Central Committee condemned the dastardly attack by Israel on the nuclear installation of Iraq.

The Central Committee, however, noted that some Opposition parties—the BJP in particular—not only fail to see this danger to the internal unity and external security of the country but are, in fact, giving alibis to Pakistan and its American benefactors. The fact that these are the very parties which gave direct support to the Assam agitation as well as to such disruptive moves as the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat shows that these parties sacrifice the wider and long-term interests of the nation for partisan purposes. The Central Committee hopes that all patriotic parties would organise and unite all sections of the people, demarcate themselves from the opportunist stand of some of the Opposition parties.

The Central Committee welcomes the visit of the Chinese Foreign Minister to India which had provided opportunities for the leaders of the two countries to re-establish the contacts broken over two decades ago. It expressed the hope that these contacts that are established would be followed up step by step towards the restoration of normal relations between the two countries and the gradual solution of all the outstanding problems.

Crisis of the Economy

The Central Committee noted that these developments are taking place when the crisis of the economy has intensified. Inflation, rising prices, and closure of factories and mounting unemployment have been the lot of the common people. The peasants are getting impoverished as never before as they do not get remunerative prices for their produce, while the cost of all inputs, taxation, and prices of all consumer goods goes on shooting up daily. Only the monopolists, speculators, and black marketeers, big landlords and foreign multinationals are making enormous profits out of the sweat and toil of the people.

But the crisis is all-pervading and threatens to bring about the collapse of the public distribution system imposing outright starvation on huge sections of the rural population.

This is the direct result of the Government's pro-big-trader as well as its inflationary policy which assures every speculator that by cornering grain and other commodities he will get higher profits.

In the midst of uncontrolled rise of prices the Government allowed the traders to have a free run instead of nationalising wholesale trade. In the wheat producing States of Punjab and Haryana traders cornered grain by offering slightly higher prices to the peasant. In the paddy-producing areas, the Government agencies are not entering the market for purchase or ensuring remunerative prices to the producers, leaving them to harassment and distress sales and those stocks are cornered by the traders.

The result was that the Haryana and Punjab State Governments failed to procure the targeted quantity of wheat. Foodgrains stocks with the Government have dipped to below ten million tonnes endangering the country's public foodgrains distribution system. This, besides, means that the Government will have no food stocks for the food-for-work programme which offered some relief to the poorest section of the rural population.

All features of the crisis are driving towards a major confrontation between the people and the Government.

Indira Gandhi's promise of bringing down prices has become a farce. The Finance Minister who repeatedly promised the same thing no longer talks about it, but he talks of demand management, peddling the World Bank recipe of exporting all imaginable commodities, and cutting down the demand for consumer goods as a result of the lack of purchasing power.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan is already in doldrums, with inflation having eroded the resources.

Struggles Breakout

In these conditions massive struggles of the working class, peasants, agricultural labourers, teachers, nurses, students, Government employees and women have started in the second half of 1980.

Faced with the rising struggles of the masses, the Congress(I) Governments in all States resort to brute force and repression. Rights of organisation, right to assembly are attacked and abrogated.

There is a general collapse of law and order, of administration in the Congress(I) ruled States where the common man is fast

losing all sense of security. In many States the link between the bureaucracy and the anti-socials, between the Congress(I) politicians and the anti-socials is clearly seen. The Congress(I) party, therefore, pursues by all means its desired objective to establish one-party dictatorship. The Judiciary, therefore, is being constantly attacked and humiliated, the directives and orders of the Supreme Court are openly defied and threats are uttered to the Judges by Congress(I) leaders, MPs and Ministers.

Appointments of new Judges to High Courts are made conditional on their acceptance of the right of the Executive to transfer them to any State. Every attempt is being made to vamp courts with the nominees of the Executive.

Loud protests are rising from the Bar and the Judiciary against this denigration of the Judiciary.

The CPI(M) calls upon all democratic forces, all Opposition parties to fight this danger unitedly.

Dictatorial Powers

Similarly, the Congress(I) party is pursuing its drive for imposing a Presidential form of Government which really means not only dictatorship of one party but also personal dictatorship.

The ruling party's attempt to create public opinion in favour of this move has failed. But the danger persists and increases for lack of active opposition on the part of the people.

The CPI(M) appeals to all parties, groups and forces to fight this danger unitedly and offer the broadest possible resistance to this conspiracy against democracy.

As part of this drive for dictatorial powers in the hands of the Centre, the Congress(I) Government carries on a relentless attack against the powers of the States. The adoption of the Disturbed Areas Bill, the demand for inclusion of forest, power, etc., in the Concurrent List in addition to education which has already been put in the Concurrent List, the appointment of the Central Commission to investigate the spirit scandal in Tamil Nadu and Kerala are the latest instances of this attack.

The economic compulsions of growing dependence on imperialist countries, on the U.S.-dominated World Bank and its

subsidiaries, on petro-dollars and the multinationals, for bailing out the economy lead the Government to an inexorable drive to attack the working class and the common people.

A Government which depends on these imperialists cannot naturally fight their conspiracies to disrupt the unity and integrity of the country.

A Government that goes on heaping heavy burdens on the people, suppresses their struggle with heavy repression cannot rouse the people and unite them in the struggle against these imperialist conspiracies.

The ruling Congress(I) does not hesitate to join hands with organisations like the RSS, Shiv Sena, Anand Margis, Tripura Upa Jati Samiti and the Naxalites.

The Central Committee noted that in the midst of these dangerous developments, along with the new awakening among the peasantry and the agricultural labourers, an index of which was the march in Delhi on March 26, all Central Trade Unions and National Federations, realising the danger from the Government, have recently successfully concluded a National Convention of Trade Unions against Price-Rise and Anti-Labour Policies. A notable feature of the Convention was that it focussed attention not only on the problems of the working class but also of the peasantry, agricultural workers, on prices affecting the entire people, attacks on democratic rights, and on issues of basic policies of the Government as well as on the attempts of the exploiting classes to divide and disrupt the working class movement on the basis of caste, religion and language. The Central Committee lends support to the programme of the Convention including the March to Parliament and the one-day token protest strike.

Opposition Parties

The Central Committee noted that a number of Opposition parties are in disarray. After their effective and joint stand on the no-confidence motion against the Government in the last Lok Sabha session they failed to present a common front in the by-elections and lost all seats to the Congress(I). Many leaders of the Congress(U) are now joining the Congress(I).

The by-election results and the growing reliance of the ruling party on dictatorial methods will lead these parties to take stock of the situation and start a process of rethinking. The situation creates the ground for organising broad resistance to the authoritarian party on a number of issues and the CPI(M) will work for it.

At the same time, the CPI(M) feels that for a successful organisation of this resistance, the unity of the Left and democratic forces, their constant intervention in the political situation, is essential.

The policies and actions of the three Ministries of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura constitute a great lever in the hands of the Left forces to take the initiative. The large-scale movement of the masses, their growing struggles, especially the looming working class actions, further place the initiative in the hands of the Left forces.

The Central Committee calls upon all the State Committees, all its members, all the Left parties to plunge unitedly into this battle and give the widest possible expression to the anti-authoritarian discontent.

On Rigging Of Poll In Garhwal*

Resolution Adopted by the Central Committee of CPI(M) in its Calcutta Session on June 24-28, 1981

The Chief Election Commissioner's declaration of the polling on June 14, in Garhwal Parliamentary Constituency as void and ordering repoll in the entire constituency, exposes the lengths to which the Congress(I) will go up to naked rigging of elections, when faced with the prospects of certain defeat. This is not the first time nor the only constituency where the Congress(I), when in office, resorted to such massive rigging.

The Press generally makes out that the order was based on a technical ground that the Election Commission was not informed of the induction of armed police forces from outside the State, as well as the BSF. Thereby it seeks to screen the fact the decision became inescapable when the Chief Election Commissioner was faced with massive and unassailable evidence of the terrorising of the people by these armed police and para-military personnel, preventing them from exercising their constitutional right to vote, and with their help the capturing of booths by Congress(I) hoodlums, overwhelming of polling officers, forcible seizing of the ballot papers, stamping them with the Congress(I) symbols and filling the boxes with them. The evidence consisted of contemporaneous documents, such as Presiding Officers' diaries, reports of the Returning Officer, who is also the District Magistrate, of Assistant Returning Officers, of the status of Additional District and Sessions Judges, as well as independent evidence.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, July 5, 1981. Hemabati Nandan Bahuguna contested this election in Garhwal Parliamentary Constituency against Congress(I) candidate. Refer the Order of Election Commission given under Appendix (xix) of this Volume.

The report of the District Magistrate has also shown that he had not requested any outside police forces, and he had nothing to do with the deployment of the police and para-military personnel from outside the State.

The Chief Ministers of U.P., Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh who were camping in the constituency for one week, including on polling day, had clearly master-minded and personally directed this grand rigging operation. This could not have taken place without the knowledge of the Prime Minister who had toured the constituency for two days.

While Shri Bahuguna had demanded repolling only in those 56 booths where this rigging had taken place, and the Congress(I) had made no complaint of any unfair practice before the team of officers of the Election Commission had already left for investigating the complaints by Bahuguna, but made belated complaints of booth capturing by Shri Bahuguna's workers on the 17th, full three days after the poll on the 14th, the Chief Commissioner had ordered repolling in the entire constituency.

And yet the Congress(I) leaders are raising a howl against the decision of the Chief Election Commissioner.

This massive rigging of the poll by the blatant use of the administrative machinery makes out the clearest case for drastic changes in the Election Laws to ensure the prevention of misuse of the administrative machinery and rigging of elections.

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) appeals to the people to exercise the utmost vigilance against such rigging.

The C.C. appeals to all parties and organisations interested in preserving democracy, irrespective of their stand on other issues, to unitedly mobilise the entire people and their massive strength to prevent the scuttling of democracy by the Congress(I), and bar its march to dictatorship.

On Racial Riots In Britain*

Statement Issued By The Polit Bureau Of CPI(M)

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its shock at the attacks on the Asians and other non-whites in Southall and Liverpool areas of England.

These attacks are clearly the forerunners of what is in the offing to the non-whites in England when the racist Nationality Bill is enacted into law. While the direct organisers of these attacks are the extremist racist organisations, the Tory Government absolves itself of its responsibility in the matter.

The P.B. conveys its sense of solidarity to the Indians and other non-white peoples who are bravely resisting these attacks. It greets the Labour Party and other democratic sections among the British people who are opposing the racist policies of the Tory Government, and are supporting the cause of non-whites in England.

The P.B. calls upon the President of India who is scheduled to proceed to England and attend Prince Charles' wedding to cancel the engagement in protest. India being represented by its head of State at the function organised at a time when such humiliation is heaped on the Indian people will be a matter of shame to our people.

We appeal to all the political parties in India and all the democratic Governments of the world to express solidarity with the suffering non-whites in England and to demand the British Conservative Government to end its racial policies.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, July 12, 1981.

P.B. Warns Against Anti-People Policies Of Congress(I) Government*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) warns that the Indira Government is moving towards imposing the Compulsory Deposit Scheme on the workers and salary-earning employees and freezing their wages and their dearness allowance. The two ordinances proclaimed on July 11 are intended to show that the Government is dealing firmly with the upper sections. They are to provide a facade for attacking the workers and lower income groups.

The rise in petroleum prices, which is bound to have a chain effect and which is estimated to impose a burden of not less than a thousand crores of rupees on the people, accelerates the effects of inflation and victimises the people. It only shows how unrealistic were the claims made by Smt. Indira Gandhi in her Press Conference that the Government had succeeded in slowing down the rate of inflation and easing the situation for the people.

It is quite clear that the Government has only one method of containing inflation, namely, raise prices and curtail the consumption of the people. This is called demand management which only means that the people should bear the entire burden of inflation. The parlous condition of the economy is further revealed by the decision of the Government to import wheat from abroad and squander the foreign exchange resources. The import takes place in the midst of a bountiful harvest. It is obvious that the Government's procurement policies have failed and at the same time it does not have the courage to dehoard the stocks with the traders and landlords. Food prices will soon rise, people

will be forced to consume less and Venkataraman will satisfy himself with success in demand management. But this is not all.

The Government, at the same time, is seeking huge loans from the IMF and other foreign sources which will enhance the burden of foreign payments and compel India to export at any cost. All this is bound to lead to further attacks on the living standards of the people and one should not be surprised if the notorious Compulsory Deposit Scheme of the Emergency days is reintroduced to impound the bonus and dearness allowance of the workers and employees.

The P.B. warns that unless these policies are combated through public pressure and action, the economy will be in a shambles leading to untold suffering and loss of democratic rights.

On Ordinance Illegalising Strikes In "Essential" Services*

Statement Dated July 27, 1981 Issued By The
Polit Bureau Of CPI(M) Condemning The Ordinance

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemns the new Ordinance illegalising all strikes in "essential" services, which include hospitals and banks, railways, ports and docks and many other industries. This latest measure, besides, prescribes summary trials of strikers and their leaders. With it, the Indira Government has taken one more draconian step towards the introduction of lawless one-party authoritarian rule.

The Ordinance constitutes an attack on the fundamental right to organise and it shows that the Government is determined to scuttle one fundamental right after another. The central trade unions at their Bombay Convention in June have already given a call for joint resistance to the Central Government's anti-labour policies.

The present order is not only a challenge to the trade union movement, it is a frontal attack on the democratic rights of the people and has to be unitedly resisted by all political parties. The Ordinance is intended to crush all agitation for better wages and living conditions for the workers and seeks to give them the status of slaves with no rights. It is a prelude to a general attack on the people to make them scapegoats of the economic crisis. The entire working class must unitedly resist this treacherous attack and compel the Government to withdraw it.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY". New Delhi, August 2, 1981.

Revoke Prof. Habib's Suspension*

Statement Issued By The Polit Bureau Of CPI(M)

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly protests against the suspension by the Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh University of Prof. Irfan Habib, noted historian and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences in the AMU.

Prof. Habib and other secular-minded teachers have been the target of the communal forces in the AMU which are not prepared to tolerate any democratic, secular element in the university. These communal forces have been carrying on a systematic campaign of slander and vilification against Prof. Habib and demanding his suspension. More than one enquiry has been instituted against him by the Vice-Chancellor under pressure of these forces. And now he has surrendered to them and conceded their demand for Prof. Habib's suspension.

Ever since the attack on Prof. Habib was mounted by the communal forces, there has been a growing volume of protest not only in Aligarh, not only from academic circle elsewhere, but also by other democratic forces.

The P.B. calls on the democratic secular forces all over the country, in the universities and outside, to see the present attack on Prof. Habib as the beginning of the complete take-over of the AMU by communal forces, and raise their voice of protest against the suspension and demand its withdrawal by the Vice-Chancellor. What is happening in the AMU cannot be isolated from the pernicious activities of organisations like the Jamait-e-Islami which are already causing concern to the democratic and secular forces. It is their task to see that these communal forces do not get the upper hand in the AMU or elsewhere.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY". New Delhi, August 9, 1981.
'AMU' means Aligarh Muslim University.

Homage to Comrade Bhupesh Gupta*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) is deeply grieved at the passing away of Comrade Bhupesh Gupta in Moscow.

The P.B., while it pays its homage to Comrade Bhupesh, remembers his wholehearted dedication to the Communist movement. As a young boy he was drawn into one of the revolutionary groups in Bengal fighting against British rule and was thrown into a concentration camp for many years. It was from inside the concentration camp that he took his B.A. degree. After his release he went to Britain to study law and there joined the Communist Party. On his return to India he became a wholetime worker of the party and remained so till his death.

Comrade Bhupesh was elected to the leadership of the party in 1954, and was a member of the Central Secretariat of the united Communist Party from 1954 and then of the CPI till his death. He was editor of the Party's Bengali daily 'Swadhinata' in the early fifties and later of the English journal "New Age". A simple way of living, and selflessness, sincerity and devotion marked his entire life in the Communist movement.

Comrade Bhupesh distinguished himself as a great parliamentarian. He continued to be a member of the Rajya Sabha from its first day till death took him away, and during this long period of 29 years, he did not allow any issue to go unchallenged, economic, political, social or legal.

During the recent years, Comrade Bhupesh worked for developing joint actions led by the Left forces and was anxious for closer cooperation between the CPI and the CPI(M).

In Comrade Bhupesh's death, the country has lost a devout patriot and a distinguished parliamentarian, the Communist movement has lost one of its devoted comrades.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the Communist Party of India and the bereaved family of Comrade Bhupesh Gupta.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 16, 1981.

P.B. Condemns Reagan Administration Of U.S.A.*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on August 14, 1981:

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemns the decision of the Reagan Administration to mass produce neutron bombs—a diabolical weapon for mass killing. It is clear that long before this was formally made known, secret production of the weapon had already started and no one knows how many bombs have been stocked by the USA. The announcement reveals the U.S. imperialists' plan to involve the world in a nuclear disaster. It also shows the arrogance of the U.S. Government towards world public opinion.

The bomb is paraded as a deterrent against the Soviet Union which has been repeatedly calling for putting a stop to the arms race and ban on the manufacture of weapons of destruction. The P.B. joins its voice with the progressive forces in the world in condemning the Reagan Administration. It appeals to the people of the USA to stay the hands of their Government and save the world from a possible holocaust.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 23, 1981.

South African Aggression On Angola*

**Polit Bureau Of CPI(M) Condemns South Africa
Issuing A Statement Dated August 31, 1981
In New Delhi**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly condemns the unprovoked aggression on Angola and occupation of Angolan territory by the South African racist regime, and the indescribable crimes committed by it on the Angolan people, including the brutalising and rape of women and even young girls.

It is with a view to liquidating the bases of the South-West African People's Organisation to suppress the Namibian people's liberation struggle, deny freedom to Namibia and perpetuate the illegal South African occupation of that territory in violation of United Nations' decisions and overwhelming world opinion, that the regime in Pretoria has launched its war against Angola, one of the front-line African States.

The South African racists are getting all encouragement from the U.S. imperialists who are not only refusing to condemn the Botha regime for its aggression but are justifying it with their talk of Cuban presence in Angola and Soviet arms aid to the South-West African People's Organisation. Even a U.S. ally like France does not support this stand of the Reagan Administration.

The attack on Libyan planes and the provocative military landing in the U.S. base in Guantanamo in Cuban territory at about the same time, and now the aggression in Southern Africa, are all part of the U.S. plan to create tensions and conflicts in various regions of the globe.

The P.B. demands that the U.N. Security Council condemn the South African aggression in unequivocal terms, and impose all possible sanctions on the racist regime to force it to withdraw its

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 6, 1981.

troops from Angola, prevent it from committing any future aggression against the front-line States, honour the U.N. decision to grant freedom to Namibia and pay indemnity for the loss of lives and destruction it has caused in Angola.

The Polit Bureau appeals to the Organisation of African Unity to give all support to the Namibian people to intensify their liberation struggle and win their freedom.

The P.B. calls on the Government of India to strongly condemn the South African aggression. It calls on the people of India to denounce the aggression and express their solidarity with Angola and give all help to the Namibian liberation struggle led by SWAPO.

Homage To Comrade A. Balasubramaniam*

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its deep sense of grief at the death of one of its members, Comrade A. Balasubramaniam, in the morning of September 5, 1981.

From his younger days when he joined the Communist movement, he dedicated his whole life to the struggle for freedom, and since Independence, to the struggles of the working class and the working people for Socialism and Communism. In the immediate post-Independence period, when severe repression was unleashed against the Communist movement in the then Madras Presidency, he was one of the leaders in Tamil Nadu hunted by the police. In 1962, and again in 1964, he was detained by the Congress rulers, and during the emergency period, in 1975-76, he had to carry on his work evading the warrant of arrest against him.

Comrade Balasubramaniam stood steadfastly by Marxism-Leninism and vigorously fought Right-revisionism which had corroded the united Communist Party. He played a leading role in reorganising the Party on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. He was, again, in the forefront of the struggle to defend Marxism-Leninism against the Naxalite Left-adventurism and in safeguarding the Party's Programme, policies and organisation.

Comrade Balasubramaniam was elected to the Central Committee at the Seventh Congress of the Party in 1964 and was re-elected to the C.C. at the Eighth (Cochin), Ninth (Madurai) and Tenth (Jullundur) Congresses of the Party. He was elected to the Polit Bureau of the Party at the Jullundur Congress in 1978. He

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, September 13, 1981.

was for a decade the Secretary of the Tamil Nadu State Committee of the CPI(M). He was an outstanding leader of the trade union movement and was a member of the Working Committee of the CITU at the time of his death. His death is a great loss to the Party and the revolutionary movement.

A whole lifetime of self-sacrificing work in the service of the working class had left Comrade Balasubramaniam a chronic patient of high blood pressure. But he continued his work for the Party and died at his post as a worthy revolutionary.

The Polit Bureau dips the Party's Red Banner in homage to Comrade Balasubramaniam, one of its very valued comrades, and sends its heartfelt condolences to his bereaved family.

Polit Bureau Denounces Hijacking*

**Statement Dated September 30, 1981
Issued In New Delhi**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) denounces the hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane to Pakistan on Tuesday. This anti-national act has been done by the extremist wing of the Akalis, which has raised the slogan of Khalistan. It should make every patriotic Indian realise the logic of the Khalistan slogan and the movement launched in order to realise it.

The P.B. notes that the extremist elements who resorted to this method put forward several demands, the central demand being that of Khalistan. This is nothing but a move to help imperialism to create conditions of destabilisation in the country.

The P.B. appeals to the patriotic-minded Akalis not to mix up their grievances with this treacherous act and come out with a forthright condemnation. The P.B. also asks the Akali party not to allow the use of Gurudwaras for such anti-national activities being indulged in at the instance of imperialist forces. Everybody is aware that the U.S. imperialists are arming Pakistan in order to create a situation of instability in this sub-continent and endanger our national independence.

The P.B., therefore, appeals to all the patriotic and secular sections of the people in Punjab and outside to isolate and defeat the game of these extremists.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 4, 1981.

Isolate Extremists, Save Communal Peace*

CPI(M) Punjab Committee's Call

The Punjab State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has appealed to all the patriotic and secular forces in the State to isolate the extremists and defeat their game, and safeguard communal peace at all costs.

The resolution adopted by the Committee at its meeting held on October 5 says:

The Punjab State Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its deep concern over the deteriorating political situation in the State leading to communal tensions.

The hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane to Pakistan by the protagonists of Khalistan, and the silence of the Akali leadership over such an anti-national act, are an indication of the growing extremist trends in the Akali Party which can prove disastrous to the democratic movement of the State.

The gruesome murder of Lala Jagat Narain earlier, and the mishandling of the situation by the State Government and the administration had further aggravated the situation. Hindu communal forces are also actively instigating the Hindu masses on communal slogans, helping their Sikh counterparts to create a wedge between various sections of the Punjabi people and dividing them on communal lines.

All political parties had rightly condemned the murder of Lala Jagat Narain. But the Government bungled in its handling of the whole issue when, instead of bringing the culprits to book, it went on making statements about the investigations even while they were going on.

The repression let loose by the Punjab Government in Chando Kalan village and the burning of religious books there, and the firing in Mehta Chowk after the arrest of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale in which scores of people were killed, added fuel to the fire. The Government has failed to bring to book even those who resorted to firing on innocent citizens in Jullundur and Taran Taran. The Darbara Singh Government cannot absolve itself of the criminal responsibility for the worsening of the situation in Punjab.

This situation is being utilised by the extremist section of the Sikhs in general and the extremist Akalis in particular, to encourage the separatist movement with the slogan of Khalistan—an independent State based on religion. The anti-national treacherous act of hijacking the Indian Airlines plane to Pakistan is nothing but an offspring of this slogan.

The State Committee feels that these developments cannot be viewed in isolation from the imperialist game in the North-Eastern region to destabilise the situation in the country by encouraging separatist movements. Especially when the U.S. imperialists are arming the Pakistani military regime to create instability in the Indian sub-continent, the border State of Punjab acquires great importance in U.S. imperialist strategy. The extremists among the Akalis are openly playing into their hands. It is unfortunate that Gurdwaras are being allowed to be utilised by anti-national elements for their activities.

The State Committee warns the democratic-minded people of Punjab of the imperialist conspiracies and calls upon them to defeat them.

The Committee demands that the Government immediately institute a judicial enquiry into the happenings of Chando Kalan including the burning of religious books, and the indiscriminate firing resorted to in Mehta Chowk in which scores of people were killed.

It demands that Lala Jagat Narain's murderers be arrested and punished so that the cult of political murders is put an end to.

Those involved in the firings and killings of innocent people in Jullundur and Taran Taran should be arrested and punished.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 11, 1981.

The State Committee appeals to democratic-minded Akalis to openly denounce the imperialist conspiracies against India and dissociate themselves from the slogan of Khalistan. They should not allow the genuine grievances of the Sikh community to be mixed up with the anti-national activities of the extremists. The State Committee also calls on the Akali Party not to allow the use of Gurdwaras for the anti-national activities being indulged in under the inspiration of imperialist forces.

The State Committee appeals to all patriotic and secular sections of the people of Punjab to isolate the extremists and defeat their game, and safeguard communal peace at all costs.

Hold Fresh Election in Kerala*

The General Secretary of CPI(M) Made The Demand In A Statement Dated October 20, 1981 Issued In New Delhi

The only honourable way out of the crisis that has arisen in Kerala following the Nayanar Government's resignation is a fresh appeal to the electorate, said General Secretary of the CPI(M) E. M. S. Namboodiripad.

In a statement in New Delhi on October 20, 1981 he said such a fresh appeal to the electorate would give every political party in the State the opportunity to explain to the people its respective suggestions for solving the problems faced by the people of Kerala.

He expressed the hope that every political party would raise its voice against those who try to avoid this honest course and try to knock together an opportunist combination for the formation of an alternative Government.

He also hoped that the Governor would not countenance any such unprincipled move.

He said the CPI(M), for its part, would continue to strive to unite all the Left and democratic forces on a common programme of struggle against the authoritarian Congress(I) and for defending the rights of the common people.

As for the question of "law and order" raised by opposition parties as well as by the Congress(S) and the Kerala Congress (Mani), he pointed out that his party had basic differences with the Congress rulers who were using the so-called question of "law and order" to suppress the legitimate rights of the common people. This anti-people approach of the Congress reached its most naked form during the Emergency.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 25, 1981.

The Left-Democratic Front emerged out of the struggle against this approach, the struggle for a democratic turn in the Government's policy. The CPI(M) is not prepared to reverse that course which, in the Party's opinion, is what the demand of the Congress(S) and the Kerala Congress(Mani) amounts to.

On Kerala Situation*

Statement Dated October 17, 1981 Issued By The Polit Bureau Of CPI(M)

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) issued the following statement to the Press in New Delhi on October 17, 1981:

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) deplores the decision taken by the Congress(S) in Kerala to pull out of the Left-Democratic Front and to submit the resignation of the four Ministers belonging to that party. It is regrettable that this decision was taken even without regard to the advice of the all-India leaders of that party and on the eve of its AICC session.

The Congress(S)'s decision has naturally gladdened the hearts of the Congress(I) and other reactionary forces which were out to disrupt the growing unity of the Left and democratic forces in the country.

Nearly two years ago, when several Opposition parties in Kerala including the Congress(U), came together and formed the Left-Democratic Front, those who joined that Coalition were aware of the ideological and political differences among them. They, however, decided to act together on the basis of a common programme, the central point of which was the common struggle against authoritarianism.

Nothing has changed since then in so far as the authoritarian danger to democracy is concerned. The danger, in fact, has increased, as is seen in the recent enactment of the Essential Services Maintenance Act against which the Left-Democratic Front in Kerala, as Left and democratic forces elsewhere in the country, acted unitedly. The working class, the peasants and all

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 25, 1981.

other sections of the working people are facing increasing attacks arising out of the policies pursued by the Congress(I) Government at the Centre.

Unfortunately, however, a section of the Kerala leaders of the Congress(S) have, for some time, been training their guns against the CPI(M). They have been echoing the slogan of the "breakdown of law and order" raised by the Congress(I) and its oppositional allies.

The CPI(M) has never claimed that there have been no lapses in the functioning of the Government. The Party has always been prepared to have any concrete complaints discussed in the appropriate bodies of the Front. The Congress(S) leaders, however, have been studiously avoiding any discussion on such complaints concerning the performance of various departments, but one-sidedly raising the question of the functioning of the Home Department.

The Polit Bureau wants to make it clear that, championing as they do, the cause of the working class, the peasantry and other sections of the working people, the CPI(M) and other Left parties cannot subscribe to the theory and practice of attacking the common people in the name of "maintenance of law and order". This, as is known, assumed the most naked form during the Emergency days, but was the common practice of the Congress regime throughout. Labour disputes, peasants' struggles, mass demonstrations and struggles, etc., were all under attack in the name of "breakdown of law and order". The Congress(I) and other oppositional forces raise the question of law and order precisely because they are unhappy that that type of law and order became a thing of the past under LDF.

It is unfortunate that instead of welcoming this positive feature of the situation during the LDF regime as every anti-authoritarian party and organisation should, a section of the Congress(S) leaders have been not only echoing the Congress(I) slogan of breakdown of "law and order" but making that the pretext for disrupting the Left-Democratic Front.

The decision to sit in the Opposition, unless immediately reversed, will lead the Congress(S) in Kerala steadily into the

arms of the Congress(I). That would mean a brazen violation of the political commitment made by the Congress(S) in Kerala when it broke with the Congress(I) and gradually went along with the Left and other opposition forces.

The P.B., therefore, appeals to the leaders and ranks of the Congress(S) in Kerala itself, and in the country generally, to help the reversal of this trend, to make it possible for the Congress(S) to go back to the constructive role it has been playing for the last two years. Leaving the Left-Democratic Front and sitting in the Opposition undermines the electoral verdict secured by the Congress(S) along with the other partners of the Front.

The Polit Bureau appeals to all other constituents of the Left-Democratic Front in Kerala to give serious consideration to the situation that has arisen following the decision of the Congress(S). Hectic moves are being made to form an alternate Ministry which will be amenable to the pressures of, and if possible led by, the Congress(I). It is the duty of all anti-authoritarian democratic and Left forces to see that these sinister games are foiled. The CPI(M) would do its utmost to help this.

On Inflammatory Communal Propaganda*

CPI(M)'s Delhi State Committee's Protest Statement

The Delhi State Committee of the CPI(M) has expressed its serious concern about the inflammatory communal propaganda being carried on in Delhi by certain elements allegedly in connection with mobilisation for the "Virat Hindu Sammelan" to be held on October 18, 1981. The Party has written to the Lt.-Governor drawing his attention to the widespread slogan-writing on the walls of the city inciting hatred against the minority community.

The Party is of the opinion that this is part of an organised conspiracy to foment communal tensions in Delhi. Similarly, while the organisers of the sammelan have proclaimed the laudable objective of abolishing untouchability, on the pretext of opposing conversion, the Harijan community is being threatened with dire consequences if they exercise a right which is a fundamental right in the Constitution.

The CPI(M) appeals to the organisers to desist and put an end to this sort of propaganda. It also demands that the Delhi Administration remain alert to nip communal mischief in the bud. It calls upon all democratic and secular forces to unitedly give a rebuff to the forces of Hindu chauvinism and destabilisation.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 25, 1981. This religious conference was held at the Boat Club, New Delhi, on October 18, 1981.

Central Committee Resolution On Kerala*

Adopted in its New Delhi Session
on October 27-31, 1981

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) holds that, by walking out of the Left-Democratic Front on October 16, 1981 the Kerala unit of the Congress(S) betrayed the trust placed in it by the people of Kerala.

The Front had been formed on the basis of a common programme which put in the forefront the cause of determined struggle against the authoritarian forces led by the Congress(I). The programme promised the electorate to find solutions for some of the burning issues within the severe limitations imposed under the present conditions.

The 21 months of the existence of the Left-Democratic Government witnessed serious efforts to implement the promises made in the jointly-worked-out election manifesto.

The LDF Government had an impressive record of maintaining the best public distribution system in the country. During the Onam festival season, prices normally shoot up beyond control. But during the two Onams since the LDF Government assumed office, all the essential articles, vegetables, cloth were supplied to the people at reasonable prices through public distribution outlets. This acted as a check on the open market itself.

Under the Government's labour policy the emoluments of the workers and employees went up and they were able to get their Onam bonus without strikes and struggles. Pensions were sanctioned for agricultural workers, old people and widows. Unemployment allowance was granted. Relief was given to workers in the crisis-ridden traditional industries like cashew, coir and

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, November 1, 1981.

handloom. Fishermen were helped to form co-operatives and given financial help. Peasants got relief from indebtedness.

The further implementation of this common programme has been blocked by the decision of the Congress(S) which led to the resignation of the Ministry.

The Kerala Congress(Mani) has let down the Kerala electorate by following the Congress(S) in walking out of the Left-Democratic Front. The two parties together have thus helped the Congress(I) to disrupt the Left-Democratic Front and strengthen the hands of the Congress(I).

The Central Committee recalls the continuous efforts made by the Congress(I) to deprive the people of Kerala of their victory in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections of January 1980. Its State and Central leaders have, right from the formation of the Left-Democratic Government, been trying to pull it down by whatever means available to them. Congress(I) luminaries, including Union Ministers and even the Prime Minister, have been attacking this Government.

The Central Committee pays its tribute to the working people of Kerala who saw in the Left-Democratic Government a champion of their cause and, therefore, defended it with all their strength. It thanks the Left and anti-authoritarian forces in Kerala and in the whole country which made it impossible for the Congress(I) either to use the Central authority to dismiss the State Government or to repeat the 1959-type "liberation struggle"—two methods to which they sought to resort.

The Central Committee deplures that, while the people of Kerala and in the rest of the country thus defeated the Congress(I)'s intention of removing the Left-Democratic Government in order to pave the way for the formation of an alternate Congress(I) led Government, the Congress(S) unit in Kerala and the Kerala Congress(Mani) helped the Congress(I) in its game of destabilisation. This attitude of the two parties which were constituents of the Left-Democratic Front for nearly two years has been hailed by the Congress(I) and its allies. The Central Committee hopes that the two parties will see the enormous damage they have done to the cause of the unity of Left and democratic forces, as

well as to themselves, by disrupting the front which they had originally helped to build.

The decision adopted by them on October 16 and 20 respectively, however, was not a chance phenomenon. It was the logical culmination of the negative stance adopted by them over several months. Many of the electoral promises made by the Front as a whole including the two parties could not be implemented by the Government because these two parties blocked many of the measures initiated by the Front and its Government.

These two parties, especially the Congress(S), have been using their position in the Government to block the implementation of such democratic policies as decentralisation of power from the State to the District Councils, sanctioning of pension to over two lakhs of agricultural labourers, democratic functioning of the Labour Department with a view to giving maximum satisfaction to the organised working class and the middle-class employees, etc.

The Central Committee notes with satisfaction that the Left-Democratic Government refused to implement the directives given by the Central Congress(I) leaders that such repressive legislations as the National Security Act, the Essential Services Maintenance Act, etc., be used in the name of "maintaining law and order". While the Congress(S) and the Kerala Congress(Mani) had endorsed this policy and, in fact, participated in the mass demonstrations and bandh against these legislations as late as in September 1981, they in practice helped the authoritarian forces by joining their voice against the so-called "breakdown of law and order".

The instances they quote to justify their stand on the law and order question were in fact labour disputes. While the Congress(I)-led Opposition and the Congress(S) demanded that the police be used against the workers to protect the vested interests, the Government's Labour Department itself had to intervene and settle them as labour disputes.

The hue and cry raised by the Congress(I)-led Opposition about the handling of the Home Department by the CPI(M) was in effect a demand to follow the repressive policies of the earlier Congress Governments, and also to implement the anti-democratic measures

of the present Congress(I) Government like the NSA, ESMA, etc. Instead of resisting this in the spirit of the promises given to the people, the Congress(S) itself raised the same hue and cry. The Kerala Congress(Mani) group joined the Congress(S) in this.

The Central Committee endorses the stand adopted by the State Committee of the CPI(M) and its allies in Kerala who refused to compromise on the principled police policy, while making many concessions on issues on which give and take was necessary for the successful functioning-of the Coalition.

The Central Committee deplors the attitude of the Congress(S) and the Kerala Congress(Mani) of not expressing their readiness to face the electorate on the issues on which they broke with the allies in the Left-Democratic Front as is demanded by democratic norms. They refuse to demand the dissolution of the Assembly and holding of fresh elections, and thus abet the game of horse-trading by the Congress(I). While the leadership of the Kerala Congress(Mani) has officially expressed its willingness to collaborate with other parties in the formation of such an alternate Government, certain elements in the Congress(S) are making hectic efforts to facilitate the formation of such an alternate Government.

The Central Committee deplors that, while giving expression to several laudable sentiments, the all-India leadership of the Congress(S) in its anxiety to "maintain the unity of the organisation" is allowing such elements to carry on their activities which help only the Congress(I). The amendment adopted to the resolution at the AICC session has been used by these elements.

While protesting against the anti-democratic step taken by the Central Government to keep the State Legislature in animated suspension, the Central Committee demands that immediate elections be held in the State. It appeals to all democratic forces to fight against the Congress(I) conspiracies.

The C.C. rejects the concerted propaganda carried on in the monopoly Press that, with the fall of the Left-Democratic Government in Kerala, the concept of Left and Democratic unity has become irrelevant.

The Left and democratic front as conceived by the CPI(M) is a concept of developing a viable alternative to the Congress(I) at the all-India level. In the struggle to translate this concept into reality, the actual relations among the various anti-authoritarian and Left forces in individual States have to be taken into account. That was why the political character of the Fronts that emerged in West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala were all different from one another. Depending on the nature of changes that take place in the next phase of the struggle, still other forms may develop.

The fact, however, remains that all the Left and other Opposition parties have to make intensive efforts to bring about maximum unity of action on concrete issues. The CPI(M) assures all other democratic forces that it will do its utmost to develop such unity of action and forge an electoral front in Kerala on the basis of an agreed minimum programme.

On Centre-State Relations*

Sri N. Sanjiva Reddy, the President of India, has discussed certain aspects of Centre-State relations in his Patel Memorial Lecture on October 31, 1981. He has highlighted the demand for greater autonomy to the States, and observed that it would be harmful to undermine the federal character of the Indian Union in the name of strengthening the Indian Union and its integration.

Though there is nothing new and fundamentally radical in what the President has observed in his lecture, it has acquired additional importance since these observations have come from a person of the President's stature and also at a time when secessionist agitation like those of Assam and Khalistan are causing concern and anxiety to the patriotic minded people of India.

Without going into the Constitutional niceties and intricacies as to whether it is proper or not to air such views in the capacity of the President of the Indian Republic, it will have to be admitted that he has done a signal service to the cause of Indian unity and its integration by openly raising the issue of Centre-State relations. The manner in which one Congress(I) General Secretary has come out against the demand for greater autonomy for the States, and the way in which the Central Government is trampling over the autonomy of the States, go to show that the party in power is out to undermine the federal character of the Indian Constitution as a part of its drive towards authoritarianism and dictatorship, replacing parliamentary democracy in the country.

Sri Sanjiva Reddy has cited a pertinent statement made by Dr. Ambedkar on the subject during the discussions in the Constituent Assembly. In reply to certain points raised, Dr. Ambedkar had stated: "The basic principle of federalism is that Legislature and Executive authority is partitioned between the Centre and States, not by any law to be made by the Centre but the Constitution itself. This is what the Constitution does. The States under our Constitution are in no way dependent upon the Centre for their Legislative and Executive authority. The Centre and States are co-equal in the matter." The Federal character of the Constitution stands, thus, clearly emphasised, contrary to the arguments of some political leaders who deny this federal character under the pretext of a strong unitary Centre.

Let alone the discussions in 1949-50 in the Constituent Assembly on the federal character of the Constitution, what does subsequent history teach us on the subject? The way big agitations and powerful popular movements were organised for reorganisation of the States on a linguistic basis, and the manner in which the unwilling Central Government was forced to reorganise the States in October 1956, go to show that the different ethnic groups and people speaking different languages in India can be united and integrated in the Indian Union, only if it is based on a federal structure, with due respect to States' autonomy.

Sri Sanjiva Reddy, referring to the unitary trends in the Constitution, has stated: "It is generally acknowledged that the unitary trends in the Constitution have been strengthened in actual practice, among the reasons for it being the three obvious ones—first, inadequacy of the States' financial resources and consequent dependence on the Centre, secondly, adoption of Central Planning and the increasing role of the Planning Commission, and lastly, the political situation in which the same party was in power at the Centre and in the States for a long time after Independence.

What is the reality of Centre-State relations after full thirty years since the first general election in 1952? The States are steadily and systematically reduced to the status of glorified municipalities. They are literally starved of finances, forced to depend upon the collection of sales-tax, in the main. The Centre, with the purse-

*Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", November 8, 1981.

strings in its hands, has acquired more powers over the States than are provided for in the Constitution and law. It is striving its utmost to bring increasing subjects to the Concurrent List, thereby denuding the States of all powers, except in name. Under the plea of all-India services such as IAS, IPS, etc., the administrative control is usurped by the Centre, depriving the States of their own prerogative. Gubernatorial institutions are being misused and abused to undermine duly elected Legislatures and legally constituted State Governments in the partisan interests of the Centre and the political party in power at the Centre. It is a well-known truth that the acceptance of Hindi as the official language by the Constituent Assembly had come about with only a one-vote majority, yet there is a systematic drive to force Hindi on the non-Hindi-speaking majority of the people in the country, contrary to all assurances and declarations. Matters have reached such a stage that Chief Ministers are being appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister, making the elected Legislatures and their majorities a mockery. Duly elected Assemblies are dissolved and their Governments subverted and toppled, if they do not belong to the ruling party at the Centre. Is it any wonder that the demand for greater autonomy for States gathers momentum and becomes an integral part of the struggle in defence of the federal character of the Indian Constitution and parliamentary democracy?

Those who oppose the demand for greater autonomy for the States under the spurious plea that it would undermine the unity and authority of the Centre should realise that their hostility to States' autonomy endangers Indian unity and national integration, providing grist only to the mill of separatist and secessionist forces.

The CPI(M) which stands in the forefront of the struggle for genuine and greater autonomy to the States, has made it clear as early as in the years 1972-73, that it stands for a strong Centre and equally strong autonomous States, the two being not contradictory to each other, but complementary. It declared, "to preserve and strengthen the authority of the Centre, subjects such as defence, foreign affairs including foreign trade, currency and communication and economic coordination" should be in the exclusive list of the Centre. Can any politically literate person say that the power of

the Centre gets weakened if the States are allowed real and greater autonomy as integral units of the Indian Union? In fact, the real power, political and military, is vested in the Indian Union, with its exclusive control on the country's armed forces, foreign affairs, currency and communication, etc., and it is a false cry that Indian integration is endangered if the States are allowed greater autonomy.

The CPI(M) extends its support to the proposals and suggestions made by the President in his Patel Memorial Lecture, and calls upon all the democratic, progressive and patriotic-minded parties and groups to demand real autonomy to the States in the Indian Union. The Congress(I) party and the Central Government it runs should respond to this legitimate demand, and thus strengthen the genuine unity of the Indian Union.

Central Committee Communique Following Its Meeting In New Delhi On October 27-31, 1981*

Decision On Convening Eleventh Congress Of CPI(M) In Vijayawada On January 26-31, 1982

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), meeting in New Delhi from October 27 to 31, 1981 unanimously adopted the Draft Political Resolution for the Eleventh Congress of the Party. *People's Democracy* will print the Draft as a supplement in its next issue. The Draft will now be discussed by every unit of the Party and the amendments and suggestions of the Party units will be sent to the Central Committee. These will be considered when the Party Congress discusses and adopts the Political Resolution.

The Central Committee, at the outset, paid its homage to Comrade A. Balasubramaniam, one of its very valued members and a stalwart of the Party, who passed away on September 5.

The Central Committee decided to convene the Eleventh Congress of the Party in Vijayawada from January 26 to 31, 1982. The Congress will be attended by 548 delegates representing a membership of 267,232, an increase of 45,181 from the membership of 222,051 in 1977, on the basis of which the Tenth Congress of the Party was held in Jullundur. Observers numbering not more than 40 will also be attending the Congress.

The Central Committee gave its serious attention to the growing war danger in the world created by the U.S. imperialists. The same imperialists have brought the war threat to the doors of the country. The C.C. adopted a resolution calling on the working class and the people to fight against the war danger and in defence of peace.

In its resolution on the IMF loan for which the Government of India has applied, the C.C. warned that the acceptance of the

conditions that the Fund has laid down would put India and its economy under the tutelage of the international organisation dominated by the Western Imperialist Powers, especially the USA.

The C.C. discussed the developments in Kerala, the defection of the Congress(S) from the Left-Democratic Front, followed by that of the Kerala Congress (Mani), which culminated in the resignation of the LDF Ministry, and called for fresh election in the State.

On Assam, the C.C. came to the conclusion that the talks between the agitationists and the Government of India had virtually broken down. It warned the people of the plans of the secessionists to continue their dangerous agitation and also of the compromise formula reportedly put forward by the Government which would be harmful to the minorities, and called for all efforts to maintain the unity of the people in the State.

The C.C. also discussed the developments in Punjab and adopted a resolution.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, November 8, 1981.

CPI(M) Polit Bureau's Protest Statement*

Expression of Solidarity with The Struggling People of South Africa

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly protests against the Government of India's decision to allow the British cricket team which includes two U.N.-blacklisted players to tour India.

Earlier the Government had rightly taken the position that unless Geoffrey Boycott and Cook who had played in South Africa were dropped from the team, the tour would have to be cancelled. The P.B. finds no reason why this decision should have been changed. The two players have neither expressed any regrets nor given any assurances for the future. The Government has reversed its earlier decision solely on the basis of some vague statements made by the British Test and County Cricket Board.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi should be remembering that the African leaders gathered at the Commonwealth Summit had vehemently protested against the Government of New Zealand for allowing a South African team to play in that country. The P.B. wishes to point out that the present decision of the Government of India to allow Boycott and Cook to play in India will tar our country's image in the African countries which are fighting for the liquidation of racism in their continent.

The P.B. lodges its protest with the Government of India and calls on the Indian people to express their solidarity with the fighting African people by boycotting the British cricket team.

*CPI(M) Polit Bureau's Statement Dated November 4, 1981 was Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, November 8, 1981.

P.B. Denounces U.S. War Moves Against Cuba*

Statement Dated November 9, 1981 Issued in New Delhi

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) denounces the aggressive moves of the U.S. Government against the Republic of Cuba. The U.S. Imperialists have sent a huge armada of naval ships including aircraft-carriers into the Caribbean Sea for a provocative military exercise.

The Cuban Mission to the U.N. has protested against the U.S. exercise saying that the USA was planning to bomb and blockade Cuba.

Rebuffed in Nicaragua, unable to stem the tide of the advancing liberation movement in El Salvador, the USA is threatening punitive actions against Cuba. A lying propaganda is being carried on that Cuba has sent its troops to Nicaragua and El Salvador. Challenged again and again by the Cuban regime, the U.S. Administration has not been able to produce a single bit of evidence. The Reagan Administration is doing all it can to bolster the reactionary juntas in Central and South America. Every defeat it suffers on this course at the hands of the people of these countries is followed by provocations against Cuba.

An attack on Cuba will have world repercussions. But the Reagan Administration seems determined to involve the world in a nuclear war.

The Polit Bureau offers its full sympathy and support to the Government and people of Cuba in this perilous situation. It appeals to all progressive forces in the country to voice their protest against the U.S. Government, and calls upon the Government of India to protest against the U.S. moves.

The Polit Bureau is confident all progressive and peace-loving Governments and forces will join in the protest and express their solidarity with the Government and people of Socialist Cuba.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, November 15, 1981.

Give All Support To All-India Strike On January 19, 1982*

Call Given By CPI(M)'s Central Committee

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), meeting in New Delhi from November 28 to 30, 1981 called for all support to the one-day all-India strike in all industries on January 19, 1982 called by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions.

The Central Committee adopted another resolution denouncing the massacre of Harijans in Deoli.

The three-day meeting of the Central Committee was convened for discussing the Draft Political-Organisational Review Report for the Eleventh Congress of the Party. The Draft will be finalised by the Central Committee at its meeting in Vijayawada on December 24 and 25, 1981 and presented to the Congress which begins the next day.

The resolutions of the Committee on the January 19 strike and the Deoli massacre read:

January 19 Strike

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) hails the working class of India and the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions for the historic Workers' March to Parliament on November 23, 1981 and the call given by the mammoth rally for a one-day all-India strike in all industries on January 19, 1982.

The highly successful march and the united call for the one-day strike constitute a big stride forward in the building of all-out trade union unity, so essential for defending the interests of the

*This was a communique issued by the Central Committee of CPI(M) following its session in New Delhi on November 28-30, 1981 and Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, December 6, 1981.

working class and working people, and even more necessary for the working class to play its proper role in the country's struggle against the forces of authoritarianism.

The trade unions are offering united resistance to the anti-labour policies of the Congress(I) Government manifested in the National Security Act and Essential Services Maintenance Act, repression on the trade union movement, the wages and incomes policy in the Sixth Plan, the plan to impound D.A. and bonus and so on.

The united voice of the workers and employees is being raised against the surrender of the country's economy to the IMF, against the regime of high prices and inflation which inflicts unbearable sufferings on all sections of the people. They are demanding reductions in prices of food and other essential commodities and their distribution through an effective public distribution system. They are at the same time championing peasants' demand for remunerative prices for their produce, and the demand of the agricultural workers for decent wages.

At the call of the central trade unions and national federations, the working class is going into united action against the basic economic policies of the Government, policies of enormous concessions to multinationals and monopolies and compromise with landlords and growing dependence on foreign loans, and in defence of itself and all sections of the common people.

The united resistance of the working class will inspire the entire people and draw the unorganised sections into the struggle against authoritarianism and for democratic advance, and full popular support has to be extended to it.

The C.C. calls on all units of the Party to exert all their efforts to make the one-day strike of January 19, 1982, a resounding success. It appeals to all political parties to give their support to the strike call. It calls on the organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth and women to extend their solidarity to the strike action.

Massacre of Harijans

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its horror at the massacre that took place in

Deoli in Uttar Pradesh in the evening of November 18. A gang with firearms went round the village gunning down every Harijan they came across, in the fields, inside houses. Twenty-four lives were mercilessly snuffed out. Even for Uttar Pradesh, where dacoities and murders are everyday incidents, the massacre of November 18 was a ghastly event. Law and order has completely broken down in the State, with dacoits, criminals in the police force and landlords, all with links with ruling party politicians, imposing their own lawless law with the strength of rifles and sten-guns.

In such killings of Harijans, in the indignities heaped on them, whether in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, the criminal hands have been those of landlords. And these landlords get full protection and help from the local administration and the police and influential politicians.

Congress land reforms have been a flop. The Harijan masses have no land and not enough work. Whenever there is a struggle for better wages or land, Harijan blood is split.

It is only in the States ruled by the Left-oriented Governments that such atrocities on the Harijans are prevented. But the Congress(I) leaders raise a hue and cry about breakdown of law and order in these States while keeping quiet about the States ruled by them like U.P. and Bihar where massacres are taking place and law and order has really broken down.

The C.C. denounces the Congress(I) State Government of U.P. for the outrageous crime against the Harijans under its regime in Deoli. It demands quick action against the perpetrators of the crime and preventive measures against such outrages in future. It demands that all weapons in the hands of the landlords be confiscated and their licences cancelled. It demands that the police officials in charge of that area be suspended and proceeded against. It demands adequate compensation to the families of those killed and injured. It sends its heartfelt condolences to them.

CPI(M) Central Committee Document On Mass Organisations*

(The question of the Party's relationship with mass organisations came in for discussion in connection with the formation of an all-India women's organisation and the Democratic Youth Federation of India. Conflicting and erroneous points of view were expressed by some in the course of these discussions. The Central Committee, having considered the issue, is circulating this document which reiterates the basic Marxist-Leninist understanding on relationship between the vanguard party and mass organisations.)

Recently the question of relationship of the Party with mass organisations and the character of mass organisations was raised, repudiating the accepted Marxist-Leninist understanding on these questions. Some comrades think that a mass organisation has to be a virtual replica of the Party, advancing the Party's basic slogans as the slogans of the organisation. In their opinion a mass organisation is just a mere platform for the Party and has hardly any separate existence.

This is all wrong and erroneous and does violence to the Party's understanding on the role of mass organisations in the revolutionary struggle.

The mass organisations fulfil the role of rousing the elementary consciousness of the sections which they organise, and through them growingly link the backward masses with the Party's activities. The guiding role of the Party consists in consistently raising the consciousness of the concerned sections without shutting the organisation to the continuous inflow of backward

*Published as a booklet in April 1981.

sections. Otherwise the organisation will be an organisation of the militants nearest to the Party and, in spite of its strength in numbers, will be isolated from the main mass and unable to activate it.

The mass organisations are required because the Party's direct slogans of basic change—revolution, capture of power, etc.—are unable to rouse these masses immediately. The wide masses are attracted immediately on the basis of partial demands, immediate demands, which are, or appear to be, possible of achievement without a complete overhaul of the social order. The education and experience gained in these struggles train the consciousness of the masses under the guidance of the Party, and direct it in revolutionary channels. The work of the Party in this connection should not be identified with the work of the mass organisations among the masses—otherwise the link with the masses will be broken. This is an absolute law of guidance of mass organisations. To substitute the role of the Party by making the mass organisation itself the spokesman of the Party, is bound to lead to harmful consequences.

Writing about the relationship between the trade unions and the Social-Democratic Party, Lenin wrote: "The workers' organisation for the economic struggle should be trade union organisations. Every Social-Democratic worker should as far as possible assist and actively work in these organisations. But while this is true, it is certainly not in our interest to demand that only Social-Democrats should be eligible for membership in the trade unions, since that would only narrow the scope of our influence upon the masses. Let every worker who understands the need to unite for these struggles against the employers and the Government join the trade unions. The very aim of the trade unions would be impossible if they do not unite all those who have attained at least this elementary degree of understanding, if they were not very broad organisations. The broader these organisations, the broader will be our influence over them—an influence not only due to the 'spontaneous' development of the economic struggle, but due to the direct and conscious effort of the Socialist trade union members to influence comrades." (*What Is To Be Done?*)

This applies to all mass organisations and demands that they should be conducted in this spirit, that their constitution, aims and objects must be framed and their affairs including elections should be conducted in a manner which does not affect their non-party mass character and which nonetheless enables the Party to exercise its leading role. Guiding role does not mean dictation, domination, vamping the executive, but carrying conviction to non-party members who may differ with the Party.

Activities of mass organisations and the Party's participation in them enable the Party to growingly get under its influence the majority of the masses. Those who are complacent and satisfied with a few thousands should remember this and remember the following words of Lenin: "A few words about the concept of masses": "It is one that changes in accordance with the changes in the nature of the struggle. At the beginning of the struggle it took only a few thousand genuinely revolutionary workers to warrant talk of the masses. If the Party succeeds in drawing into the struggle not only its own members, if it also succeeds in arousing non-party people it is well on the way to winning the mass.... You have a mass when several thousand non-party workers, who usually live a philistine life and drag out a miserable existence, and who have never heard anything about politics, begin to act in a revolutionary way; when the revolution has been sufficiently prepared, the concept of 'masses' becomes different: several thousand workers no longer constitute the mass. The word begins to denote something else. The concept of masses undergoes a change so that it implies the majority, and not simply a majority of workers alone, majority of all the exploited." (*Collected Works*, Vol. 32, Pages 468-477)

This persistent struggle for the majority of the masses, with different levels of consciousness, is what gives vital importance to the Party's work among the non-party mass organisations. A spurious and sectarian argument is recently advanced that since in our country every party has its own mass organisation, what is the harm if we run mass organisations led by us as party organisations. This shows how little is understood by the advocates of this viewpoint, who ask the Party to follow the

practice of bourgeois or non-Marxist parties and ape them. This is to equate the Party's aims, objects, understanding and class tactics to the level of those of the non-revolutionary parties.

The other parties, Right or Left, do not have the same revolutionary objective in view and are not like ourselves in urgent need of winning over the majority of the working people for the revolution. At best they consider these mass organisations as a reservoir for electoral voting, and therefore a preserve of theirs admitting of no intervention by others. They direct their efforts to keeping their following as far as possible from common mass actions, run the organisations as a party preserve and thereby growingly lose their following, as their tactics go against the interests of the masses. The CPI(M) has other objectives and aims and, therefore, has to work for winning over the majority to its side. That is why it is absolutely essential that the mass organisations led by it are able to attract the large sections whose interests they are to defend, and that constant recruitment is not inhibited by dictatorial functioning, or by slogans for which the wide mass is not yet prepared to fight. The fact that we are compelled to have a separate organisation does not remove the responsibility to function it as a broad-based mass organisation. On the other hand, that responsibility increases and it is precisely to discharge this responsibility that we lay stress on united action with mass organisations led by other parties. These appeals for united action are part of our tactics to win over the majority of the masses. This means all the more that our own organisation must continue to function as a genuine mass organisation, open to all who are interested in fighting the elementary battles of the section concerned.

It is not to our liking that we are forced to have separate organisations. We would have very much liked to work in a common mass organisation where we could have had a bigger audience for our Communist work, for getting larger sections under the ideology of the Party. It is the opportunists, the revisionists and bourgeois leaders who split the mass organisations to prevent their rank and file from coming under our influence. We try to overcome this split not by ourselves

aping them by running the mass organisation as a party organisation, but through united front tactics bursting into their preserve and uniting with masses under their organisation.

Erroneous ideas have crept into our Party because we have not examined the functioning of some of our mass organisations, their practice, etc. On the other hand, some have been carried away by the increased strength of some of these organisations, little caring whether that strength really reflects the opportunities open to us. It will be interesting to study the documents in relation to some of these organisations to see whether they really conform to the character of mass organisations as understood by us.

The document on students produced and adopted several years ago should be restudied. Its appeal and preamble are nothing but a restatement of the Party's formulations on the international and national situation which overshoot the common consciousness of the average student and cannot be a weapon for building a mass student organisation. But, fortunately, the main activity of the organisation was concentrated on student demands, educational, political, and this was given prominence in the document itself. The document talks about scientific Socialism. If adherence to scientific Socialism were to be made the test of membership, then only CPI(M) members would be eligible. Even if propaganda and agitation on scientific Socialism, correctly understood, was to be carried on as a part of daily work, i.e., identify the organisation with scientific Socialism, it would hinder the students' organisation from being a mass organisation. The saving clause in the document assured that the organisation would not allow politics of any particular party to be imposed on it, while explaining what scientific Socialism is.

Many mass organisations include programmes and objectives which, if really insisted on or implemented, will hinder the process of their expansion. But in practice they concentrate on issues which directly and immediately affect the masses concerned and their progress. This does not mean that their unrealistic slogans and programmes are correct.

The proper outlook towards the mass organisation, its programme, its constitution, its appeal is to be determined by the character of the mass whose organisation it is, the place this mass

occupies in building the People's Democratic Front and the direct and immediate interests of this mass which impel it to enter the arena of struggle and how this mass is brought into the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, anti-monopolist struggle. The guiding role of the Party in these organisations consists in leading ever-larger sections of the masses to a new and higher consciousness, to win them over to the Party's basic slogans without in the least changing the broad mass character of the organisation.

The Salkia Plenum of our Party warned against two deviations in this connection. It said, "several committees and comrades handle mass organisations as if they are subsidiaries of the Party and pay scant attention to functioning them democratically. At the same time, there is another harmful tendency in evidence. Several Party members leading mass organisations tend to function them independently, bypassing the Party."

It is necessary to remember these things because there is immense scope for rapid development of our mass organisations today. Wrong understanding and functioning are likely to hamper the process of expansion. In the trade unions, especially, our organised strength is not commensurate with our influence and there is a general absence of democratic functioning in the Marxist-Leninist sense. With overwhelming majorities in leading bodies, Party members tend to forget the broad character of the organisation and the necessity of increasing the participation of the non-party mass in the activities of the organisation. It is logical that Party members should head these organisations, that their voice should be listened to with respect and authority, but that is no reason why they should forget its appeal and character as a broad mass organisation.

In recent discussions the wrong viewpoint was pinpointed in connection with the character of the women's organisation. The Polit Bureau's report submitted to the last Central Committee stated in connection with the women's meeting: "The P.B. members participating in the meeting pointed out that the view held by these comrades is contrary to the Marxist-Leninist understanding of broad non-party mass organisations over which,

through correct political leadership and the disciplined functioning of Party members, the Party secures authority. The differing approach, on the other hand, is that of the mass organisation turned into the appendage of the Party. Their approach would, in fact, hamper the process through which the Party extends its activities among the non-party democrats and establishes the political and organisational leadership of the Party over the masses".

This erroneous stand is again seen in their opposition to a broad women's organisation and contrasting it with a toiling women's organisation. They write, "the basis of the organisation will be the toiling masses of women of all sections". This is coupled with the "apprehension that in the name of 'broadening' the mass organisation, there is a tendency towards a liberal attitude which may lead to a non-class view regarding the women's movement".

However, in the course of the discussions, it was revealed that some of these comrades have wrongly interpreted their own experience, and also failed to understand all the features of the women's movement in India. Take the following from a report: "Now there is no question of going backwards and again trying to forge unity with the women of the upper classes and form a National Democratic Front of Women, the stage which we have passed long ago." This is said by members of our Party which is today engaged in a serious endeavour to form a broad platform of political resistance to authoritarianism which includes bourgeois-landlord parties. The opposition is to the inclusion of the "upper classes", i.e., all except the toiling sections, when the Party's People's Democratic Front assigns a place to the national bourgeoisie.

Some of these comrades are afraid of a feminist deviation in this connection. Perhaps they identify feminism with fight against feudal customs and the feudal status of women. They forget that the toiling sections of women are the worst sufferers of feudal traditions.

Their opposition continued even after it was explained to them that: "The apprehension that the broad basis of the organisation will hamper the class basis of our organisation, is wrong—all other questions are also part of the class struggle, e.g., price-rise, communal harmony, civil liberties are not non-class issues, but on which we can organise broader mobilisation. Of course, the success of the movement depends on the mobilisation of our own class. Regarding women we have to remember that they are (1) women as part of the population, as citizens, (2) women belonging to different classes, and (3) women as women. We must take into consideration the needs of women as women, irrespective of the class they belong to, e.g., women's rights, equality, atrocities on women, rape, dowry problem."

Under present-day conditions the fight for women's freedom from feudal conditions and inequality is not confined to what are considered as toiling sections only. This is not true in connection with the People's Democratic Revolution, much less is it true about the women's movement.

The Party Programme considers the national bourgeoisie also to be a component part of the PDF but here a mass organisation, one of whose main aims is to fight the feudal oppression of women, is asked to confine itself to toilers.

The fear of united front, of broad-based mass organisation, is always expressed as a fight for maintaining the purity of class outlook. This is a disease as old as the rise of the Communist movement. This sectarianism wants to distinguish our organisation from "bourgeois" organisations, "revisionist" organisations, by some kind of slogans—Socialist, etc. It does not realise that real demarcation emerges in the course of the struggle, and not by neglecting the programme and slogans which even the bourgeoisie might raise but which are dictated by the advance of the movement.

If the revisionists and bourgeoisie raise demands for equality of rights for women, constitutional guarantees, if they take demands against feudal slavery, do they become revisionist demands? The question is, who carries them to the mass, who rouses them to fight for them. We regard reforms as by-products of revolutionary struggle.

It should be reasserted that the women's organisation which we want should be a broad-based organisation which should be capable of appealing to women in general in the fight for their advance. It will naturally make the biggest appeal to the toiling sections for whom the Party wages a fight through several organisations including women's.

The women's organisation simultaneously takes the question of capitalist-created inequality—wages, unemployment, discrimination in jobs, etc. However, it does not forget that both women from the toiling sections and women from other sections are still living under conditions of feudal restrictions, with inferior status in their families.

Rousing women to fight against all inequalities—feudal, capital—the organisation, in practice, links the struggle with the general democratic struggle against bourgeois-landlord rule. This understanding must be made common and all erroneous understandings removed.

Hail The Kerala Victory

Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY",
January 27, 1980.

The victory of the Left and democratic alliance in Kerala, headed by the CPI(M), is welcomed and greeted by all anti-authoritarian and democratic forces in the country. Coming immediately in the wake of the sweeping success of the Indira Congress in the Parliamentary elections, it administers a much needed rebuff to the authoritarian forces who are now conspiring to topple all non-Congress(I) State Governments and establish one party rule in all the States. The Left alliance of West Bengal and Tripura defeated the authoritarian party and routed it in the Parliamentary elections. The Left and democratic alliance of Kerala defeated the Indira Congress in the Parliamentary elections securing a majority of seats for itself. And now again in the closely fought Assembly elections a severe and humiliating defeat is inflicted on the Congress(I) alliance. Wherever the Left forces are strong and they forge unity with other democratic forces, the Indira magic cannot work, the Indira wave has no effect—this truth is again being told to the people, once again it is demonstrated that only the Left and democratic forces can check the onward march of the authoritarian forces and inflict a defeat on them.

In the background of the Congress(I) victory at the Centre and the rout of the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties, the Kerala victory assumes national importance. It should inspire the disappointed and dissatisfied democratic forces in other States to pick up the gauntlet, reorganise themselves and wage concerted battles against authoritarian encroachment on democratic rights. The confidence inspired by the Kerala victory, by the unity of anti-authoritarian forces there, should prove valuable to the people in other States where the Government toppling game of the

Congress(I) is starting. Fresh elections in the States may prove disastrous for the authoritarian party only if as in Kerala, the anti-authoritarian vote is fully united and mobilised.

The Left and democratic alliance of Kerala, its constituent parties, all deserve warm congratulations for their historic victory. All the constituents worked together fully realising the danger facing them, the danger to democracy, to the people of Kerala. Firmly closing their ranks after Indira's victory in the Parliamentary elections, acting as a barrier to the Indira wave, they unwaveringly protected their unity and marched forward to success. We congratulate them all—the leaders and cadres of CPI, Congress(U), All India Muslim League, RSP, Kerala Congress (M) and Pillai group. We congratulate our State Committee, the leaders and cadres of the CPI(M) for their devotion to the cause of anti-authoritarian unity. We greet the people of Kerala for this historic victory.

The victory could only be achieved because the reactionary combination around the coalition ministry was broken and the big barrier for Left and democratic alliance was removed. The CPI decision to quit the coalition ministry played an important role in building the alliance and the growing understanding between the two parties has helped all other parties to come together for the electoral battle.

It is clear from the election results that the Congress(I) influence and organisation have been reduced to very sorry straits in Kerala. The Congress(I) contested 55 seats. It won only 17 seats, only three seats more than its partner the Indian Union Muslim League. Could any one have imagined that the all-sweeping Indira Congress which won 352 seats in the Parliamentary elections, would win only 17 out of 140 Assembly seats in Kerala? To win this small number the Congress(I) in Kerala had to enter into all kinds of opportunist alliance, trampling underfoot all its professed principles. It had also to seek direct help from various dubious and obscurantist quarters.

Indira Congress denounced the Janata as a communal and reactionary party outside Kerala. But in Kerala it had no compunction in joining hands with this organisation which is growingly dominated by the RSS and which is accused of

fomenting communal riots. The unscrupulous leaders of the Janata Party on the other hand found no difficulty in joining hands with Indira though they continued to attack her in other States. The Central leadership of the Janata Party had no objection to this unholy alliance to fight the Left and secular forces.

Indira's alliance further depended too much on the Indian Muslim League. This is clear from the fact that out of 41 seats the League accounts for as many as 14. The Congress(I) professing secular and anti-caste outlook elsewhere exploited the caste divisions in Kerala and allied with the NDP—a Nair Caste organisation. And finally the Catholic Church openly intervened for Indira. A number of Bishops called on the flock to vote against the Left and democratic alliance—against the Communist atheists. During the last days of the election a number of Bishops and Nuns went from home to home canvassing for Indira alliance. The Prime Minister herself visited the Padmanabha Swamy temple of Trivandrum and Guruvayoor temple in Trichur district to appeal to orthodox Hindu sentiment—while the Indian Union Muslim League directed its fire against the heretics of the Left and democratic alliance.

There is no doubt that having failed to get the ear of the democratic electorate, the Indira alliance had to rely on casteist and obscurantist and religious appeal. This demonstrates the dire strait to which the Congress(I) has been reduced in Kerala. It has to walk on the crutches supplied by the obscurantist forces. It also demonstrates the great significance and importance of the victory of the democratic alliance.

The massive mandate of the people places a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the parties of the alliance. Previous alliances and coalitions have disintegrated due to unprincipled bickerings and dissensions among themselves. But the grave problems awaiting solution, the struggle for democracy, leave no room for such squabbles in the present situation and demand firmer and greater unity in the alliance to meet the challenge of the situation. And there is no doubt that every constituent will rise to the occasion vying with each other in the service of the people.

This has been a close election. The defeated combination also could mobilise substantial support. The alliance will have to bear this in mind and function as the representative of the entire people. Its task is while giving urgent relief to the people, to strengthen the democratic forces and isolate the authoritarian forces. It is not entering on uncharted seas. It has the example before it of the West Bengal and Tripura State Governments who resisted the pressure of the vested interests, protected the people and raised the democratic consciousness and people to a higher level, thereby undermining the strength of the authoritarian party.

The economic situation in Kerala is perhaps worse than ever. All the traditional industries of Kerala are in shambles. Coir, cashewnut, handlooms, bidi—which employ tens of thousands of workers have been languishing for years. The unemployment rate in Kerala is perhaps the highest. The agricultural worker, the peasant, the small producer of commercial crop, the employees all are awaiting immediate relief. The entire people are seeking escape from the monstrously high prices.

The new ministry will have to tackle these problems with utmost seriousness and speed. It will have to overcome the resistance of the vested interests as well as the policies of the Central Government. But the powerful mandate of the people is a sufficiently strong lever to overcome all obstacles and satisfy the urgent demands of the people.

The democratic forces all over India wish well to the new Kerala Ministry of Left and democratic alliance. There is no doubt that it will play an important role in strengthening the anti-authoritarian forces all over India as the West Bengal and Tripura ministries have done and increase the confidence of the people in Left and democratic unity.

On The Defeat of Dange's Line

Editorial of "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY",
February 17, 1980.

At long last, the National Council of the Communist Party of India has asserted itself and enforced its political-organisational discipline on its defiant Chairman, and rejected his political line of the crassest class-collaboration. The Council, near unanimously, rejected the political thesis of S.A. Dange and accepted his long-pending resignation letter from the post of Chairmanship of the National Council and also from membership of the Central Executive Committee. Dange, in his capacity as Chairman of the National Council of the CPI, did all he could do to prevent the CPI from correcting some of its serious mistakes so as to enable it to play its due role in the reforging of the Left forces, a unity that was unceremoniously disrupted in the year 1969-70. He also did his utmost to prevent the CPI and CPI(M)—the two big segments of the Left forces in India—from coming together in the struggle for building Left and democratic unity.

Dange was, and is, an unabashed advocate of a class-collaborationist political line, a line of alliance between the CPI and the ruling Congress Party headed by Indira Gandhi. He was, and is, a staunch supporter and an apologist of the Emergency regime of Indira Gandhi during the years 1975-77. He alone has the cheek to still uphold the authoritarian rule of the Congress Party under the spurious pretext that there can be no rule and governance of a country without "authority".

Dange was, and is, the staunchest upholder of the bankrupt thesis that the ruling Congress Party, headed by Indira Gandhi, represents the patriotic, progressive, non-monopolist, national bourgeois class and that it champions the anti-imperialist, anti-monopolist and anti-

feudal interests of the Indian people. It is audacious on the part of Dange to maintain this discredited thesis after 30 years of unbroken Congress rule under which Indian Big Business and foreign monopolists flourished and got fattened at the expense of the common people and the country.

Dange was, and is, the determined opponent of the unity of the Left forces in our country. He has declared his unconcealed hostility to all the efforts of the CPI(M) and the CPI to forge the unity of Left and democratic forces and fanatically argues for the defence and perpetuation of the anti-Marxist united front—a front in which the ruling Congress was predominant. The decision of the CPI to break away from that front in Kerala, giving up the post of Chief Ministership, is condemned and denounced by Dange as "surrender" to the CPI(M) and as a betrayal of the "revolutionary cause".

S.A. Dange, utilising his status as the Chairman of the CPI's National Council, has come out with open statements and documents which are in flagrant violation of his party's political and tactical line. He defied all norms, forms and discipline of any political party, let alone a Communist Party. His sending of a condolence message to Comrade E.M.S. Namboodiripad when Indira Gandhi won the Chikmagalur by-election, his telegraphic message of congratulations to H.N. Bahuguna for his betrayal of the Lok Dal-Congress alliance and for joining the Congress (I), and his greetings to Mrs. Indira Gandhi on her party's victory in the Seventh Lok Sabha election—all these have shocked every decent Leftist and democrat in the country. These gimmicks and the bizarre behaviour of Dange had invited upon him and also his party utter disrepute and ridicule. No other leader, and by no other political party, would have been allowed to indulge in this type of gross indiscipline and highly indecorous political behaviour. And yet the National Council of the CPI had shown its utmost tolerance and patience towards its Chairman, probably because of his political and party standing and ripe old age.

The ignominious defeat of S.A. Dange and his political line of class-collaboration and hostility to the unity of Left and democratic

forces in the CPI's National Council is, no doubt, a big victory for all those who eagerly and impatiently look forward for the fructification of Left unity and for closer cooperation between the CPI(M) and the CPI in the pursuit of the struggle for Left and democratic unity. Though the defeat of this treacherous political line marks a big turning point as far as the CPI is concerned, it will be simplistic to assume that the threat to the new line from Dange and his followers is eliminated. The political trend representing Dange's line is still strong and tenacious enough to resort to rear-guard battles in order to sabotage the new line, and to reverse it if possible.

The CPI(M) welcomes these heartening political developments inside the CPI and will continue to strive its utmost to carry forward the struggle for the unity of all Leftist forces, unity that gives a tremendous fillip to the struggle for forging Left and democratic unity as a real and viable alternative to the bankrupt bourgeois-landlord class rule in the country.

The CPI(M), while noting the limited success recorded in achieving Left unity, and while recording its appreciation of the role played by the leadership of the CPI in this regard, is fully conscious that there exist a number of serious differences—political, ideological and theoretical—that divide the two parties. Without either underplaying these differences or their negative impact on the building of the class and mass revolutionary movements in our country, the CPI(M) highly evaluates these initial successes in the vital struggle for Left and democratic unity and assures the people that it will carry forward this struggle with dedication and determination.

The re-emergence of the Congress (I) rule and its performance in the last four weeks, with all its authoritarian and dictatorial past, are a stern warning to all the democratic forces, the Left forces in particular. The disastrous disunity and utter disruption of the Left forces that had come to prevail in the decade between 1969 and 1979, had played a very harmful role in preventing the emergence of a viable Left and democratic alternative. What has been possible to achieve so far in the three States of West Bengal,

Kerala and Tripura—the building up of powerful class, mass and political movements—could have been achieved in several States and regions if only the Left forces were capable of defending their unity achieved in 1967-68, without one big section of it tailing the ruling Congress Party and another big section getting dissolved in the Janata jamboree in the last one decade. Drawing on these costly lessons, the Left parties and groups, the CPI(M) and CPI in particular, should play their due role in reforging Left and democratic unity, on a much higher plane and on a vastly superior scale. This is what people expect of the Left forces, and they will have to fulfil these hopes and expectations of the people.

The RSS—Mask Off*

Editorial of "People's Democracy" March 30, 1980

The refusal of the RSS Pratinidhi Sabha to bar from its activities, M.P.s and Legislators as was suggested by the Janata leadership surprises nobody. The long-awaited decision, in fact, has only formally cleared all doubts nursed by some that the RSS might help the unity of anti-authoritarian forces by completely delinking itself from all party political activities.

The three-day session of the Pratinidhi Sabha, however, was remarkable for three separate resolutions on some of the current political issues facing the people. The content of these three resolutions, combined with the complete silence of the Sabha on the most burning political question of the day, throws revealing light on the so-called "non-political and cultural" character of the RSS.

The burning political issues on which the Pratinidhi Sabha has kept silent is the drive of the ruling Congress (I) towards the restoration of the "extra-constitutional authority" which acquired notoriety during the Emergency. This is particularly remarkable for an organisation which claims to have been the stoutest defender of civil liberties and democratic rights during the Emergency regime.

The ten weeks that have elapsed since Indira Gandhi took over for the second time as the Prime Minister of the country has shown how, one after another, the perpetrators of the Emergency excesses are being rehabilitated and put back in positions of power. As day follows day, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Prime Minister's son and his cronies are once again becoming

the force behind the throne and ruling the country behind the cover of the Prime Minister. All honest champions of democracy are concerned at these developments. The RSS Pratinidhi Sabha, however, has not a word to say on this.

At the very time when the Pratinidhi Sabha was in session a revealing letter, written by a serving Judge of the Supreme Court, had appeared in the Press. Addressed to Smt. Gandhi, on January 15—within 24 hours of her being sworn in as Prime Minister—Justice Bhagwati offered to her "my heartiest congratulations on your resounding victory in the elections and your triumphant return as the Prime Minister of India Your party has been voted to power with an amazing outburst, amounting almost to an avalanche, of affection and enthusiasm and now the people are looking forward to an era where there will be for everyone freedom from want and destitution. You have become the symbol of hopes and aspirations of the poor hungry millions of India who had so far nothing to hope for and nothing to live for and who are now looking up to you for lifting them from dirt and squalor and freeing them from poverty and ignorance".

Coming as it does from a serving Judge of the Supreme Court, it naturally disturbed the legal profession who, according to *The Statesman*, "have received with indignation" Justice Bhagwati's letter. The voice of protest raised by them was joined by Justice Bhagwati's own colleague in the Bench, Mr. Justice V. D. Tulzapurkar, who described the tendency shown in his brother Judge's letter as "dangerous to the independence of the Judiciary" and added: "Hobnobbing with Ministers or Deputy Ministers or law officers of the Government, seeking favours for one's family members for long-distance travels unquestionably sully the bright image of the Judiciary If Judges started sending bouquets or congratulatory letters to a political leader on his political victory eulogising him on assumption of high office in adulatory terms, the people's confidence in the Judiciary would be shaken".

Justice Tulzapurkar underlined the impropriety of this by pointing out that this year seven vacancies are to be filled in the Supreme Court suggesting that rewarding aspirants for these

*'RSS' means 'RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH', the parent organisation of erstwhile 'JANA SANGH' and present 'BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY'.

posts in return for political support to the ruling party might "make inroads into the Judiciary's independence".

We are reminded of the concepts of "committed Judiciary", "committed bureaucracy", etc., popularised during the days of Smt. Gandhi's earlier Prime Ministership. Champions of democracy are rightly worried that those days are coming back. Hence the scarcely concealed protests of the legal profession and Justice Tulzapurkar against the tone and spirit of Justice Bhagwati's letter.

An equally disturbing trend was noticeable in Home Minister Zail Singh's declaration that the record of officers and men of the police force, recruited during the Janata regime, would be subjected to a probe, since according to him there has been a large-scale infiltration by the RSS and "other disruptive" elements. He blamed these "disruptors" for such scandalous incidents as the lathi-charge on the blind in Delhi and brutal attacks on lawyers in Gwalior. Asked by newsmen who the other "disruptive" elements were, the Minister refused to comment. It is thus obvious that the present Congress (I) Government at the Centre is going to organise a witch-hunt in the name of infiltration into the police and other arms of the Government.

The RSS should have been concerned, if its professions of fighting the authoritarianism of the Congress (I) were genuine, with these and other developments in the administration. It should also have been concerned with the rising prices of essential commodities and other problems of the common people's living. The Pratinidhi Sabha, however, has not a word to say on anyone of these things. It proceeds as if the authoritarianism represented by the Congress (I) had not won an electoral victory, as if those who were removed from power for the atrocities committed by them against the people had not already been rehabilitated, as if the notorious Emergency regime was not being resurrected. This is not surprising: the Pratinidhi Sabha was, in fact, translating into practice the policy declaration made by the RSS Chief, Balasaheb Deoras, that Indira Gandhi has changed and that it is for all patriotic people to extend their hand of cooperation to her and her Government.

Let us now come to the three resolutions which the Pratinidhi Sabha session adopted—those on Assam, the North-Eastern region and Kerala.

The resolution on Assam is all praise for "the massive people's movement there (which) had succeeded in drawing the attention of the entire country". The Assam movement is lauded for "its restrained conduct" which "carried the appreciation of all our countrymen". Not a word about the deliberate campaign launched against tens of thousands of non-Assamese citizens of India who are denounced as "foreigners". Not a word, again, about the unauthorised deletion of thousands of names from the voters' lists on the unproved allegation of being "foreigners". Not a word about the fact that the official machinery in Assam was turned into an instrument of Assamese chauvinism. Not a word about the fact that, due to these irregular and illegal activities of the "restrained" movement, Assam had to go without the Lok Sabha election in January this year.

The Pratinidhi Sabha is not concerned if the Assam agitation caused misery to thousands of genuine Indian citizens who are denounced by the agitators as "foreigners". It is not concerned with the disruption and dislocation of economic life by the picketing against the oil installations of Assam, preventing the flow of oil to the rest of the country. All this according to the RSS is a legitimate form of struggle for a just cause!

Still more significant is the RSS diagnosis of the malady in Assam. It says: "The Assam problem today was the result of a deeply-laid political conspiracy of planned Muslim infiltration carried out over several decades. This problem assumed additional dimension when a large number of Hindu refugees entered the State after being perpetually persecuted in Pakistan and later in Bangladesh, leaving them with no choice other than crossing over to India".

Here in a nutshell is the notorious anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan approach of the Hindu communalists. It would, in practice, mean a discrimination between Hindus and Muslims even among those who according to the agitators are "foreigners". Muslims settled in Assam during the last several decades will have to be automatically considered "foreigners" since they came here as the result of "a deeply-laid political conspiracy of planned Muslim infiltration". As for the Hindu refugees, they will have to be rehabilitated, but the resolution goes on, "in the whole country" (not in Assam).

The resolution on the North-Eastern region called the movement in Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur and other hill States as separatist and as having "generated feelings of hatred against the people from other provinces". It blamed the foreign Christian missionaries for creating this feeling of hatred for the people from the rest of India.

This assessment of the RSS is one-sided because, (1) it fails to take note of the specific ethnic character of the people inhabiting this region and their legitimate demand that their identity should not be submerged. Their demand for maximum autonomy within the Indian Union is in other words "separatism" and "feelings of hatred for the people in the rest of India". (2) By singling out one of the agencies of imperialism (foreign Christian missions), it fails to nail down the multiform character of imperialist intrigue. It may be mentioned that the Home Minister himself had in his statements in Parliament drawn attention to some proofs of imperialists intervention in the region, but the RSS wants to turn a blind eye to this; hence its singling out of the foreign Christian missions.

It should, in this context, be recalled that one of the forms in which the Hindu chauvinism of the RSS found reflection some time ago was the notorious "Freedom of Religion Bill", moved by a Janata M.P. with known RSS links. The present resolution of the Pratinidhi Sabha shows that what is claimed to be the drive against the activities of foreign Christian missions is, in fact, directed against the Christians' right to preach, rather than the use of that right by imperialist agents.

The third resolution adopted by the Pratinidhi Sabha is the one protesting against the so-called "Marxist violence" in Kerala. Facts show that it is the RSS which has been consistently resorting to violence to "wipe out the Marxists from Kerala". The Home Minister of the State has given enough factual material to show who are the aggressors and who are the victims. The point, however, is that this attack on the Left and Democratic Government in Kerala is coming from the RSS at a time when its leader is offering his own hand of cooperation to the authoritarian Congress (I) Government and as we mentioned earlier, the Pratinidhi Sabha itself is keeping completely silent on the Indira Gandhi Government's drive towards authoritarianism.

Exit The RSS-Jana Sangh*

Editorial of "People's Democracy", April 13, 1980

The April 4 Decision of the Janata Party National Executive by a majority vote to bar party members from taking part in the day-to-day activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, though belated and after immense damage has been caused, is a very welcome development. The decision has removed one big obstacle which had stood in the way of mobilising all the democratic forces and strengthening the struggle against authoritarianism. The forces of dictatorship, back in power at the Centre, are busy rehabilitating the Emergency outfit. Nine non-Congress(I) State Governments have already been dismissed and constant threats are being held out against the remaining three—the Left-led Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. The Congress(I) is out to establish its monopoly one-party rule in the States, too. The drive towards an authoritarian set-up is all-too-evident. The utter incapacity of the Janata Party to face this emerging situation was demoralising not only to the democratic forces inside that party, but to the democratic forces outside as well, all of whom wanted a stepping up of the struggle to halt the march towards dictatorship.

It was the anti-people policies pursued by the Janata Government and the growing RSS-Jana Sangh domination over the party that had led to its disintegration and helped the authoritarian forces to stage a come-back to power at the Centre.

The Janata Government pursued essentially the same policies as the predecessor Congress Government. The people were

*RSS' means 'RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH'—the parent organisation of erstwhile 'JANA SANGH' and present 'BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY'.

victims of high prices which placed essential necessities beyond their reach, repressive measures were taken against them including a number of police-firings on striking workers, the pledge to give bonus to railwaymen was violated, a preventive detention measure was being thought of, the administration had become totally incompetent. While all this led to the loss of support among the people in general for the Janata Party, communal riots as in Aligarh and Jamshedpur in which RSS involvement was widely known, and the growing atrocities on Harijans by upper-caste landlords alienated the Muslim minorities and weaker sections from the Janata Party.

The disintegration of the Janata Party in this background was nothing surprising. The resolution of the Jullundur Congress of the CPI(M) had warned, "the bourgeois-landlord parties are unable to maintain their unity and are riven by dissensions. The Congress Party is already split into two sections. The ruling Janata Party has still to develop a cohesive ideology.....The ideological and organisational skirmishes in the party, the open play of former loyalties and the conflicting traditions and heritage of its constituents speak of divided counsels.....The wranglings in elections, the manipulations for places in the Ministry, the struggle for tickets and the open appeal to former loyalties—all are the first symptoms of the disease". The continuous crisis in the Janata Party and its ultimate disintegration was the inevitable outcome.

Within a few months after the Janata Party assumed power at the Centre in March 1977, when the elections to the State Assemblies were held, it had become clear that the Janata Party was losing support among the minorities and the weaker sections, especially Harijans, because of the party's RSS connection. Instead of ending this connection, the leadership of the Janata Party put in cold storage the clause in the party's statutes barring members of the party from being members of other parties, and allowed the RSS-Jana Sangh to manoeuvre continuously to establish its domination over the party. The RSS-Jana Sangh refused to accept the merger of the mass organisations, trade unions, youth, students, etc., of all constituents of the Janata Party.

They joined hands with the erstwhile BLD to keep the CFD out and share the Chief Ministerships of the States where the Janata Party had won, and later joined hands with some others to isolate the BLD. The domination they thus established over the party must have come as a shock to many in the party itself when, even after it was proved that a leading RSS element in the Janata Party was responsible for the ghastly communal carnage in Aligarh, the RSS-Jana Sangh was able to get the Janata Party leadership to allow the guilty to go scot-free. The same story was repeated in Jamshedpur. It was no longer just allowing dual membership to continue, precisely that section of the party whose dual membership, it was being demanded, should be ended, was taking virtual control of the party.

Opposition was building up inside the Janata Party from two sides—one from those who were not prepared to tolerate the ideological domination of the party by the RSS-Jana Sangh and the second was from those who wanted to resist the attempts at organisational domination of the party by the RSS-Jana Sangh. The loss of support of the minorities and Harijans, crucial for any electoral victory, further strengthened the opposition inside the Janata Party to the RSS-Jana Sangh. While individual ambitions, etc., certainly played a role, the main responsibility for the disruption of the Janata Party should be laid at the door of the RSS-Jana Sangh and its attempts to capture the party.

Even the exit of the BLD and a section of the Socialists leading to the downfall of the Morarji Deasai Government, and later the exit of Jagjivan Ram and his followers, did not make the party leadership sit up and critically examine where the party was being led to.

The RSS-Jana Sangh, while keeping its sakhas and camps and mass organisations separate, was utilising the Janata Party as its cover. This became all the more clear in the developments of the last few weeks. When the Janata Parliamentary Board, on March 18, took the decision to ban party members from participating in the day-to-day activities of the RSS, the RSS-Jana Sangh sections refused to accept it, saying that it would accept such a decision only from the RSS Pratinidhi Sabha which was to

meet in Nagpur on March 21-23. Despite all their profession of loyalty to the Janata Party, it was clear they were loyal only to the RSS. Many of them proudly declared their adherence to the RSS and their decision never to leave that rabid communal organisation. The RSS leadership which had promised the Janata Party President that the Pratinidhi Sabha would adopt a decision that office-bearers and legislators of the Janata Party would not take part in RSS sakhas, went back on the promise. There were vacillations in a part of the Janata leadership itself, with Morarji Desai, Asoka Mehta, Ram Jethmalani and some others, trying to dilute the Parliamentary Board formula to appease the RSS-Jana Sangh. This was nothing but parliamentary opportunism on their part. The bitter fruit of this opportunism is that while Morarji Desai, as "a man of principle", has remained in the Janata, some of his followers have walked over to the RSS-Jana Sangh side. The compromise formula proposed would have admirably suited the RSS—that would have enabled it to keep its own organisations intact for carrying on with its majority communalism and upper-caste varnashrama dharma, and simultaneously keep the Janata Party as its political front for electoral purposes. At the same time it is no secret that the RSS leadership has offered cooperation to the Congress(I), joined hands with that party in Kerala and has claimed that its ideology is close to that of the Congress(I).

It is this double-dealing game of the RSS-Jana Sangh that has now been ended by the Janata National Executive and it is for that reason that the decision deserves welcome. The RSS elements have now launched their own party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, which is nothing but the resurrection of the Jana Sangh despite the association with it of old Congress(O) elements.

As we write this, efforts are on to bring the secular elements of the original Janata Party together, and on this occasion, again, we would like to repeat what we have said many times earlier. The Lok Dal, the Jagjivan Ram Janata and the Janata Party will not be able to play their role in the struggle against authoritarianism unless they undertake a serious re-examination of the policies pursued by and the performances of their Governments and their organisational leaderships.

The collapse of the Janata Party is the collapse of the policy of fighting authoritarianism without defending the people. In the absence of any programme in favour of the people, the struggle assumes the character of a factional struggle for power between various parties. Here lies the difference between the Left Parties and the bourgeois-landlord parties. The CPI(M), because it combined the struggle against authoritarianism with the struggle to defend the interests of the masses, has not only survived but has strengthened itself while the bourgeois-landlord parties which entered the arena of struggle against authoritarianism without any concern for the people have all been plagued by disruptions and betrayals. A re-examination of past policies and performances with the drawing of the necessary lessons and the acceptance of a democratic programme in the interests of the mass of the people alone can enable the leaderships of these parties to reforge the unity of the Janata Party and again earn the confidence and support of the people.

We are happy that the Socialists in the Janata have taken a firm stand against the RSS-Jana Sangh. Their policies in the last few years—joining the Grand Alliance disrupting the Left unity that was then developing, the merger with the Janata Party that followed, the division in their camp when one group joined the Lok Dal while the other remained in the Janata dominated by the RSS-Jana Sangh—had all created certain apprehensions in all the other Left forces. Their present decision, we hope, will mark the beginning of a new and stable period for the Socialists in the camp of the Left forces in the country.

While this process of reforging unity goes on and may take time to achieve results, there is an immediate issue to which the leaderships of these parties have to address themselves. And that is the matter of effecting electoral understandings amongst themselves and with other Left and democratic parties and forces to give a joint fight to the forces of authoritarianism in the forthcoming elections to the nine State Assemblies. There should not be any exorbitant claims of strength on behalf of any party, the interests of offering a stiff fight together to the Congress(I) should become the over-riding factor. The CPI(M) which has already

initiated talks, along with the CPI, with the Akali Dal, the AIADMK and so on, will do everything in its capacity to help the process of effecting electoral understandings of all the democratic and secular parties.

We hope the leaders of these parties will not commit the mistake of going by the arithmetic of numbers. There are sections in their leaderships who have a general antipathy to conceding to the Left what is its legitimate due. The Left, particularly the CPI(M), because of its creditable record both in the seriousness with which it has been fighting the struggle against authoritarianism and in defending the interests of the people, has emerged from the last electoral battle with increased strength and enhanced prestige. The record of the Governments led by it in West Bengal and Tripura, and now in Kerala, is attracting people all over the country to a Left and democratic alternative. In contrast is the debacle of the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties. What is needed is not public appeals accompanied by exaggerated claims but real and sincere efforts to forge electoral understandings with full recognition of the importance of the Left forces in the coming battle.

The camouflaged Jana Sangh, the Bharatiya Janata Party, has also declared its aim as fighting and defeating the forces of authoritarianism. Coming as it does from a party whose Guruji has offered cooperation to the Congress(I), which openly allied with the Congress(I) in Kerala and whose RSS cadre secretly helped the Congress(I) to win by working against Lok Dal and Janata candidates in the Lok Sabha elections, it raises serious doubts about the bonafides of that party in the struggle against authoritarianism.

The electoral understandings and the election battle in the offing will themselves be immensely helped, if all the parties effecting such understandings come together urgently to take up some of the burning problems of the day like the defence of non-Congress(I) State Governments, ever-rising prices, scarcity of essential commodities, etc. The people need not be left as helpless victims, the Congress(I) can be prevented from scoring a runaway victory because of splitting of votes, if such a united movement is organised, if one agreed candidate of the opposition faces the Congress(I) in the Assembly elections.

Defeat Secessionist Policies

Editorial of "People's Democracy", May 18, 1980

The Decision of the Assam Students, etc., organisation to identify foreigners on their own and deport them is nothing but a fratricidal call for hunting down minorities and with it the rights of Indian citizenship. The leaders of these organisations now assume all power to determine who shall stay in Assam and who shall not. This is an open call for secession. The ground for this attack on Indian unity was being long prepared by the reactionary and secessionist leaders of the movement who were regularly encouraged by certain political parties like the Jana Sangh-dominated Janata to reap petty electoral advantage. For this petty gain some of these parties and a section of the bourgeois Press were prepared to stab the country in the back.

No doubt the exacerbation of the problem of foreigners in Assam is due to the opportunism of the Congress Governments, later on, the Janata Government. The reason why the problem has now taken this dangerous form is entirely due to the sense of alienation created by the Congress Party's policy of working for a dominant Centre, with State Governments reduced to the status of sub-feudatories. The Janata Government led by Morarji Desai had no other policy.

During the last three decades of its rule, the Congress did nothing to strengthen the sense of national solidarity and unity but did everything to fritter away this precious heritage of the freedom-struggle days. The British had to retreat before the mighty force of national unity which took nearly a hundred years to come into being.

The Congress Party, on each critical occasion, took steps which went contrary to the sense of national unity and imposed on the people of the States a sense of inferior status. The Congress opposed the formation of linguistic States—a legitimate democratic demand.

It made all efforts to suppress the agitation in cold blood killing scores of people.

For long it dreamed of imposing Hindi as the official language which helped the separatist agitations in Tamil Nadu at one time, helping the DMK to come forward and make a regional appeal.

By growingly appropriating all power to the Centre, it not only reduced democracy in the States to a farce, it enabled the vested interests dominating the State Governments to escape responsibility for solving people's problems and gave them an alibi. They pleaded their helplessness pointing that all power lay with the Centre. This enabled them to rouse regional and chauvinistic feelings against the Centre whenever it suited them, which finally went against the sense of national unity.

The concentration of power in the hands of the Centre reached its peak during the Emergency leading to further accentuation of regional and chauvinistic feelings. Short-sighted political parties and individuals appealed to local and caste feelings to fight this advanced of dictatorial forces instead of making a straight appeal for the unity of democratic forces in all States. Till this day the Congress(I) and other bourgeois-landlord parties fail to understand the political importance of a new redistribution of power between the Centre and the States and the role it can play in promoting a sense of equality among constituent units, and with it strengthening national unity. In this background the consequences of the capitalist path, the economic stagnation and crisis, the rising unemployment and massive growth of destitution in the rural areas and the general increase in impoverishment have dealt serious blows against national unity, undermining it and initiating a process of disintegration. Though all States and regions are confronted with honest toilers, who are now victims of the wrong policies of their leaders, have to be won over by the joint appeal of the minorities so that all fratricidal conflicts end.

The minorities in Assam have now had their own experience. They themselves as Indian citizens—both Hindus and Muslims—enthusiastically participated in the movement for indentification of foreigners and against their influx. But they found the edge of the movement turning against them and disowned its real aim—

the expulsion of Indian citizens for purposes of secession. Then they withdrew and took a neutral stand. But neutrality is not enough. They will be letting down their country and its unity if they do not organise themselves to protect their own rights.

It is a matter of satisfaction that minority organisations in Assam are realising the peril and slowly bestirring themselves. Simultaneously political parties interested in the unity of the country, the Left parties and others, are holding consultations to find a way to meet the crisis. The task before the minorities in Assam is difficult as they have mostly to stand on their own legs and brave all difficulties. Under President's rule, it is of course the duty of the Central Government to grant them all the protection they need. It is equally the duty of the political parties in Assam to stand behind the movement and give them courage to stand by national integrity and unity.

Above all it is the responsibility of the people all over the country, in all States, to raise their voice by all possible means to protect national unity and against the anti-national secessionist policies of the leaders of the Assam movement. It will be an act of treachery if the people in the States fail to speak in defence of the minorities, of their citizenship rights and leave the matter to be dealt with by the Government of India.

This is all the more necessary as certain organisations like the Jana Sangh—RSS dominated Janata had created the impression that it was only a dispute between the Government and the people of Assam. The latter must know that the entire people of India consider the stand of their leaders to be divisive and disruptive of national unity and reject it. The minorities in Assam should know that the people of India are behind them.

The Left parties of West Bengal helped by the Left Front Government have given a lead in this matter to the country and its democratic forces. They have appealed to the Assam leaders to desist from implementing the threat of deporting foreigners. If this appeal fails, then all the Left parties including the CPI will join together to express their opposition to the disruptive anti-national moves by various measures like meetings, demonstrations, hartals, etc. This will be a mighty people's demonstration in defence of

national unity. It will boost up the morale of the minorities in Assam and, one hopes, will have a sobering effect on student leaders of Assam. True to their sense of national solidarity and unity, the Left parties in West Bengal have only taken such steps to express their disapproval as will not disrupt the economic life of the people of Assam. Let people everywhere follow the footsteps of West Bengal and raise their voice against disruptive agencies in Assam and in defence of national unity. Their united protest will no doubt help Assam's masses to realise the gravity of the situation and turn away from the path of disruption along which their leaders are leading them.

Stand by the Minorities in Assam

Editorial of "People's Democracy", June 1, 1980

As we go to Press on May 27, The Reports that are coming from Assam are extremely disturbing. We are referring to the clashes, firings, deaths and imposition of curfew in another nine towns of the State the previous day.

The Assam agitation is now in its ninth month. We have written enough in the recent past about the character and course of the Assam agitation.

Neither the Congress in its three decades of rule over the country, nor the Janata Government that followed it, pursued any policies to strengthen the country's unity or the sense of national solidarity. On the contrary, opposition to the demand for formation of linguistic States, attempts to impose Hindi as the official language, the concentration of powers at the Centre reducing the States to an inferior status not much better than that of municipalities, starving them of funds for development activities, and so on, had all not only gone to torpedo the sense of unity and solidarity, they had also helped the disruptive forces in all States to rouse regional and chauvinist passions.

Simultaneously, the policies pursued by the ruling classes to build capitalism in the country had led to snails space economic development, stagnation and crisis, rising unemployment and massive growth of destitution in rural areas, general increase in impoverishment. This was ideal ground for the parochial interests in every State to raise dangerously disruptionist slogans like "sons of the soil" to pit the people of one State against another, people of even one region in a State against people of another region of the same State. What was being disrupted was not only the common

struggle that had to be fought against the anti-people policies of the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes, but the very integrity of the country.

It is this very challenge to the integrity of the country that the Assam agitation poses.

The leaders of the Assam agitation—the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU), The Gana Samgram Parishad (GSP) and those allied with them—claim that their struggle is against foreigners who have infiltrated into the State from the erstwhile East Pakistan and present Bangladesh. But these eight months have more than amply demonstrated that the issue of foreigners is only the fig-leaf, the agitation is directed mainly against non-Assamese Indian citizens—those from Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, U.P. and elsewhere, people who have been residents of Assam for generations. The seven thousand Bengali families who have fled Assam to West Bengal, with their numbers going up everyday, the fact that the camps set up inside Assam are filled with Indian citizens and not foreigners, would show who have been the real targets of the agitation.

The leaders of the agitation claim that their movement is peaceful. It may have been peaceful in regard to the State administration because that administration is so partisan to the agitation, because that administration is run under the diktats of the agitation leaders. But for the non-Assamese Indian citizens—the linguistic minorities in that State from West Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Rajasthan, etc., and the religious Muslim minority, it has been anything but peaceful. Their villages have been razed to the ground, their homes burnt down in an attempt to force them out of the State. Many have been killed, many have been maimed. Intimidation, coercion and terror are the order of the day. This is the peaceful character of the agitation.

Elsewhere in this issue is a report on the continuous attacks which the Assam agitators have been making on the leaders and cadres of the CPI(M) and its mass organisations, attacks which are now being extended to the CPI, RCPI, etc. The latest report from Nowgong is that CPI(M) cadres there have been attacked on May 27 and seven have been admitted to the hospital with grave injuries. The CPI(M) has become the special target because of its

consistent stand against secessionist activities and for the country's integrity.

The agitation has brought the economy of the State to the verge of collapse and is adversely affecting the economy of the whole country. While the agitation leaders' ban on taking out petroleum and petroleum products has affected the rest of the country, the ban on taking out jute, bamboo, plywood, etc., has rendered jobless tens of thousands inside the State with their families facing starvation. This is another face of the peaceful agitation!

The leaders of the agitation assumed powers to decide who should stay in Assam when they issued the ultimatum that they would themselves begin detecting and deporting foreigners after May 15. It was clear that this would lead to more violent attacks on the linguistic and religious minorities. And that precisely is what has happened.

In the night of May 16, there were clashes in Tinsukia, curfew was imposed on the town on the 17th. On the same day, the AASU and GSP leadership announced the extension of their agitation—gherao on the 19th and the 20th of all District and Sub-Divisional Forest Offices to demand "eviction of all foreigners in illegal occupation of reserve forests, tribal belts and other Government land"; non-cooperation movement for a week from the 21st by Government and semi-Government employees; both these in addition to taking "direct measures to detect and deport foreigners".

On May 19, the AASU requested Governor L.P. Singh to furnish it with a copy of the 1951 National Register of Citizens, obviously to go ahead by itself to prepare a register of Indian citizens. The President and Secretary of the AASU, on the 23rd, asked the people to keep in readiness to "solve the foreign nationals issue by themselves on the basis of the 1951 National Register of Citizens". Two days later, on May 25, the AASU in another statement appealed to the youth to join the volunteer force being set up all over the State to prepare a register of Indian citizens. The people themselves will have to identify and deport the foreign nationals, the statement said. The leaders of the agitation rejected every other date except 1951 as the cut-off year for identifying and deporting foreigners and they spurned every

offer for resumption of talks unless their demand was accepted. About the same time, they made two arrogant statements, one, that national political parties had become irrelevant in Assam and the second, that the all-party meet convened by the Prime Minister on May 31 was irrelevant in Assam.

The leaders of the agitation are behaving as if they are the final arbiters of Assam's destiny, their movement is nothing but a reactionary, dangerous secessionist one.

It is in this situation that the minorities in Assam—linguistic and religious—decided to organise a demands day on May 26 to protect their rights. For nine months, they have been the victims of the virulently chauvinist agitation. The partisan local administration had not given them any succour. The stage had come where they had to either declare that they intended to protect their rights as Indian citizens to stay in any State of the country or succumb to the pressure and terror of the chauvinists and quit.

The leaders of the agitation declared that the minorities should not hold their demands day. Assam was of the Assamese, how dare non-Assamese make any demand or demonstrate any protest? They turned May 26 into a day of clashes and curfew and are threatening more of the same in the coming days.

The linguistic and religious minorities of Assam, facing the most difficult situation, are fighting to defend themselves and also to safeguard the integrity of the country. It is the duty of all political parties in Assam to stand with them and strengthen them. And not only political parties in Assam, it is the duty of political parties and people all over the country to raise their voice in all possible ways in defence of national unity and against the secessionist policies of the Assam agitation leaders. It will be a betrayal to the cause of the country's integrity if they do not rally behind the minorities in Assam, their rights of citizenship, and leave everything to be settled by the Government which has already been procrastinating long enough.

The Left parties in West Bengal and Tripura have set a positive example by the successful bandhs in the two States to protest against the violence on the minorities in Assam. Parties in other States have to chalk out their own programmes for the same purpose.

It is at this stage that Vajpayee and his Bharatiya Janata Party and some other short-sighted political leaders are demanding the withdrawal of the army, etc., from Assam. Did they pause to think even for a moment as to what would be the fate of the minorities if all necessary measures are not taken to protect their lives and property?

No one is happy that such measures have become necessary today to protect the linguistic and religious minorities. But that is a situation created by the leaders of the Assam agitation and their secessionist activities. It is necessary that this situation is ended as quickly as possible, hence the urgency of hammering out a political solution to the problem.

The vested interests of Assam are out to throw all non-Assamese out to grab their land and property. The leaders of the agitation are serving their cause. The RSS and the Bharatiya Janata Party and short-sighted leaders of some other political parties are lending support to the agitation. Imperialist agencies with their "Operation Brahmaputra" are having a field-day. The latest report is of a clandestine organisation set up for the purpose of establishing an independent federal State in the North-Eastern region. These imperialist agencies engaged in their own nefarious anti-Communist activities are happy with the hatred of the agitation leaders to the CPI(M) and other Left parties.

By the time the all-party meet convened by the Prime Minister takes place on May 31, the election to the nine State Assemblies would have been over. Even those parties which have been using the Assam agitation for partisan aims, or keeping silent with the same purpose, should now give up these narrow considerations and help to hammer out a solution which will resolve the problem of "foreigners" without in any way affecting the citizenship rights of even a single Indian. Such a hammering out of a solution, along with all political parties declaring their determination to safeguard the citizenship rights of the linguistic and religious minorities in Assam, will enable the people of Assam to see that the entire people of India consider the stand of the agitation leaders as wrong, it will help them to reject the path of disruption along which they are being led by these leaders.

Indo-Soviet Joint Declaration Following Brezhnev's Visit To India

**Polit Bureau of CPI(M) Welcomes The Move
in Its Statement Dated December 13, 1980
Issued to the Press in New Delhi**

Coming in the midst of a rapidly deteriorating international situation because of the aggressive reversion to cold-war policies by the U.S. imperialists and their military adventurist activities in various parts of the world, the visit of L. I. Brezhnev to India and the Joint Declaration signed at the conclusion of his talks with the Government of India are a positive factor in favour of the peace forces in the world and a big rebuff to the U.S. warmongers and their supporters, including in our own country.

The visit also took place in the midst of serious accumulation of arms across the border, including preparations for the production of atomic weapons, and open conspiracies of imperialism against the integrity and sovereignty of the country. The strengthening of the Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty after Brezhnev's visit and the firm assertion by both sides that they resolutely stand for peaceful settlement of all international disputes will give a rebuff to the doings of all would be conspirators against our country.

Various elements in India, not excluding some in the ruling party also, had been exerting their efforts to get India to change its position, specially on Afghanistan. That their efforts have not succeeded is clear from the Joint Declaration. The Soviet Union has made it clear in Brezhnev's public pronouncements that once activities of intervention against Afghanistan are ended, prerequisites will emerge for the full political normalisation of the situation, including withdrawal of Soviet troops. As for South-East Asia the Joint Declaration has called for "normalising the situation in that area for making it a region of durable peace and stability".

Regarding West Asia, the Gulf region, the Joint Declaration has called for peaceful solutions on the basis of the well-known positions held by all anti-imperialist and progressive forces. Leonid Brezhnev put forward a very important five-point proposal for the Gulf region on the basis of the independence and integrity of the countries there. These proposals are sure to find support from all those who have been concerned with the U.S. military build-up in the region.

The Joint Declaration unequivocally calls for the dismantling of existing bases in the Indian Ocean as in Diego Garcia, preventing the creation of new bases and condemning any attempt to build up foreign military presence in the Indian Ocean under any pretext.

The agreements signed in the spheres of trade, industrial development, culture and so on, especially on the supply of much-needed petroleum and petroleum products, will further advance the already existing close economic relations between the two countries.

Though some elements tried to mar the occasion of his visit by hostile demonstrations, the Polit Bureau is happy to note that the Soviet President received a warm welcome in this country.

The Polit Bureau is confident that the Joint Declaration will be welcomed by the people of India as a document which advances the causes of anti-imperialism and world peace, as a document which constitutes a severe rebuff to the enemies inside the country of friendly Indo-Soviet relations.

Karnataka State Plenum Of CPI(M)*

The CPI(M)'s Karnataka State Committee's Organisational Plenum was held from December 24 to 28 last in Mysore. Inaugurating the Plenum at the Town Hall, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, General Secretary of the Party, said that the growth of the CPI(M) and other Left parties was a life and death issue for all those who are opposed to authoritarianism, for all those sections of the people who fight for a just and reasonable life, and for the very existence of the country itself. He explained how the Salkia Plenum of the Party had laid down the principle of extension and consolidation in order to enable the Party to implement the political line laid down by its Tenth Congress to fight for people's issues, to develop a Left and democratic front and a broad platform for protection and extension of democratic rights. Comrade E.M.S. noted the developing peasant struggles in the State and explained how the intervention of the Left and democratic parties enabled the Maharashtra peasants' agitation to be strengthened and properly led.

The Plenum was attended by 109 delegates from 17 of the 19 districts in the State. The Plenum noted that the Karnataka State Committee had earnestly tried to implement the Salkia Plenum decision by extending the Party to almost every district in the State. The Party earlier had no members in nine of the 19 districts to where the Party has now expanded, closely following the recent growth of trade union, Kisan Sabha and other mass organisations in these districts. Similarly, the task of consolidation, by strengthening the State Centre, organising a

bookshop, conducting Party classes in all the districts, evolving a proper method of annual check-up of membership, etc., were taken up by the State Committee in a serious way.

The Plenum adopted the report placed by the State Committee with certain amendments and it passed a resolution on Party organisation on the lines of the Salkia Plenum document. E.M.S. Namboodiripad was present on all the days and P. Ramamurti attended the Plenum for two days and guided the deliberations. The Plenum had elected a Presidium consisting of C. Nanjundappa, V. J. K. Nir, K. R. Sriyan, S. Savaridas and Mohammed Dastagir.

The Plenum noted that the mass organisations in which the Party worked had grown during the past two years, and mass struggles were breaking out throughout the State, which called for further extension and consolidation of the Party in a big way in order to enable it to intervene in these struggles and guide them properly.

The Plenum concluded on December 18 with a largely attended mass rally which was addressed by E.M.S. Namboodiripad, and presided over by M. K. Bhat, State Secretary of the CPI(M).

*Report Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, January 25, 1981.

CPI(M) Delegation In Vietnam And Laos*

At the invitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, a delegation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) consisting of Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet, member of the Polit Bureau in charge of external relations of the Central Committee, and Comrade Promode Dasgupta, member of the Polit Bureau and Secretary of the West Bengal State Committee of the Party, paid a visit to Vietnam from January 16 to January 24, 1981.

The CPI(M) delegation paid homage to President Ho Chi Minh at his Mausoleum and visited the place where he used to reside.

Comrade Le Duan, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, received the delegation and had an intimate talk with the delegation.

The delegation visited a number of economic and cultural institutions in the capital city of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Lan Son township.

The delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam (which met the CPI(M) delegation) comprised Comrade Nguyen Duy Trinh, member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee, Head of the delegation, Comrade Le Van Luong, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee and Secretary of the Hanoi City Party Committee, Comrade Nguyen Thanh Le, member of the Central Committee and Head of the External Relations Commission of the Central Committee, and

Comrade Phan Dinh Vinh, Deputy Head of the External Relations Commission of the Central Committee.

The Vietnamese delegation held talks with the CPI(M) delegation in an atmosphere of friendly solidarity and earnest comradeship.

The following is the text of the Joint Communiqué signed by the two delegations at the end of the talks:

The CPI(M) delegation warmly commends the Vietnamese people for their great achievements recorded during the last 50 years under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, founded and tempered by Comrade Ho Chi Minh, especially the historic and epoch-making victories of the resistance war against the U.S. imperialist aggressors for the liberation of South Vietnam and reunification of the Fatherland. It also warmly hails the working class and people of Vietnam who, by bringing into full play revolutionary heroism and the determination that "nothing is more precious than independence and freedom", have for the last five years scored major achievements in building Socialism as well as in defending their Fatherland.

The CPI(M) delegation as before protests against China's policy and attitude towards Vietnam. It earnestly calls upon China to stop all provocative acts against Vietnam and fully supports Vietnam's proposal on resuming without delay the talks to settle the differences arising from the relations between the two countries by means of peaceful negotiations with a view to restoring normal relations and the time-old friendship between Vietnam and China.

The CPI(M) delegation whole-heartedly applauds the positive foreign policy and indefatigable activities of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam aimed at steadily increasing the solidarity between the Socialist countries, the international Communist movement and the progressive forces in the world, extending unreserved support for the people's struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and Socialism. It values highly the great disinterested assistance provided by Vietnam to Kampuchea and Laos in keeping with the principles of proletarian internationalism. It supports Vietnam's consistent policy aimed at developing

*Report and Texts of Joint Communiqués were published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, February 8, 1981. Refer Document under Appendix (x) of this Volume.

relations of friendship and cooperation with South-East Asian countries in order to build South-East Asia into a zone of peace and stability.

The CPI(M) delegation pledges to continue doing its utmost to support the Vietnamese people's building of Socialism and defence of the Fatherland, contribute to the strengthening of the solidarity between the working class and people of India and the working class and people of Vietnam and to the development of the cooperation and friendship between the Republic of India and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam expresses its sincere gratitude to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) which has, for the last few decades, together with other democratic and progressive political parties and mass organisations in India, initiated broad and deep movements of support to the Vietnamese people's revolutionary cause. Throughout Vietnam's war of resistance against the U.S. imperialist aggression, the CPI(M) launched many continuous, active and vigorous campaigns in support of Vietnam, which brought to the Vietnamese people the solidarity and valuable stimulation of millions of workers and people of India. After Vietnam achieved complete victory in 1975, the CPI(M) continued supporting the Vietnamese people's building of Socialism and defence of their Fatherland, consolidating the friendship and militant solidarity between the two peoples.

The delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam warmly applauds the CPI(M) for its strong condemnation of the genocidal Pol Pot-Ieng Sary clique and for its support for the Kampuchean revolution under the leadership of the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea as well as its support for the Laotian revolution under the leadership of the People's Revolutionary Party of Laos.

The delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam values highly the important contribution made by the CPI(M) to the Indian people's cause of national independence, democracy and social progress, to the common struggle of the peoples in Asia and all over the world for peace, national independence, democracy and Socialism.

The delegation of the Communist Party of Vietnam warmly welcomes the foreign policy of peace and friendship carried out by the Government of Republic of India and values highly the latter's positive role in the non-aligned movement.

The two delegations rejoice at the ever-developing relations of friendship and co-operation between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of India in the interests of the two peoples, of peace and stability in the region and the world.

The two delegations emphasise the necessity of building a broad world people's front to struggle persistently for peace, national independence, democracy, social progress and detente in international relations.

The two delegations resolutely support the Laotian people's struggle to defend their national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The two sides express their complete support for the Kampuchean people who, under the leadership of the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea, are foiling all acts and schemes of intervention and subversion by imperialism and international reaction. The two sides declare that the situation in Kampuchea is irreversible. The two sides applaud the Republic of India's decision to recognise the People's Revolutionary Council of Kampuchea. The two sides fully support the four-point proposal put forward by the Kampuchean Foreign Minister at the Vietnam-Laos-Kampuchea Foreign Ministers' Conference held in Vietnam on July 18, 1980. The two sides severely denounce the decision to hold an international conference on the so-called 'question of Kampuchea' considering it an intolerable intervention in the internal affairs of Kampuchea.

The two sides express their complete support for the Afghan people's struggle under the leadership of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan headed by Comrade Babrak Karmal to safeguard and develop the achievements of the April Revolution. The two sides completely support the Palestinian people's struggle under the leadership of the PLO for their national and fundamental rights including their right to establish an independent State on their territory.

The two sides support the conversion of the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace and demand the dismantling of the U.S. base of Diego Garcia and other imperialist military bases in the Indian Ocean region. The two sides condemn the war-like and aggressive acts of imperialism headed by U.S. imperialism against national independence and sovereignty, threatening security of the countries in West Asia. The two sides express full support for the Namibian people's struggle led by SWAPO for their national independence and sovereignty. The two delegations severely condemn the U.S. imperialists for their placing and developing the middle-range missiles in the Western European region, thus menacing seriously security and peace in Europe and the world.

The two delegations declare their full support for the struggle of the countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and in the non-aligned movement against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, zionism and hegemonism.

The two sides will do their best to struggle for solidarity in the international Communist movement on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. The two delegations extend their solidarity to the working class, the labouring people and progressive forces in the capitalist countries who are stepping up their struggle for better living conditions, democracy, social progress and peace.

The two delegations express their satisfaction at the fine results of the CPI(M) delegation's visit to Vietnam. The two sides affirm their determination to strive their utmost to further consolidate the militant solidarity between the Parties and people.

CPI(M) Delegation in Laos

At the invitation of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, a delegation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) consisting of Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Comrade Promode Dasgupta, members of the Polit Bureau, paid a visit to Laos from January 24 to January 26, 1981.

The CPI(M) delegation had a meeting with Comrade Kaysone Phomvihane, General Secretary of the People's Revolutionary

Party, which resulted in a free and frank exchange of views in a warm and fraternal atmosphere.

The delegation visited a number of places of economic and cultural importance in Vientiane and paid a visit to the Plain of Jars which was a centre of the struggle for national salvation for a long time, and paid homage to the heroes who had laid down their lives in the cause of national independence and for a new social system. The delegation also visited a cooperative to see the pace of social transformation in agriculture.

The delegation of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, consisting of Comrade Sisomphone Lovomasy, member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the Central Committee, Comrade Salyvongh Khamaao, Comrade Khaune Chandong and Comrade Wandhanany Vonghichit, held talks with the CPI(M) delegation in a spirit of proletarian solidarity and Communist fraternity.

The following is the text of the Joint Communiqué signed by the two delegations at the end of the talks:

The CPI(M) delegation applauds the struggle of the people under the leadership of the People's Revolutionary Party, especially the heroic struggle waged against the French colonialists and the U.S. imperialists, for the liberation of their country. Uniting all the ethnic minorities in a National Front and combining true patriotism with proletarian internationalism, the Lao people wrote a glorious chapter in the history of national freedom and social progress.

The CPI(M) delegation supports the stand of the People's Revolutionary Party and the people of other countries of Indo-China in their struggle against imperialism and international reaction who want to destroy their independence and freedom and disturb peace in South-East Asia and the world.

The CPI(M) delegation appreciates the efforts of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos to build a Socialist society in a backward country ravaged by the war of aggression for about two decades.

The delegation of the People's Revolutionary Party of Laos expresses its sincere gratitude to the CPI(M) which, during the last

two decades, along with other Left and democratic forces, mobilised the Indian people in solidarity with the struggle of the Lao people for national salvation. The delegation supports the fight of the progressive forces of India for democracy and social progress.

The two delegations are happy over the developing relations of friendship between Laos and India.

The two delegations support the struggle of the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The two Parties will continue to make efforts for solidarity in the international Communist movement based on Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, and express their firm support to the working class and toiling people of the capitalist countries who are strengthening their fight for better living conditions, democracy, social progress and peace.

The two delegations express satisfaction at the results of the visit of the CPI(M) delegation and decide to further strengthen the fraternal bonds between the two Parties.

Speech in Welcome of CPI(M) Delegates

The following is the text of the speech made by Comrade Nguyen Duy Trinh at the banquet in honour of the CPI(M) delegation on January 16, 1981:

Dear and respected Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Comrade Promode Dasgupta,

We warmly welcome you, who have accepted the invitation from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam to pay a friendly visit to Vietnam, bringing to our Party and people the deep feelings and sympathy to all the members and cadres of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and from the fraternal working class and people of India.

We are very glad indeed that your visit to Vietnam this time occurs at the moment when our National Assembly has just passed the new constitution aimed at ensuring the success of our construction of Socialism throughout the country and our defence of the fatherland.

Our National Assembly has also passed the State Plan for 1981, starting the Third Five-Year Plan for economic and cultural development. Our whole Party and people are entering this new year with a spirit of buoyant emulation, actively preparing for the Fifth Congress of our Party to be held late this year.

Reviewing the glorious revolutionary tradition and looking forward to the bright future of our country, the Vietnamese people are determined to build successfully Socialism and to defend steadfastly our sacred fatherland, resolutely joining the Socialist

countries and other nations in the world in the struggle for peace, national independence, democracy and Socialism.

We warmly acclaim the great contribution made by your Party to the valiant struggle of the Indian people for national independence, democracy and social progress.

We highly appreciate your important contribution to the struggle of the working class and people in Asia and the world for national independence and Socialism.

At this meeting, alive with friendship and militant solidarity, we feel deeply moved as we remember what your Party has done in support of the Vietnamese people's revolutionary cause during the last few decades. Untold numbers of cadres and members of your Party have tirelessly campaigned for a broad movement in support of the anti-U.S. resistance war for national salvation of the Vietnamese people, which has brought precious encouragement to our compatriots and fighters. In the recent years, your Party has contributed an important part to promoting the Indian people's movement to support the Socialist construction and the defence of our fatherland.

On this occasion, from the bottom of our heart, we would like to express our deep and sincere gratitude to the Central Committee, to all the cadres and members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

We propose a toast to the health of Comrade General Secretary Namboodiripad and other leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

May the militant solidarity between the two Parties and peoples be ever consolidated and developed.

We wish Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Comrade Promode Dasgupta the best of health and success in this friendly visit to Vietnam.

CPI(M)'s Telugu Daily Inaugurated*

Prajasakti, the Telugu daily, inaugurated at a function in Vijayawada on July 31, 1981 is the sixth daily brought out by the CPI(M), the other five being *Deshabhimani* (Malayalam), *Theekkathir* (Tamil), *Ganasakthi* (Bengali), *Tripurar Katha* (Bengali) and *Lok Lehār* (Punjabi).

The inauguration indicated a new stage in the development of the CPI(M), and the Left movement in general, in Andhra Pradesh. It witnessed tremendous enthusiasm on the part of the members and friends of the CPI(M) as well as among those who belong to other Left and democratic parties. Greetings were offered by the spokesmen of the CPI, the Congress and other opposition parties who attended the meeting. They hoped that the new addition to the Left Press in Andhra Pradesh would further strengthen the united movements and struggles in the State.

Ever since the Communist Party was split in 1964, the CPI(M) has been running bi-weekly and weekly journals in Andhra Pradesh. Only for a few weeks during election campaigns had the Party been able to bring out a daily and that, too, to cater to the requirements of the election campaign. This was totally inadequate to meet the situation since it failed to explain to the people the policies of the Party as they have necessarily to change in a changing situation.

Of late, however, the activities of the Party, the strengthening of its own organisation and its active participation in the joint movements of Left and democratic forces have underlined the need for transforming the existing weekly. The one factor that

*Report published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, August 16, 1981.

had prevented the State leaders from taking the necessary step so far was shortage of the finances required to undertake the venture. The printing machinery together with its accessories, construction of building and other requirements were increasingly becoming more and more costly and hence the venture could be undertaken only if there was adequate response from the people.

Fortunately for the Party, the response has been magnificent. The call for funds to help the starting of the daily was enthusiastically responded to. Enrolling of life subscribers each of whom pays Rs. 1102 in return for a copy of the paper for life, donations from sympathisers, deposits from agents—these have been the forms in which over Rs. ten lakhs were collected when the total requirement is more than double this amount. The State leaders of the Party are quite confident that once the paper comes out and reaches the subscribers everyday, it will be possible to run it efficiently, make the paper stand on its own legs in course of time and in the meantime, collect additional funds for making it work more efficiently.

The first number dated and reaching the readers on the morning of August 1, was released at a well-attended hall meeting in Vijayawada in the evening of July 31. M. Hanumantha Rao, the editor of the paper, welcomed the gathering and P. Sundarayya presided over it.

Formally inaugurating the paper, Party General Secretary E. M. S. Namboodiripad explained the policy of the Party which *Prajasakti* would be popularising. He appealed to Party members and sympathisers to do everything to increase the circulation of the paper, and also to give their criticisms and suggestions to the editorial comrades, so that they can constantly improve the political content of the paper and the technical quality of its get-up.

E. M. S. Namboodiripad drew attention to the growing unity of the Left and democratic forces in which Andhra Pradesh was playing a significant role. Particularly significant in this context are the joint actions initiated by the CPI(M) and the CPI along with other Left and democratic forces. This, of course, does not mean that there are no differences here between the two parties.

On the contrary, vital differences still continue, as can be seen from the political articles which appear in *People's Democracy* and *New Age*. These continuing differences and exchanges on issues on which the two parties differ do not preclude, in fact, make it all the more necessary that the two parties along with other Left and democratic forces forge unity in action on issues on which they agree. Exchanges of views on issues of differences, therefore, should not be allowed to stand in the way of growing unity of action.

Spokesmen of other Left and democratic parties as well as the editor of the CPI daily *Visalandhra* appreciated the sentiments expressed by EMS, Sundarayya and Hanumantha Rao. Sundarayya and Hanumantha Rao explained in detail, how the paper proposed to carry on its work and appealed to all comrades and friends to extend their cooperation.

P.B. Meeting In Preparation For Party Congress

**Communique Published in "People's Democracy",
Of October 4, 1981.**

The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) met in New Delhi on September 26-28, 1981. The meeting of P.B. was convened to start the preparations for the Eleventh Congress of the Party to be held at the end of January next.

The P.B. discussed the outline for the drafts of the Political-Organisational Review Report and the Political Resolution. The drafts will be prepared in the light of the discussions that have taken place and they will be placed before the Central Committee which is to meet in the last week of October. The Central Committee will release the finalised drafts by the middle of November so that they will be available in various languages for discussions in the entire Party two months before the Party Congress, according to the provisions of the Party Constitution.

The Polit Bureau discussed and decided on the dates of various State Conferences and the Polit Bureau members who would attend them.

While discussing the outline for the drafts, the P.B. came to the conclusion that the political tactical line pursued by the Party in the four years since its Tenth Congress has stood the test of time and earned good dividends. It noted that the membership of the Party has risen from 122,051 in 1977 on the basis of which the Tenth Congress was held, to 267,232 this year. Also, that the membership of class and mass organisations has nearly doubled. The Party's voting strength has been consistently increasing as shown in the recent Lok Sabha and Assembly by-elections and municipal elections in West Bengal. The Party has the largest number of members in Parliament among the Opposition parties, and is the largest Opposition Group in the Lok Sabha.

On international and national developments, the P.B. noted that the P.B. and C.C. found themselves more unified than ever before since the Party began existing separately.

It noted with satisfaction that, despite all limitations, Left and democratic unity has advanced, and Left unity has scored some successes. The struggle against authoritarianism and in defence of democracy, though it had to go through many vicissitudes, has deepened and the resistance to the drive towards authoritarianism has grown. The struggle against the Essential Services Maintenance Bill, corruption, etc., were fought unitedly by all the Opposition parties in the last session of Parliament.

The P.B. noted with satisfaction the role played by the Party for the success of the March 26 Kisan March, the National Convention of Trade Unions and Federations in Bombay in June, and the Student-Youth March in Delhi on September 15. Though it cannot be said that a breakthrough has already been made in the Hindi-speaking areas, a dent has certainly been made there as could be seen in the Kisan March and the Student-Youth March, where the main mobilisation was from these areas, with the vast majority of the participants coming from States like Bihar, U.P., Haryana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

The P.B. noted with pride that the three State Governments of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura have significant achievements to their credit. It was happy that the CPI had joined the Left Front in West Bengal. It noted with concern the attempts being made by the Congress(I) to destabilise the Left Democratic Front Government in Kerala and expressed its hope that the constituents of the front would foil these attempts and strengthen the unity of the alliance.

After the Salkia Plenum, there have been achievements in the organisational front of the Party, too. The mobilisation from the Hindi-speaking areas in the Delhi marches has already been mentioned. Some of the tasks laid down by the Plenum have yet to be implemented. These will be taken up by the Party Congress and the Party will march forward even more rapidly.

Ten Years of Indira Regime and Two Years of Janata Rule: India—1966-1979*

As the elections approach, monopoly newspapers have started "selling" Indira Gandhi to the electorate. She herself of course has always projected herself as a saviour and a messiah, even after the people of this country had ended her tyranny by throwing her out of power in March 1977; now her cries are becoming shriller. And the whole gang of sycophants, hoodlums and regamuffins that constitutes her entourage is dutifully echoing her words with matching gusto.

As a result, a veritable cacophony of pro-Indira noises is building up which presents her years in power as some sort of an idyllic period, defends even her infamous Emergency terror and projects her as the hope for the future. Perhaps she and her camp-followers are proceeding on the assumption that lies if told with a straight face and repeated often enough may be mistaken for the truth by some people. It becomes worthwhile, therefore, to recapitulate the well-known record of the Indira era.

The most significant feature of the Indira era was a terrific decline in the absolute living standards of the toiling masses. This decline which is revealed with stark clarity even through official statistics, was a result of three concurrent phenomena: declining real wages of industrial as well as agricultural workers and real salaries of the bulk of middle class employees as a result of inflation; declining employment opportunities as a result, among other things, of industrial recession; and the growing pauperisation of petty producers who are thrown into the ranks of the labourers. Indira Gandhi now claims that she had brought

*Published by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) as a booklet for Election Campaign before 1980 Lok Sabha elections.

inflation under control. This lie is certainly an addition to her stock of lies; when in power she used to admit the obvious fact of inflation but underplay it by referring to the "worldwide" (i.e., capitalist worldwide) phenomenon of inflation and claiming that other countries were doing even worse than India as far as inflation was concerned. Throughout the Indira period, apart from two brief lulls—one in 1968-69 and the other in 1975-76—there was continuous and raging inflation. The Emergency was often portrayed as a period which saw the elimination of inflation, but during the Emergency itself there was a sharp rise of over 12 per cent between March 1976 and March 1977 in the index of wholesale prices. Taking the Indira era as a whole, between March 1966 and March 1977, the percentage increases recorded in the various official price-indices were as follows:

Wholesale index for all commodities	: 135.4
Consumer price index for industrial workers	: 117.8
Consumer price index for urban non-manual employees	: 111.1

The price-indices in other words more than doubled in these eleven years, implying an average annual growth rate of over ten per cent. By contrast the average rate of price increase during the period 1952-53 to 1965-66, though quite substantial in itself, works out to around six per cent. Thus the Indira years saw a dramatic acceleration of inflation in the economy. But this was accompanied by a much slower growth in the wage-rates and salaries in money terms, so that the real wages were drastically reduced. A Planning Commission document summarises Labour Bureau data on the real earnings of industrial workers in the form of the following table:

Year	Index of real earnings of workers with wage incomes less than Rs. 400 per month
1961	100
1966	95
1971	101
1975	66

Source: "Recent wage trends," Planning Commission (mimeo).

Since according to another official series (since discontinued) on the index of real earnings of workers earning less than Rs. 200 per month, the 1961 level was only 6.8 per cent above the 1939 level, it is almost certain that wages of industrial workers in 1975 were lower than in 1939. So fantastic was the magnitude of the real wage decline in the Indira era that the level of real wages in 1975 was only two-thirds of what it was in 1961 and well below what it was way back in 1939.

But the workers were not the only ones to suffer. White collar employees including Government employees witnessed a massive erosion of their real incomes owing to the inflationary upsurge. The Third Pay Commission Report gives the following figures on the index of real emoluments of Central Government employees:

	1960	1972		1960	1972
Peon	100	105	Class II	100	63
LDC	100	91	Class IA	100	56
UDC	100	82	Class IB	100	55
Assistant	100	78	Class IC	100	58

Source: The Third Pay Commission Report, 1973, p. 22.

If this was the plight of Central Government employees, the position of State Government employees can well be imagined.

The real wage decline of agricultural workers was equally phenomenal. From the summary report of the Rural Labour Enquiry, 1974-75, we can compute the daily real earnings from agriculture of an average agricultural labourer for 1963-64 and 1974-75:

**Daily Real Earnings from Agriculture
Per Agricultural Labourer at 1960-61 Prices (Rs.)**

	1963-64	1974-75	Percentage decline
Male	1.20	0.88	26.7
Female	0.80	0.62	22.5
Children	0.60	0.49	18.3

Source: Computed from Rural Labour Enquiry, 1974-75, Summary Report.

The daily real earnings of agricultural labourers fell by 20 to 25 per cent owing to the fact that increases in daily money earnings could not keep pace with the increases in the consumer price index for agricultural labourers.

Along with the decline in wage-rates, however, there was also the decline in employment opportunities. For agricultural labour households again, we have the following information:

**Days Employed Annually Per Worker
(Agricultural Labour households)**

		Wage employment		Self-plus salary employment	Total Employment*
		Agri-culture	Non-Agri-culture		
Men	1963-64	208	27	31	272
	1974-75	185	25	36	246
Women	1963-64	138	15	27	184
	1974-75	129	14	36	179
Children	1963-64	167	35	63	280
	1974-75	145	36	83	254

*Total includes days for which work-type was not known.

Source: Same as above.

Under this dual onslaught of declining daily wages and declining employment opportunities, agricultural labourers were pushed to the very extremes of penury where their annual real earnings fell drastically to virtual rock bottom. The table below gives the figures:

**Real Earnings Per Agricultural Labourer
at 1960-61 Prices (Rs.)**

	1963-64	1974-75	Percentage decline
Male	282.53	185.10	34.5
Female	120.75	60.48	49.3
Children	121.75	57.96	52.4

Source: Same as above.

Employment opportunities outside agriculture were shrinking as well. Total employment in the organised private sector hardly changed at all between end-March 1966 and end-March 1977, the respective figures being 68.13 lakhs and 68.67 lakhs. It did increase in the public sector from 93.79 lakhs on the former date to 138.76 lakhs on the latter. Total employment in the organised sector—taking the public and the private sectors together—increased by 28 per cent over these 11 years which means roughly at 2.5 per cent per annum on average. This increase, in other words, was just about enough to absorb the natural increase in the work-force. In the unorganised sector, on the other hand, the growth of employment was much lower. In fact, the credit squeeze and the recession played havoc with the “tiny enterprises” and lakhs of workers were retrenched owing to the closure of several thousands of these enterprises. Whether we take the unorganised sector alone, or the organised and the unorganised sectors together, it is clear that the growth of employment fell below the natural increase in the work-force implying declining employment opportunities for the workers.

The symptoms of declining employment opportunities manifest themselves in other ways as well. The number of applicants on the live register of employment exchanges increased from 25.85 lakhs at end-December 1965 to 97.84 lakhs at end-December 1976, nearly four times the figure on the earlier date. At the same time, the number of placements as a ratio of the number of applicants on the live register declined from 22.05 per cent in 1965 to around four per cent in 1976. In other words, as the queue of the unemployed job-seekers lengthened, the ratio of persons actually finding jobs out of this queue declined sharply.

This, however, is by no means all. Not only were the workers, both rural and urban, made to suffer a drastic decline in their living standards, but a vast mass of petty producers was pauperised and made to join the ranks of the workers. This, of course, is a phenomenon characteristic of capitalist development in all its phases. In India, too, this phenomenon can be seen to operate throughout the post-Independence period. On the basis of National Sample Survey data, the number of landless

households increased from 6.6 million in 1954 to 21.9 million in 1971-72. Of this increase, not less than nine million came from the ranks of displaced tenants according to several observers. A comparison of the 1961 Census with the 1971 Census confirms this process of pauperisation. The jump in the percentage of agricultural labourers in the male work-force in the rural areas from 15.3 for the country as a whole in the 1961 Census to 24.9 in the 1971 Census was certainly a result, among other things, of this pauperisation process, a fact which is clearly borne out by innumerable micro case-studies.

We thus have, in the Indira era, all three processes operating simultaneously: the pauperisation of petty producers, a decline in employment opportunities and a decline in real wage-rates. The combination was deadly and inflicted an almost unbelievable amount of hardship on the toiling people. At the other pole, as is to be expected, the real incomes and assets of the landlords, the monopolists, the multinationals, and the big merchant capitalists multiplied. After all, per capita real income did not decline in the country; it increased, howsoever sluggishly.

And if the real incomes of the toiling masses were registering a phenomenal decline in absolute terms, somebody else in the economy must have been recording significant real income gains; this somebody else was precisely the classes and groups mentioned above. Landlords of all descriptions gained from the so-called “Green Revolution”. Those of them who went in for the new technology gained because of the higher yields; those of them who did not go in for the new technology gained nevertheless since the very profitability of the new technology raised land values and hence rents. Landlords together with capitalists of all descriptions and the big traders gained from the terrific inflation.

And finally, the big industrial capitalists and multinationals gained from a whole range of budgetary transfers like export subsidies and tax concessions that became the order of the day. The assets of the top 20 monopoly houses, which include both Indian and foreign giants, increased by as much as 76 per cent between March 1972 and March 1977 or at an annual average rate

of 15 per cent. Their profits increased even faster. The houses of Tata, Birla, Mafatlal and Singhania alone increased their profits from Rs. 113.68 crores in 1972 to Rs. 197.98 in 1975, i.e., at an average rate of 25 per cent per annum. Their rate of profit in other words increased substantially. And all this refers only to profits as declared in the company accounts. The huge concealed profits whose existence is covered up through spuriously inflated cost figures, e.g., in case of foreign companies through inflated values of imports from parent multinational corporations, and in case of Indian companies through exaggerated figures under headings like "other expenses", are likely to have made the growth in the monopolists' share even more pronounced.

Capitalist development, as emphasised by Marx, inevitably implies the growth of wealth at one pole and of misery at the other. Where this capitalist development is occurring on the basis of a feudal and semi-feudal agrarian structure, as in our country, the contrast between the two poles is all the sharper.

The vast mass of the population ruthlessly caught in the vicious grip of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation provides only a narrow and restricted market for developing capitalism. The State inevitably steps in to widen this market through its own expenditure and investment. But the financing of State investment and expenditure in our economy is carried out not by appropriating the economic surplus going into the hands of the landlords, the monopolists and the multinationals, but by reliance upon indirect taxes, upon deficit financing and upon so-called foreign "aid". Inflation and impoverishment of the masses and a drift towards greater reliance upon "aid" and, hence, greater concessions to, and collaboration with, foreign finance capital are therefore inevitable concomitants of capitalist development in our country.

But the contradictions of capitalist development get necessarily accentuated in the process. The impoverishment of the people further narrows the market; the increasing outflows on account of debt-servicing and on account of the operations of multinationals further reduce the investible resources domestically available. The market problem faced by developing capitalism becomes accentuated; its solution through State intervention becomes even

more ruthlessly anti-people. Moreover, the monopolists and landlords claim larger and larger shares of the budgetary resources in the form of subsidies of various kinds and this only multiplies the burdens upon the people. The deepening crisis of capitalist development in our country is thus caused by and temporarily solved by the growing impoverishment of the toiling masses. A crucial role of the bourgeois-landlord Governments in our country in general, and of the Indira regime in particular, has been to enforce this growing impoverishment upon the people.

The method adopted by the Indira regime to remain in power in face of this growing mass impoverishment and mass discontent was a combination of deception and terror, with the reliance upon terror increasing over time until it culminated in the general terror of the Emergency regime.

The Ordinance on bank nationalisation, the split in the Congress Party and the slogan of "Garibi Hatao" were all meant to deceive the people that she was a crusader against the monopolists and the landlords. This stratagem paid her dividends: a massive majority in the 1971 election to the Lok Sabha.

Instead of the promised land reforms, there was an accentuation of the inequalities in rural incomes and assets under the impact of the so-called "Green Revolution". In fact, to this date, out of the 630 lakh acres of estimated surplus area at the time the ceiling legislations were enacted, the total surplus land acquired by the Government amounts to a paltry 24 lakh acres and the land actually distributed to a mere 12 lakh acres. Instead of the promised attack on monopolists, there was a "liberalisation" of the licensing procedures which removed a large number of even such restrictions upon them as had existed earlier. Instead of an attack on multinationals, there was the so-called import "liberalisation" which opened up the Indian market even more for them. Instead of the so-called "Garibi Hatao", there was a phenomenal inflationary phase starting from 1972 that made the working people's misery even more acute. In fact, so completely was the Government a prisoner of the vested interests that, instead of using the foodgrain stocks it had in 1972 for distributing to the people through the public distribution system, it sold these in the

open market where these were bought up by grateful speculators. Instead of the so-called "progressive" economic policy, there was surrender to the dictates of the World Bank.

In the mass struggles that erupted, the working class took the lead. As the workers resorted to strike battles to maintain their precarious living standards threatened by rampant inflation, the Indira regime stepped up its attacks on the working class. In the name of combating inflation it imposed a "freeze" on wages, even though prices were increasing, and snatched away any increases in workers' emoluments in the form of a "compulsory deposit". By this Ordinance the Indira regime ensured that the workers and middle class employees could not defend their living standards in face of inflation. Working class resistance continued, the finest example of united fight being the railway workers' 20-days strike and the all-India general strike organised in support of it on May 15, 1974. The Indira regime used the most brutal methods against the striking railwaymen.

Alongside the working class movement there developed powerful movements against the Congress Government in Gujarat and Bihar. The suppression of these movements in which hundreds of thousands of people participated brought the Indira regime into confrontation with parties outside the Left opposition.

The slide towards dictatorship that began was punctuated as much by crass vulgarity as by open corruption. The media completely under her thumb discovered ever new adulatory epithets for her. The State-controlled radio became so much her mouthpiece, so totally committed to spreading her lies, that in popular parlance it came to be known as "All-Indira Radio". Senior Congress leaders vied with one another in sycophancy. And a series of scandals like the Pondicherry licence scandal, and above all the Maruti scandal involving her son, gave the people only a brief glimpse of the depths of corruption and degradation to which public life had sunk under the Indira regime. Even the murder of the Railway Minister, L. N. Mishra, her one-time close confidant who apparently had secret second thoughts about her, involved, as it now appears through the labours of Justice Tarkunde, an intricate plot traceable to one of her close and trusted

henchmen. Corruption, vulgarity, brutality, terror, blackmail, and murder—these became the hallmarks of political life.

The Allahabad High Court judgement burst into this putrid atmosphere. Indira Gandhi was not only unseated but also debarred from contesting any elections for six years owing to her having indulged in malpractices during the 1971 elections. When she did not get the required "stay order" from the Supreme Court, to meet the danger to her personal power, Indira Gandhi declared the Internal Emergency and put her opponents both inside and outside her own party behind the bars. The Emergency carried further the utter degeneration and putrefaction of public life which had set in under the Indira regime. It deprived the people of all civil liberties including even the right to life. The Press was censored. In this atmosphere of terror the Constitution was amended to legalise retrospectively all the illegal acts and malpractices which Indira Gandhi had been convicted of by the Allahabad High Court. The whole country was terrorised, the people gagged and the Constitution altered just to ensure that one person, Indira Gandhi, stays in power.

Having undertaken this act of supreme arrogance and cynicism, she now ran the country with a cabal of thugs, criminals and shady henchmen—Banshi Lal, the notorious Chief Minister of Haryana who perpetrated inhuman atrocities upon his opponents, V. C. Shukla, a playboy-cum-bully, Yashpal Kapur, a major-domo skilled in the art of dirty tricks, R. K. Dhawan, her Private Secretary, and a few others formed this cabal. They were presided over by Sanjay Gandhi who shot into overnight prominence as a youth leader and heir-apparent.

Though the immediate motive behind the declaration of the Emergency was the maintenance of Indira Gandhi's dictatorial rule, the historical role of Emergency was to suppress the people, particularly the working class in the interests of the ruling classes, particularly the monopoly capitalists. To be sure Indira Gandhi in a move to canonise her evil designs came out with a 20-point programme for improving the lot of the poor and announced the abolition of bondage among agricultural labourers. These, however, were all fake. The ludicrousness of the Government's

effort in abolishing bondage is borne out by statistics: according to the 27th round of the NSS more than half of the seven million wage workers in the countryside toil from dawn to dusk for usurious moneylenders or virtually free of charge to pay off small debts incurred years ago. A recent study by the National Labour Institute and the Gandhi Peace Foundation has shown that there are 2.3 million bonded agricultural labourers in nine States of the country. As against these figures, official efforts had succeeded in identifying 101,972 bonded labourers until March 31, 1978, and of these only 35,000 are claimed to have been "rehabilitated" so far, which amounts to hardly one per cent of the total number of bonded labourers.

While the "progressive" measures were thus a hoax, the attack on workers was real and ruthless. Having disarmed the working class through the ban on strikes, the Indira regime imposed upon them a massive cut in money wages through the Bonus Ordinance. The magnitude of the cut varied across industries and across units, but the average magnitude for industry as a whole was seven/eight per cent of the total annual wage-bill. State power was thus directly used for raising the degree of exploitation of the working class by the monopolists.

Workers were not the only group to suffer. With bumper harvests in 1975-76, there was a disastrous fall in the peasantry's commodity prices. This fall, however, was not passed on to the consumers, so that middlemen, big traders and millers and landlords enjoyed vastly widened profit-margins. And finally, the severe credit-squeeze hit small establishments and the workers employed therein. Thousands of small units closed down and the workers were rendered idle. With the credit squeeze, moreover, small ancillary units were not paid in time by their customers, the large units controlled by the monopolists. This brought many to bankruptcy. The Emergency, therefore, was used to launch a frontal attack on small capitalists, peasants and above all, the workers while it bolstered the gains of big traders, landlords and, above all, the monopoly industrialists.

This was a course of events much to the liking of not only the ruling classes but also imperialist agencies like the International

Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The latter in particular came to play an even more decisive role in policy-making during the Emergency.

The World Bank's set advice to the underdeveloped countries, though expressed in varying languages, has always been: devote your resources to agriculture and population control and not so much to industry, and certainly not to heavy and basic industries; if you want industries, let multinationals set them up for you, and for this purpose create a congenial environment for them by removing trade restrictions, dismantling industrial licensing, allowing a freer play of market forces, and, above all, by keeping wages down and disciplining the working class. While in the post-colonial period, underdeveloped countries have tried to break out of the pattern of international division of labour imposed by their colonial masters over decades whereby they produced only primary products for the advanced industrial capitalist countries, the World Bank's advice to them is aimed directly at frustrating this effort. It aims to prevent any independent industrialisation in Third World countries which is out of keeping with the global operation of the multinationals. And the Indira regime swallowed the World Bank line. "Freer play of market forces" in the name of efficiency and export promotion, opening up to multinationals in the name of revamping technology (it was the Indira regime that had promoted the notorious BHEL-Siemens deal), and attacks on workers in the name of anti-inflationary struggle became the order of the day. It was this World Bank line, again, which was swallowed in mounting the unprecedented assault on the population through the compulsory sterilisation campaign. Population control needs a prolonged period of education and is itself an outcome of economic development. But under the fantastic theory that population control comes first, the Emergency regime herded lakhs of poor, helpless and protesting people into hastily constructed sterilisation camps where overworked doctors performed instant operations upon them in filthy surroundings. If ever there was an instance of a Government treating its entire people as if they were some contemptible species of animals, this was it. While daily protesting its love for

the poor, the Government behaved towards the poor with a cynical contempt reminiscent only of the Brazilian Government's contempt for the Indian tribes and the Nazi Government's contempt for the Jews.

While sterilisation represented a general atrocity upon the population, specific atrocities during the Emergency were numerous. Nearly two lakh persons were put into jails; many more were beaten up by the "forces of law and order"; inhuman forms of torture were devised to extract confessions and humiliate detenus; several died in police torture chambers, the most widely-known case being that of Rajan in Kerala; vast populations were shifted around to suit the aesthetic tastes of Sanjay Gandhi juggis were erased with bull-dozers and juggi-dwellers sent off miles outside the city limits as if they were "pariahs"; hundreds who resisted being shifted were massacred as in Turkman Gate in Delhi. And over the agonised land, flanked by servile officials and ministers, strutted about Sanjay Gandhi, the upstart hoodlum whose only claim was that he was Indira Gandhi's son.

Finally, when in a moment of misguided euphoria Indira Gandhi ordered fresh elections in the belief that thereby she could legitimise her absolutism and her son's succession in the eyes of the world, the people of this country asserted their dignity, their right to be treated as human beings with wills of their own, their desire for civil liberties and their hatred for tyranny by voting her out. Now the same Indira Gandhi is approaching the electorate again. There is not a single word of remorse from her for her Emergency crimes. She has both publicly defended the imposition of Emergency in June 1975, and publicly asserted that she would impose it again "if the need arose".

But the people will not let her "get away with it". They will defeat her authoritarian designs now as they had defeated her authoritarian regime in March 1977.

II

The Janata Government which came to power in March 1977 was committed not only to the restoration of civil liberties, to the undoing of the damage done to the Constitution, the media and the

judiciary but also to a break-up of the concentration of economic power, a break-up of land concentration, to the abrogation of the Bonus Ordinance and to the ending of destitution in the country in ten years' time. By ending Press censorship, restoring civil liberties, setting up Commissions to enquire into the Emergency crimes, and initiating the process of release of political prisoners, the Janata Government did much to end the suffocation which the country had felt during the previous regime.

But two things became clear from the outset. First, despite its Gandhian rhetoric, the Janata Government was bent on pursuing the same economic policies as the previous regime. And secondly, despite its protestations to the contrary, the Janata was essentially a loose coalition in which each component party pursued its own goals and among the various components the Jana Sangh with its RSS links was the most cohesive and potentially the most powerful.

On the question of land reforms, several Janata-run States like Orissa demanded an upward revision of ceilings! The Ministry of Agriculture put forward the absurd claim that the surplus area in the country in excess of the ceilings amounted to a mere 53 lakh acres. Since 40 lakhs of this land had already been "declared surplus", 24 lakh acres already taken over and 12 lakh acres already distributed, it followed that there was nothing much left to do regarding land reforms. The Government in other words gave a clear indication of its unwillingness to do anything about land reforms. So absurd was its figure for surplus land that even the Planning Commission was outraged by this and provided an alternative estimate of surplus land at about 215 lakh acres.

On the question of fighting monopolies, though the Janata Government paid much lip-service to small-scale units, it became clear from successive Janata budgets that encouragement, concessions and subsidies to the monopolists were on the agenda and not their control. In the name of promoting investment, tax concessions and subsidies were handed over to them much as the Indira regime had done. In the name of removing particular bottlenecks, e.g., cement, large numbers of licences were given out to them. So reluctant was the Janata Party to undertake any

anti-monopoly measures that even the tame suggestion made by Biju Patnaik and George Fernandes that the Government should take over private units in only three industries, steel, aluminium and automobiles, was turned down with derision by the Janata Party Executive.

On the question of multinationals, perhaps the most remarkable feature of Janata's economic record, was its growing capitulation to the multinationals and to the dictates from imperialist countries.

In its industrial resolution it announced that foreign companies would be treated on par with Indian companies if only they reduced foreign equity to 40 per cent. Since this involved no great sacrifice for the foreign companies, 40 per cent equity being quite adequate for control, they complied with it by expanding their equity, their activities and their total assets. Thus the Janata gave the multinational offshoots the green signal for their growth and diversification. The World Bank retained its influential role in policy-making and on its advice, further "import liberalisation" was undertaken in the name of promoting domestic investment. In other words, the Indian market was thrown open to foreign goods to an even greater extent. The concomitant of this was the policy of "export promotion". Since this needed advanced technology, so it was argued, a new round of collaborations with multinationals was necessary. The Siemens agreement, initiated by Indira Gandhi, whereby the BHEL, a core public sector undertaking, was to be virtually mortgaged to a German multinational was only one instance. The handing over of the Bombay High fertiliser project to the Americans at the expense of our own FPCI, the systematic induction of MNC products and technology in the sphere of electronics at the expense of indigenous sources, were both justified on the same grounds of the need for modern technology. The destruction of indigenous technological potential in favour of the MNCs was epitomised by the break-up of the CSIR at the instance of Americans.

On fighting hoarders and speculators: the only means to insulate the people from the evil manipulations of hoarders and profiteers, the only way to checkmate their evil attacks on the people's living standards through inflationary commodity

speculation is to strengthen the system of public procurement and distribution. Far from doing this, however, the Janata Government moved precisely in the opposite direction, namely that of reviving the free market and abandoning the system of public distribution. This was so in foodgrains, sugar and cotton textiles. This created the conditions where hoarding and speculation could flourish.

On every front, therefore, the Janata's economic policy was a betrayal of the trust placed by the people upon it. The counterpart of this pro-monopoly, pro-landlord, pro-multinational "free marketism" was growing hostility towards the working class. It appointed a committee headed by an MNC employee, Boothalingam, a director of Glaxo, to report on wages and incomes policies and he, not surprisingly, recommended a wage-freeze for large sections of workers precisely when the working class was resorting to strike struggles to make good some of the erosion in their real wages which Indira Gandhi had inflicted. Several State Governments, notably the Madhya Pradesh Government, even brought in a MISA-type Ordinance to suppress a strike by electricity workers. Finally, the Central Government introduced an infamous Industrial Relations Bill and a companion Bill on teachers and hospital staff to curb the revival of trade union activities. The Industrial Relations Bill proposed to ban strikes in nearly half the industries and to put virtually insurmountable legal hurdles in the way of strikes in the other half of the industries. The working class fought unitedly against the Bill, yet the Janata Government refused to withdraw it. Moreover, it brought in two anti-working class Ordinances, one to crush the strike by RBI employees and the other to withhold repayment of CDS amounts.

Workers were not the only section to feel Janata's wrath and hostility. The peasantry suffered from a disastrous fall in prices as a consequence of the bumper 1977-78 harvest, and yet the Government watched on impassively as a silent spectator. This fall, moreover, did not provide any relief to the consumers, for whom the final market prices continued to stay put at the peak levels reached during the Emergency. The fall in peasants' prices only meant the amassing of huge profits by the big traders and the

monopolist middlemen and industrialists. In case of cotton textiles, in fact, a nine per cent fall in raw cotton prices was accompanied by a three per cent increase in cotton yarn prices between February 1978 and February 1979. Despite the Janata's tall promises, unemployment increased sharply. The number of persons on the live registers of employment exchanges increased by a phenomenal 12 lakhs during 1977 to reach 11 million at the end of the year. This growing distress of the masses unleashed growing mass movements which the Janata Government began to suppress ruthlessly. The striking agricultural labourers of Pantnagar University were butchered. The economic struggle which erupted in the countryside often took on a caste complexion. The atrocities upon the Harijans intensified as the militancy of the agricultural labourers increased, and the local Janata acted either as a passive onlooker or an active protagonist of the upper caste exploiters. The growing mass militancy finally affected even the police and the para-military personnel, for so long the loyal minions of law, who went on strike demanding better conditions of work and better pay. The army was used against them and their revolt was suppressed brutally through the infliction of heavy casualties.

Janata's pursuit of the same shop-worn economic policies as Indira Gandhi, its championing of the same class interests as Indira Gandhi, not only brought it into increasing confrontation with the people, but also resulted in a revival of the same inflationary process which had characterised the Indira era. The growing reliance upon indirect taxes and deficit financing as revealed in successive Janata budgets finally culminated in an inflationary explosion following this year's budget. While handing over large subsidies to the monopolists and landlords, the budget raised direct tax revenue by only Rs. 50 crores while indirect taxes were raised by over Rs. 600 crores. Notwithstanding this a budgetary deficit of Rs. 1350 crores was left uncovered. A terrific inflation was sparked off threatening a further intensification of popular struggles. Against this background the Janata leaders, who had already left intact the constitutional provision for the declaration of Emergency and

that, too, with the parliamentary support of the Indira Congress Party, started talking about reintroducing preventive detention. A confrontation with railwaymen on the bonus question was in the offing and Janata's rigid intransigence was ominous. It thus became increasingly clear that Janata had not only exhausted its anti-authoritarian potential, but had actually reached a point where it was itself turning authoritarian, and further, had gone under the complete domination of the communal RSS-Jana Sangh.

It is no accident that the monopoly Press is projecting the Indira Congress and the Janata Party as the only two significant contestants in the forthcoming elections. By this very act of projection the monopolists hope to restrict the contest to these two alone and reduce the others to insignificance. Both these can be trusted by the ruling classes. Indira has already demonstrated how she can safeguard ruling class positions and interests against popular onslaughts. Janata, too, has given notice that it can turn against the people, with a new preventive detention law, if need be, to defend the ruling class interests; and the RSS is a powerful bulwark against any democratic movement.

This game of the monopolists in presenting only these two as the relevant alternatives, both of which share authoritarian and communal characteristics, either of which would serve the class interests of the ruling classes adequately, and each of which serves to legitimise the other, must be broken. It can be broken and Indian politics can be taken a step further away from the spurious Indira-Janata divide, only through a common and powerful anti-authoritarian and anti-communal platform of all democratic forces. It is vitally necessary that such a platform obtains the support of the people in the coming elections.

Working Class Under Congress And Janata Rule*

The swift developments which led to the dissolution of the Sixth Lok Sabha have a great significance in that for the first time a Government at the Centre has collapsed as it had lost its majority. The working class has to assess the situation and the role played by different Governments in the light of its own experience so that it can play its vital role in the coming electoral battle.

Though a persistent campaign is on that the present situation arose due to defections and fight for power, the working class has to realise that what is happening in our country is directly linked with the ever-deepening crisis of our economy. The determined resistance of the working class, braving ruthless repression let loose upon them, to the efforts of the ruling classes to pass the burden of the crisis on to the shoulders of the working people, has created the present situation.

The organised working class, the most conscious section of the fighting people, must be able to see through the claims and counter-claims, the hypocrisy of the solicitude for the poor expressed by different parties which were in the Government by a thorough examination of the assurances and the deeds of the earlier Governments so that it can act unitedly to shape the electoral decision in the interests of the people.

The Indira Regime

Smt. Indira Gandhi was returned to the Lok Sabha with a thumping majority on the basis of her slogan of 'Garibi Hatao' in 1971. What were the policies and practices of her Government that led the people to repudiate her in 1977?

*Published by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) as a Booklet for Election Campaign before 1980 Lok Sabha Elections.

As far as the economy is concerned, there was a severe crisis. While planners set the target of a five per cent rate of economic growth, it slumped to 0.7 per cent in 1973-74, and in the next year, it was only 3.5 per cent. This happened because the purchasing capacity of the people had gone down due to the policy of high taxation. It was estimated in 1972 that the indirect taxes of the Central Government formed 50 per cent to 75 per cent of the priced cost of cloth, 75 per cent of the cost of sugar, 50 per cent of beedi and cigarettes, 60 to 70 per cent of cement and 50 to 60 per cent of steel. The growth of excise duty after 1972 is as follows:

Year	In crores of rupees
1973-74	2602.00
1974-75	3231.00
1975-76	3824.00
1976-77	4093.00

Such taxation constitutes a robbery of the people, helps in transferring their earnings from the poorer sections to the richer classes and intensifies inflation. The rise in prices can be seen from the following figures:

Consumer price index number for industrial workers (1960=100)		Index number of wholesale prices (1970-71=100)	
Year	All-India	Year	All commodities
1970-71	186	1971	105.0
1971-72	192	1972	113.0
1972-73	207	1973	131.6
1973-74	250	1974	169.2
1974-75	317	1975	175.8
1975-76	313	1976	172.4
1976-77	301	1977	185.4
1977-78	324	1978	184.9

Report on Currency and Finance, Indian Labour Journal

From these figures, one might get an impression that the consumer price index numbers for industrial workers had steadily

fallen during 1975-76 and 1976-77. But the fraudulent character of these figures will be seen from the index numbers of wholesale prices which have been steadily rising, except for the year 1976.

In the Committee on Consumer Price Index, the representative of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions and the Bhartiya Mazdoor Sabha jointly submitted a dissenting note about the fraudulent compilation of the consumer price index numbers, which is inherent in the system of calculation of prices. Faulty conversion factors while replacing the 1939 series by the 1960 series had also led to this fraud. An analysis shows that Delhi textile workers, for instance, are being defrauded of Rs. four crores every year due to this fraud.

The rise in prices had imposed a cut in the real wages of the workers. The rise in the consumer price index numbers between 1972-73 and 1974-75 was to the extent of 55 per cent which entitled the Central Government employees to four to six instalments of dearness allowance, but they were paid nothing. Instead of fully neutralising the rise in prices by grant of adequate dearness allowance, Smt. Gandhi's Government imposed a "Compulsory Deposit Scheme" through which half of all wage-increases was frozen. The Central Government employees were, however, paid nothing.

This attack on the wages of all wage-earners had eroded the real wages of the workers. In the earlier period, the workers' share of the value added either remained static or declined slightly. The National Commission on Labour had remarked that "production per workers has increased by about 63 per cent between 1952 and 1964" but "the real earnings have almost remained static during this period". The Bonus Review Committee showed that the share of workers in the value added by them had decreased by about 0.8 per cent by 1965. As far as workers with earnings below Rs. 400 per month are concerned, there was a precipitous fall in their real earnings as can be seen from the following:

Year	Per capita earning money (in Rs.)	Index No. of real earnings (1961=100)
1961	1540	100
1965	2112	95
1971	2852	101
1975	3171	66

Smt. Gandhi never stops shedding copious tears for the rural poor. She launched the so-called 20-point programme with a lot of fanfare to project the image of one doing all for the rural poor. But the reality was otherwise. Documents of the Planning Commission show that the real wages of agricultural workers in 1976-77 was still below the 1961-62 level as will be seen from the following figures:

Year	Money wages (in Rs.)	(1961-62 prices) Real wages (in Rs.)
1961-62	1.76	1.66
1966-67	2.63	1.38
1971-72	3.10	1.55
1976-77	4.95	1.64

Besides, did the agricultural workers get work everyday? Definitely not. Introduction of tractors, threshers, etc., had taken away their jobs. The Rural Labour Enquiry of 1974-75 shows that the estimated number of full day's work of men of agricultural households for wage employed in different agricultural operations declined from 206 in 1964-65 to 185 in 1974-75, that of women from 138 to 129 and that of children from 167 to 145. The fall in real wages blows up the myth of the 20-point programme and proves it to be a hoax.

Documents of the Planning Commission said, "A statutory minimum wage should be an important device for raising the consumption levels of the poorer sections to the desired levels". The Minimum Wages Act is supposed to be a safeguard to protect the workers against the price mechanism of the present society. But the State Governments, or even the Central Government, under Smt. Gandhi, refused to revise the rates. When they did, the rates were kept much below the level that the workers had already achieved through struggles. It has been officially admitted that among the employments carried out under this Act, minimum wages had not been revised for more than five years in 94 employments and more than ten years in 34 employments.

Smt. Gandhi's regime saw a tremendous rise in unemployment.

This was bound to be. The crisis in the economy arising out of the policy of high taxation and deficit financing had given rise to a phenomenal growth of unemployment as can be seen from the figures of applicants on the live register of employment exchanges, as shown below:

Year	No. of applicants (In thousands)
1971	51,00
1972	68,96
1973	82,18
1974	84,33
1975	93,26
1976	97,84
1977	109,24

Leave alone the downtrodden and the poor, can Smt. Indira Gandhi claim the sympathies of the working women even?

Smt. Gandhi did nothing for women, particularly the working women of our country. She was the first woman Prime Minister of India. Did she do anything to ensure that the laws enacted to protect working women were implemented? All enquiries show that the laws existed only on paper; violations went unheeded and discrimination continued as before. Just one example will suffice to show the position. The ILO Convention No. 100 on "Equal Remuneration for Men and Women (1948)" was ratified by the Government of India in 1958. But nothing was done to enact a national law. Only when the CITU took up the matter with the ILO in 1974 an Act was passed. Even then, the Minimum Wage Advisory Committee in the States and at the Centre continued to recommend unequal wages for men and women during Smt. Gandhi's regime.

Smt. Gandhi was crying hoarse about "self-reliance". But what is the position regarding multinationals during her regime? According to the Reserve Bank Bulletin of November 1974, multinationals operating in India increased their profits before tax by 20.5 per cent during 1971-72. Glaxo Laboratories India Ltd.

declared a dividend of seven per cent in 1974, 14 per cent in 1975, and 16 per cent in 1976; and Pfizer Limited declared 21 per cent dividend in 1972, 22 per cent in 1973, 23 per cent in 1974, 24 per cent in 1975 and 25 per cent in 1976. The former which started with an original equity of Rs. 1.50 lakhs had remitted Rs. 506.23 lakhs abroad as profits, etc., during the period from 1969-70 to 1973-74 having built up a reserve of Rs. 758 lakhs in India; and the latter which started with an original equity of Rs. two lakhs had remitted Rs. 32.25 lakhs abroad after building up a reserve of Rs. 823.03 lakhs here.

The Committee headed by Shri Jai Sukhlal Hathi, appointed by her Government in February 1974, submitted its report in April 1975 in which the Committee stated: "We, therefore, strongly recommend that the multinational units in the field of drugs and pharmaceuticals should be taken over by Government and managed by the proposed National Drug Authority. Such take-over will not create any dislocation in production or distribution of drugs".

Smt. Gandhi's Government did not implement this recommendation and take the country towards self-reliance.

Resistance From All Sections

The working class did not accept these ferocious attacks let loose by Smt. Indira Gandhi against them. Not only just the industrial workers, but all sections, both the Central and State Government employees, railway workers, teachers, medicos, engineers, and agricultural workers repeatedly went into struggles against these attacks. The loss of mandays due to strikes in the organised sector alone in 1972, 1973 and 1974 were to the extent of 20.5 million, 20.6 million and 31.2 million respectively. The struggles of the middle class employees developed on a scale and with a sweep never seen before. The State Government employees of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and many other States went into prolonged struggles. College and school teachers in almost every State conducted prolonged and bitter struggles. Engineers of Electricity Boards in many States also conducted their struggles. Agricultural workers in Kerala, parts of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, Punjab as well as in many other States carried

on struggles for higher wages and against tractorisation. In particular, the struggle of the loco running staff, repeatedly, during 1973, brought the railways to a grinding halt and forced the Government to enter into an agreement with the struggling workers. In 1974, railway workers once again rose in a mighty upheaval for 20 days causing a loss of 4.5 million mandays for settlement of their six-point charter of demands, including bonus, parity of wages, decasualisation, eight hours' duty, etc.

All these struggles were ruthlessly suppressed. Four thousand striking State Government employees of Bihar were thrown into jails. The merciless lathi-charge on a demonstration before the Assembly in Patna shocked the entire people of Bihar. The same treatment was meted out to the State Government employees of Rajasthan. The U.P. Government called in military personnel to break the struggle of the striking engineers. The Haryana Government dragged in the streets the teachers in colleges and schools, beat them before the students and public and continued to beat them mercilessly in police stations. When a programme to demonstrate before Parliament was taken up by them, the Haryana Government began stopping the buses proceeding to Delhi and arrested many on suspicion. Three thousand of them were thrown in jails by the Central Government in Delhi.

The ruthlessness with which the Indira regime suppressed the strike of railway workers has no precedent. Railway colonies wore the look of occupied areas under the control of the police and anti-social elements. Family members of striking railway employees were not spared the lathi. Over 30,000 were arrested and about a hundred thousand railway employees were dismissed from service or suspended. The morale of the railway workers was sought to be broken by continuing victimisation for years. Workers were asked to sign mercy petitions which they refused. Judgements of High Courts were not honoured. An attempt was made to force the workers into submission through starvation. Railway workers, aided by other sections of the people, did not bow down and kept the flag of resistance flying. The Central Government employees who went into solidarity action were mercilessly punished by removals and suspensions. This ruthless suppression was supposed

to strike terror into the hearts of the working class. The valiant jute workers of West Bengal, despite the semi-fascist terror prevailing in the State, unitedly fought for their just demands for 48-day in early 1975. The unity of the working class against the policy of wage-freeze and repression, which found shape in the "National Campaign Committee Against Wage-Freeze", continued to inspire the working class. The Internal Emergency was then imposed from June 1975 to throttle all struggles. The fact that the loss of mandays in 1975 and 1976, despite the Internal Emergency, was 21.90 million and 12.75 million respectively, demonstrated the unflagging spirit of resistance.

Horrors of Emergency

While the country as a whole experienced the Emergency for twenty months, West Bengal was under the grip of semi-fascist terror for nearly seven years. Just after the 1971 Parliamentary elections, in which a majority of the members returned from West Bengal belonged to the Left Front, Smt. Indira Gandhi's followers went into an orgy of violence, murdering 1100 cadres in West Bengal, occupying 300 trade union offices and evicting 30 to 40 thousand workers from their homes. Thousands of workers were prevented from joining their duties despite High Court judgements. Democracy was subverted trampling underfoot the Constitution of the country.

As soon as her personal power was threatened following the Allahabad High Court judgement, she imposed the Internal Emergency on the entire country to remain in power. In one sweep, over a lakh of people were thrown into jail. The lawless law, the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, was enacted and even members of her own party, members of the Working Committee of that party, along with other veteran leaders were put in prison. Freedom of the Press was done away with. There was wholesale banning of strikes and all types of agitations. Permission had to be obtained for issuing a leaflet or holding a hall meeting even. People were robbed of all fundamental rights including the right to life guaranteed under the Constitution of the country. The right to bonus of the workers was taken away, in the name of fighting inflation,

thus presenting about Rs. 200 crores to the employers, over and above Rs. 400 crores of workers' money which was already frozen under the Compulsory Deposit Scheme. The solemn agreement with LIC employees on bonus was unilaterally scrapped. The agreement with the Loco Running Staff Association was put into cold storage. The whole country was turned into a vast prison.

Any resistance to these policies was drowned in bloodbaths. The Solicitor-General argued before the Supreme Court that the administration, under the Emergency, had the power to take the lives of the people in cold blood and the courts had no powers to give any remedy. Such were the powers given to the bureaucracy. Bloodbaths were a logical consequence. Can anyone ever forget the massacre of Turkman Gate? It was during this time that compulsory sterilisation was forced on the people. There was no limit to the monstrous crimes and humiliations heaped on the people. The Shah Commission reports have brought to light the horrors of the Emergency which was illegally imposed on the people.

The Internal Emergency was institutionalised through the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution. Newer strata of people joined the struggle against the authoritarian regime.

All these horrors were enacted in the name of helping the rural poor. It is now proved that specifically during this period, i.e., between 1972 and 1977, while "Garibi Hatao" and the 20-point programme were supposed to have been in their full swing, the 20 top Big Business houses in the country increased their assets by 76 per cent.

Thus while shedding tears for the rural poor, Smt. Gandhi was, in fact, enabling Big Business and the multinationals to thrive at the cost of the people.

The working class has to take note of the fact that the authoritarian forces headed by Smt. Gandhi are once again raising their head and making a bid for power, with the slogan of a stable Government. Her return to power would only mean re-enactment of the repressive measures all over again. The railway workers who are still fighting for fulfilment of their six-point charter of demands, including bonus and parity in wages, know that

Smt. Gandhi has never expressed regrets for the ruthless repression on them in 1974. She also never expressed her readiness to negotiate and settle these demands. She has also not assured that bonus will not be taken away and CDS will not be imposed once again. She has also not assured that the freedom of the Press, workers' right to strike and the freedom of association will never be attacked again. In fact, everything that she says and does, including the rehabilitation of the notorious Sanjay-Bansi Lal caucus, goes to show that the Emergency weapons are the weapons she will wield again, if ever she gets back to power. The working class, therefore, must ensure the defeat of these authoritarian forces represented by the Congress(I) headed by Smt. Gandhi. This is a task which it can ignore only at its peril.

Janata Party Comes To Power

The people, given the opportunity of casting their votes in 1977, threw out the Indira Government from power. It was not merely the anger of the people which found expression in this verdict but also their support to the solemn pledges of the Janata Party to them through its Election Manifesto. In the political charter of the manifesto, it was promised among others that the Janata Party will repeal the MISA, release all political detenus and review all other unjust laws; re-establish the rule of law; and ensure the right to peaceful and non-violent protest.

The manifesto assured an "end to destitution in ten years", a "full employment strategy", "end to monopolies" and various other measures.

Wages & Price Policy

In the chapter on "Wages and Price Policy", the manifesto stated:

"The Janata Party believes that economic policies should subserve the interests of workers in the agricultural and industrial sectors. It will, accordingly, affirm the rights of workers and trade unions. The Party will introduce legislation to assure minimum wages for all categories of workers. Such minimum wages should be sufficient for the maintenance of the worker and his family.

"While it believes that the erosion in real wages caused by fluctuations in price and the value of money should be neutralised by dearness allowance, the party realises that one answer to the difficulties experienced in this field lies in the formulation and implementation of an equitable national wage and price policy in which the ruling party has singularly failed. The Janata Party will lose no time in formulating and implementing a national wage and price policy based on the following principles;

- (i) A fair wage must be the minimum wage;
- (ii) Workers must derive proportional benefits from increases in productivity;
- (iii) The party accepts the principle of bonus as deferred wage. It will safeguard the legitimate interests of the working class with due regard to the need for increased productivity;
- (iv) A wage and price policy must ensure that income disparities are reduced. Steps will be taken to see that minimum incomes rise rapidly so that the difference between the minimum and maximum income after tax is reduced to 1:20. It would strive progressively further to reduce this differential to 1:10 within a decade by a policy of income redistribution that raises floor levels and discourages bloated incomes;
- (v) The prices of essential commodities will not be allowed to rise beyond the capacity of the common man to pay. Therefore, as long as shortages persist, a well-organised public distribution system is absolutely necessary, coupled with a consumer movement to maintain vigilance over prices and quality".

A Good Beginning

After assuming office, the Janata Government made a good beginning by restoring democracy, ordering reinstatement of victimised railway workers, followed by orders of reinstatement of those victimised during the Emergency, convening the Indian Labour Conference giving equal status to the trade union centres and thus removing the practice of favoured recognition, restoring

the freedom of the Press, etc. But very soon, hesitation started to dog the Government. There was delay in repealing the MISA. At one stage it was proposed to replace it by a Preventive Detention Act which had to be given up under pressure from its own ranks. It started faltering on steps for dismantling the authoritarian structure which could be done only by repealing the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution. But the Government lost the initiative in this respect and by the time it was introduced the Congress was able to block it in the Rajya Sabha. Instead of facing this situation boldly and exposing the authoritarian aspirations of the Congress, the Janata Government struck a compromise and backed out.

Same Old Policies

The retreat of the Janata Government from its election pledges on the economic front is quite striking. First, it wanted to do away with Planning itself in the name of introducing Rolling Plans. Later on, forced to submit the Sixth Five-Year Plan, it based itself on the same postulates of the earlier Plans of the Congress Party which refused to touch the vested interests and introduce any institutional change for the benefit of the common man.

The growth rate was cut down in the name of realities. Reliance on external assistance continued to grow, 50 per cent of such assistance being required for debt-servicing alone. The same policy of export promotion as followed by the Congress was continued by granting subsidies of over Rs. 300 crores every year. The policy of high taxation was continued, by imposing additional excise duties of Rs. 500 crores more every year. Over and above this, there was heavy deficit financing of Rs. 1000 crores and more every year, causing a heavy rise in prices. The All-India Consumer Price Index Number which was 301 (1960=100) in 1976-77 and 324 in 1977-78 rose to 360 by August 1979. Today the annual rate of inflation has reached 20 per cent or more causing immense hardship and misery to the people.

The glib talk of "ending destitution in ten years" could not halt the growth in unemployment. According to a recent statement presented by the Union Labour Minister in the Lok Sabha, the

number of applicants in the live registers of 535 employment exchanges up to December 1978 was one crore and 25 lakhs. The fact that cannot be brushed away is that due to the economic policies pursued by Smt. Gandhi and the Janata Government, the number of registered unemployed rose by 57 lakhs in six years and only 13 out of 100 new entrants have any chance of getting a job in the organised sector while the rest 87 must shift for themselves.

The solemn pledge about reducing "income disparities" through an equitable "wage and price policy" was not implemented in consultation with labour. Like Smt. Gandhi's Government, this Government, too, talked about "high-wage islands" and continued the policy of freezing wages. The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) with the full support of the Government tried to limit wage-increases and impose a cut in dearness allowance rates. This Government also continued to defend the unilateral cancellation of the agreement on bonus to LIC employees and when the employees won the case in the Supreme Court, this Government terminated the earlier agreement. It appointed a committee headed by Sri Bhoothalingam, Chairman of Glaxo Laboratories, a multinational concern, to determine the wage and income policy, while refusing to negotiate with the central trade unions. It is no wonder that this committee recommended a national minimum wage of Rs. 100 to be increased to Rs. 150 in seven years which was worse than the earlier Sukhamoy Chakravarty Report.

The volte-face of the Janata Government on the question of bonus was remarkable. Contrary to the election pledge of treating bonus as referred wage, the Janata Government, after much hesitation, restored the pre-Emergency position, that, too, imposing a ceiling on the same, and only on an annual basis, because of the growing pressure from the working class. The railway workers, who hoped that with their leaders of the 1974 strike being in the Cabinet, they would at last get bonus—and the Railway Minister was feeding them with hopes all the time—were left high and dry. Negotiations for settlement of their six-point charter of demands were not started at all. The election pledge of the Janata Party raised hopes amongst other employees of the Central Government

who also have been agitating for bonus. But their hopes were belied. Even the cut in dearness allowance imposed during Smt. Indira Gandhi's regime was not restored with retrospective effect as should have been done.

Apart from wage-freeze, lock-outs were imposed on the workers to break their resistance. The following figures given by this Government in Parliament show the character of the long-drawn lock-outs imposed on the workers:

Year		No. of workers involved	Mandays lost
1977 Jan-June	Strike	567,961	44,87,185
	Lock-outs	115,700	40,14,005
1978 Jan-June	Strike	563,382	58,95,004
	Lock-outs	131,684	68,37,814

It is seen that in 1977, the number of workers under lock-outs was one-fifth of those on strike, but the loss of mandays due to lock-outs was almost the same as due to strike. In 1978, again, the number of workers locked out was one-fourth of those on strike, but the mandays lost due to lock-outs were 15 to 17 per cent more than the loss due to strikes. Did the Government denounce the owners locking out their factories as anti-social and anti-national, those who were hampering production? The answer is 'no'.

The attitude of the Janata Government towards Big Business houses or the multinationals was not in any way different from its predecessor. The Government remained transfixed before the multinationals, who had never cared to respect the Indian laws as far as trade unions were concerned. They have never allowed collective bargaining. Instead of increasing the labour potential, they have resorted to unfair labour practices of using contract labour in permanent jobs in order to deny them the same wages as the permanent employees. In order to break struggles, they have resorted to increasing lock-outs as by Glaxo Laboratories in Aligarh, Pfizer Limited in Thane, Biological Evans in Hyderabad, Smith, Cline and French in Bangalore and Organon in its factory in Calcutta. The Janata Government also, like the Congress

Government, did not lift a finger to help the workers. Glaxo Laboratories refused to allow the President of the Aligarh Union of the employees to enter the company's premises even for negotiations. They terminated the services of the General Secretary of the All-India Chemical and Pharmaceutical Employees' Federation and Medical Representatives' Associations of India and several other union functionaries. Smith, Cline and French dismissed 24 office-bearers and executive committee members, Biological Evans dismissed another 24 office-bearers and executive committee members. Suhrid Geigy dismissed 21 employees including the union secretary. Similar other terminations have taken place in West Bengal, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Kanpur, Andhra Pradesh, Bombay and Assam. A decision arrived at in the presence of the Chief Minister of Maharashtra to reinstate the victimised workers was also not implemented.

Struggles and Repression

Contrary to their election assurance of right to peaceful and non-violent protest, the Janata Government mounted severe repression on the working class of the country who bitterly fought against the attack on their wages, trade union rights and victimisation. According to the figures released by the Labour Bureau of Simla the loss of mandays was 25.32 million in 1977, 21.51 million in 1978 and 16.929 million in the first five months of 1979. One of the striking features of these struggles was that there was growing unity of the working class. Even those trade unions which supported the Janata Party revolted against its policies and joined the struggles. These were sometimes long-drawn-out and bitter. Workers of the Khetri Copper Mines struck work unitedly for more than two months. Similarly, there was a prolonged strike in the Atomic Power Plant at Rawatbhata (Rajasthan) and the Prime Minister refused to negotiate unless the workers called off the struggle unconditionally.

The Madhya Pradesh Government promulgated a monstrous anti-labour Ordinance and prescribed barbarous punishments for the workers. There have been innumerable firings upon struggling workers. The Uttar Pradesh Government which has a record of

eleven firings within a year opened fire on the striking workers at Pantnagar, Hardwar, Kanpur and several other places wantonly killing workers who went into struggle demanding wages due to them. The situation in the industrial complexes in Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Modinagar, Sonapat and Delhi needs special mention. From the time of the Emergency, the owners had begun raising their private armies, killing workers and terrorising them. The police were placed at the disposal of the owners, while the awards in the engineering industry remained a dead letter in this area. The entire working class went on a protest strike on May 7, 1977, against this repressive policy. The Bihar Government shot down the workers in Bokaro Steel City killing six of them who were fighting for their jobs. The Madhya Pradesh Government opened fire in Dalbi Rajhara and Bailadila to suppress the struggle of the workers. Several trade union workers were exterminated in Madhya Pradesh under the Public Safety Act. In Orissa, the workers of Kalta Mines went into a determined struggle against the contractor. Electricity workers in different States went into strike actions. One and a half lakh textile workers of Bombay went in for a day's strike. The textile workers of Tamil Nadu went into a long-drawn strike for wage-rise. Six lakh coalmine workers unitedly observed a day's token strike on February 5, 1979. The Public Sector employees went into one day's token strike on September 14, 1979. Workers of Delhi also went into strike on August 11, 1979, for revision of minimum wages. The textile workers of Delhi fought a determined battle for more than 107 days.

Middle class employees were equally in the fight. The State Government employees in Maharashtra struck work for 73 days. The struggle of Bihar NGO's was also long-drawn. Bank employees observed two days' strike and a long-drawn work-to-rule movement. Unemployed youth were organised in Ahmedabad and pitted against the struggling bank employees. LIC employees also unitedly went into strike action demanding revision of wage agreement.

Industrial Relations Bill

In order to curb the momentum of growing united struggles, the Janata Government introduced three legislations together in

Parliament which were commonly known as the Industrial Relations Bill. Two of these sought to ban formation of trade unions in research and educational institutions which were also classified as Industry by the Supreme Court. This was a blatant attempt to deny the right of freedom of association to teachers, nurses, hospital staff or those employed by research organisations. The other Bill sought to institutionalise the 'Emergency' provisions and policies in relation to the trade union movement. This was an anti-climax to the 45th Constitutional Amendment Bill which was designed to eliminate the Emergency framework institutionalised by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act and a betrayal of the election pledge. This Bill sought to impose wholesale ban on strikes, in the following major industries:

1. Any establishment of or connected with the armed forces of the union or installations connected with the defence of the country against war or external aggression;
2. Any railway service or any other transport service for the carriage of passengers and goods, by air, water or land;
3. Any service in the International Airports Authority of India constituted under the International Airports Authority Act, 1971;
4. Any service in or in connection with the working of any major port or dock;
5. Any section of an industrial establishment or undertaking on the working of which the safety of such establishment or undertaking or the employees employed therein depends;
6. Any postal, telegraph or telephone service;
7. Any service in or in connection with the working of any public sector undertaking engaged in the purchase, procurement, storage, supply or distribution of foodgrains;
8. Any industry which generally supplies or distributes power, light or water to the public directly or indirectly;
9. Any system of public conservancy or sanitation;
10. Banking;
11. All atomic energy installations including power stations;
12. Production, supply and distribution of coal.

This Bill, if enacted, would have deprived the majority of the Indian workers of the right to strike as during the Emergency.

Though Indira Gandhi had mooted such ideas, no previous Government had dared to bring forth such a Bill for wholesale banning of strikes which included banking also. But this was not all. Section 157 of the Bill empowered the appropriate Governments to add to the list of essential services for imposing ban on strikes.

The scheme of these Bills, in short, was to make registration and functioning of the unions difficult and strikes impossible. Even the right of the workers to choose their own bargaining agent was denied. The working class fought back unitedly against this anti-working class Bill. The historic convention on November 19, 1978, and the workers' march to Parliament next day demonstrated their power of united resistance.

Struggle of the Police, CISF and CRP

The repressive apparatus of the State, the police, CISF and CRP, was not left untouched. They were denied the right to form their own associations and inhuman treatment was being meted out to them. The protest movement began from Punjab and soon spread to almost the whole of the country. The Janata Government instead of realising their problems and difficulties, came down on them with a heavy hand. The BSF and other armed forces were deployed to disarm these jawans. Three companies were disbanded and hundreds put behind the bars. Even those who came for negotiations were sent to jail. Virtually, war was declared on them. Mortars were used in Bokaro Steel City to break their resistance.

Black Ordinances

Closely following this came the black Ordinances to withhold repayment of CDS money and to ban the agitation of the Reserve Bank employees. The draconian Ordinance against RBI employees bore the hallmark of the Emergency and laid down that even refusal to work overtime would be treated as strike and anyone could be arrested without warrant on mere suspicion. Ruthless attempts were made to suppress the struggle. The leaders were hounded and arrested. Those raising their voice of protest were arrested *en masse*. In new Delhi, 118 workers including 67 women were

arrested and 138 in Jaipur. Reserve Bank employees refused to be browbeaten and continued their agitation heroically. It was at this stage that Sri Morarji Desai began talking about enacting a preventive detention measure.

This is the record of the Janata Government which fell primarily because the Hindu communal forces represented by the RSS-Jana Sangh combine were making a bid to capture the Central Government. They had successfully changed two State Governments in their favour. Communal riots were led by them in Aligarh and Jamshedpur. Several trade union workers were murdered by them in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. The working class could not but note the authoritarian trends coming to the fore in the Janata Party, and it has to do its utmost to defeat the Janata Party in the coming elections.

Record of Left Front Governments

In sharp contrast to the Congress and Janata Governments, the working class had noted the record of the Left Front Governments in West Bengal and Tripura. Functioning within the limited resources and constraints imposed upon them through the Constitution, these Governments have established a pro-working class, pro-people record.

The very first thing that was done in these two States was restoration of full democracy. It was made clear that the police would not be used against the working people in their disputes and struggles. The police would no longer be employed to serve the interests of the employers and landlords. During the 51-day struggle of jute workers and also the long-drawn struggles in the Garden Reach Workshop, Hind Motors, Rallies India, etc., there was no police intervention. The West Bengal Government intervened on behalf of the workers as a result of which the intransigence of the jute barons, who refused to implement the Raghunatha Reddy award on badli workers and introduced the hated "bhagawala" system during the Internal Emergency, could be broken and a fair settlement with substantial gains for the workers could be reached. The Government responded to

the demands of the State Government employees, cancelled all measures of victimisation and reinstated the workers with full back wages. The hated system of police verification for employment in Government services was withdrawn. The police personnel were given the right to form their own associations. The Government also granted ex-gratia (in lieu of bonus) payment to all its employees including teachers and municipal employees and granted recognition to the employees' unions.

As far as the peasantry and the agricultural workers are concerned, the achievements of the Left Front Government of West Bengal have been outstanding. The minimum wages of agricultural workers were revised. These workers, who had no work in lean periods and were under constant exploitation, were helped through the food-for-work programme, thus reducing their dependence on the landlords and moneylenders for their survival. The right of sharecroppers was ensured through "Operation Barga". A new Landholding Bill was passed in 1979 to do away with the old feudal rent system. This was a bold step towards radical land reform and the peasants having land-holdings valued at less than Rs. 50,000 were exempted. A system of equitable levy basing on various factors was introduced through which 45 out of 52 lakhs were benefited and a basis was created through which the wealth accumulated by the richer section of the peasantry would be ploughed back for the development of the State.

The unemployed youth, whose names remained continuously for five years or more in the live unemployment registers, were given relief of Rs. 50 per month.

It was these policies of the Left Front Government which roused the working class and the people of the State to combat the devastating floods of 1978.

Equally proud is the record of the Left Front Government of Tripura which took a series of steps for the relief of the tribal people, for the restoration of their lands, for their education and jobs. It also met the long-standing demand of the oppressed tribals for an Autonomous Tribal District. The present Constitution does not allow anything further though the Government wanted to go much further.

Strengthen Left & Democratic Forces

The working class must unitedly enter into electoral battle. It cannot allow the authoritarian forces led by the Indira Gandhi's Congress(I) to come back to power as that would mean the biggest danger to their democratic and trade union rights. Equally, they cannot allow the Janata Party, which is now completely under the grip of the RSS-Jana Sangh elements, which has proved its anti-working class character, to win.

History had placed this onerous task on the shoulders of the working class. It must work for the victory of Left and democratic forces, and the anti-authoritarian and anti-communal parties and forces whom they support, the Lok Sabha election must be made a turning point to change the correlation of forces in favour of the working people.

Real Face of The Assam Agitation*

P. Ramamurti

The Assam agitation, which is now more than ten months old, is an open movement for secession, a violent movement directed against the religious and linguistic minorities. The State administration is fully with the agitation giving it dangerous dimensions, because the minorities under attack do not get any protection. The movement poses a serious threat to the unity and integrity of the country. All those who are interested in the unity and integrity of the country are seriously concerned with the developments in Assam, as also in the whole of the North-Eastern region, which is being gripped by this secessionist movement in some form or other.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has reason to be particularly concerned over these developments. The Party strives to build the unity of the working class, the working people, of the Left forces and all the democratic forces, in the struggle to eradicate the backwardness and discrimination inherent in the capitalist path of development pursued by the Indian ruling classes, the struggle for a better deal to the workers, peasants, employees, the toiling masses, and ultimately the struggle for fundamental social transformation in the country. It is this unity that is being disrupted by secessionist movements as in Assam. Only the worst reactionaries can benefit from such disruptionist movements and that is what the Assam movement is clearly demonstrating. The voice of the Left and democratic forces are being sought to be muzzled, the linguistic and religious minorities are being sought to be deprived of all their rights.

*Published by The Communist Party of India (Marxist) as a Booklet in July 1980. Refer Documents under Items 4, 5, 13, Appendix (vi) and 20 of this Volume on Assam situation.

The Big Business controlled newspapers generally, and the leaders of the Assam agitation are presenting only one face of the agitation and that is that there has been a large influx of foreigners into Assam and this problem of foreigners has to be solved on the basis of the Indian Constitution and Indian citizenship laws. In reality the movement is not directed against foreigners but Indian citizens—the Muslim minority, the people from the rest of the country, from West Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Orissa, Rajasthan, etc.—who have settled in that State over the years or are working there. What the agitation seeks to achieve is not the expulsion of just foreigners, but the expulsion from the State of all non-Assamese Indians. Their ire is directed against the Muslims and the Bengalees but not against them alone, their target includes also Indian citizens from other States who are living and working in Assam.

Secessionist Aims

The secessionist aims of the guiding forces of the agitation, despite the camouflage of the "foreigners" issue, revealed themselves in the very early stages of the movement itself.

The organisers of the movement are the Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal (AJD) and the Purbanchaliya Lok Parishad (PLP), two regional parties which came into existence in the wake of the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in 1977 and 1978 with chauvinism inscribed on their banner. The Assam Sahitya Sabha, supposed to be a purely cultural organisation heavily financed by the State Government, has thrown its weight with these two regional parties to form the All-Assam Gana Samgram Parishad (AAGSP). The Parishad and the All-Assam Students' Union are spearheading the agitation.

Some intellectuals had been carrying on a subtle secessionist propaganda even in the years preceding the agitation. A number of articles had appeared in academic journals like university magazines arguing the case for secession as the only way for Assam's emancipation from "India's colonialism". Some "ultra-Left" elements lent their support to this propaganda using pseudo-Marxist theories about nationalities and the right to secession. This was an attempt to give an ideological cover for secession to attract the youth and Left intellectuals.

The Press in Assam, both English and Assamese language newspapers, was pressed into service. The Press propaganda started a year before the Lok Sabha election in 1977. It skilfully mixed up concocted reports of infiltration by foreigners with stories about the trickery, deceit and treachery of Bengalees. There were editorials, letters to the editor and articles in hundreds charging the Left parties and progressive intellectuals of callousness to and betrayal of the interests of Assam.

A Bengali history teacher in the Dibrugarh University who had been doing research in the history of Assam for years and had obtained his doctorate, later published an article in an academic journal of the university on the social history of Assam in the pre-Independence period. The journal has only a very limited circulation and that, too, in academic circles. The Assamese chauvinists smelt an anti-Assam trend in the article. Public meetings were held in Dibrugarh town by the chauvinist politicians to condemn the article and its author. The Assam Sahitya Sabha, in a resolution adopted on June 22, 1979, denounced the article as an instance of "Bengali aggression on the Assamese language". The Assamese language Press particularly joined the attack with editorials, articles and reports of meetings. Unnerved by all this, the Vice-Chancellor ordered the withdrawal of the issue carrying the article. When the schools reopened, school children, who could not have read the article, went in a body to the Vice-Chancellor and demanded severe punishment to the author of the article. The Vice-Chancellor ordered the appointment of two commissions—one consisting of academicians, historians and litterateurs unconnected with the university to go into the academic aspects of the article, and the other headed by the Chairman of the State Text Book Corporation, to look into the non-academic aspects, whatever that might mean. Even before these commissions began their work, the Council of the University met and, pandering to the Assamese chauvinists, directed both the author of the article and the publisher of the journal not to attend classes. This gives a measure of the virulent anti-Bengali chauvinism pumped into the Assamese people.

The extent of this anti-Indianism can be seen from another incident. When the Union Health Ministry sent a team to spray and exterminate mosquitoes that carry a special type of malaria that is prevalent between Assam and Thailand, the Assam officials told the team, "We are Assamese and you are Indians. We don't want your help", and the team was sent back. The Prime Minister herself narrated this incident in the Rajya Sabha and later in her meeting with trade union leaders.

One of the top leaders and President of the Assam Jatiyatabadi Dal, Nivaran Bora, wrote an article in 1978 in a well-circulated local weekly, known to be pro-American, denouncing the national leaders of Assam for agreeing to stay in India in 1947 and openly calling for separation.

It should also be remembered that in the preceding years three language riots had been organised with the Bengali minority as their target.

This was how the separatists prepared for the agitation in the name of expelling "foreigners" from the State. At the time of a scheduled by-election from the Mangaldoi Lok Sabha constituency, the demand for eliminating the names of "foreigners" from the electoral rolls was pressed. The Golap Borbora Janata Government of the State acceded to the demand and directed the police force to delete the names of "foreigners" from the rolls. In the most arbitrary manner, 40,000 names were deleted in just one Lok Sabha constituency. The by-election was not held because by then the general election to the Lok Sabha had been announced.

The agitation reached the level of direct action in November 1979. Within weeks came the slogan and movement for boycott of the Lok Sabha election until the electoral rolls were revised eliminating the names of all "foreigners". The Election Commissioner decided that the names of those who were on the rolls at the time of the 1977 election should not be deleted. Using force and coercion, the agitators prevented candidates from filing their nomination papers. Election to twelve out of the fourteen Lok Sabha constituencies in the State could not be held. For the first time in the history of the country, the State refused to participate in a Lok Sabha general election. There was no disability

in constituting the new Parliament, but the unity of the country, its people, was disrupted.

Having smelt blood, the chauvinists moved in for the kill. After politically isolating Assam from the rest of the country, they took matching economic measures. A virtual blockade was imposed and the taking out of oil from the refinery, of timber and jute from the State was totally stopped. Tens of thousands of workers and employees were left without work and their livelihood. But not a step was taken against the British tea-planters and other vested interests in Assam. It is also not accidental that the innumerable bandhs and picketings organised by the agitators were never directed against these vested interests. For the chauvinists, Assam's salvation does not lie in eliminating the foreign and Indian vested interests, but in political and economic separation from the country.

The economic blockade was followed in April with an ultimatum that if the Government did not start "detection and deportation of foreigners" before May 15, the AASU and Gana Samgram Parishad would themselves carry out the work of detecting and deporting "foreigners" who, according to the agitation leaders numbered four and a half million. This was nothing but assuming powers as if, Assam was an independent State. They, of course, could not carry out their threat because the minorities decided to assert their rights. But it served their purpose of further strengthening in the minds of the people the demand for secession from India.

The leadership of the agitation has developed very close links with the armed secessionist groups in the neighbouring hill States in North-Eastern India—the Muniva Group of Nagaland, the Mizo National Front of Mizoram, the People's Liberation Army of Manipur, the Tripura Upajati Juba Samity of Tripura and similar groups in Meghalaya. The PLA in Manipur and Muniva in Nagaland announced the formation of "united armed forces", namely, the NAMMAT (initials for the seven North-Eastern States of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal and Tripura) and the SULA (Seven Units' Liberation Army). The AASU and the GSP have not publicly dissociated themselves from these "armies", though both NAMMAT and SULA have claimed Assam as a constituent. In fact, recent reports that AASU volunteers

are being given training in firearms, go to show that they are also in the process of building up armed forces for carrying on the agitation for secession.

For actual coordination of the secessionist movements in the North-Eastern region, the North-Eastern Regional Students' Union (NERSU) was formed, which used to meet occasionally in premises provided by friendly State Governments. The NERSU, known to be a pro-American organisation, is the author of the notorious 35-point programme formulated in March last, and circulated in Assam by the AASU. For reasons of space, the entire programme is not being given here but some of its important points are:

1. Formation of secret societies at different levels with underground headquarters under a single leadership with strict discipline, code and conduct.

3, 4 and 5. Selection of Assamese and non-Assamese politicians, Government servants, doctors, etc., fix dates for their local trial.

6. Develop cordial relationships with Nagas, Mizos, Manipuris, Meghalayans, Arunachalis and Tripuris and all other indigenous people of this region and march hand in hand.

34. We should develop friendship with Thani Buddhist societies.

35. We should tell Calcutta and New Delhi that we require from you only salt for our bare necessities of life and your requirements from us are tea, coal, crude oil, plywood, jute, etc. *We should make them understand that Assamese are not alone in the world* (Emphasis added).

The AASU which had circulated this programme, has later disclaimed any connection with it, but it has neither condemned it nor warned its followers against implementing it.

The actual coordination of the secessionist movements in the region is also evident in the common issue they have taken up (foreigners), forms of action (picketing and non-cooperation), the 35-point programme and participation of volunteers from one State in the actions in another State.

These joint actions are accompanied by the clandestine propaganda for a "United States of Assam (USA)". Posters about the "USA" have appeared in various towns of the North-Eastern region.

This fully fits in with the designs of the Western imperialist agencies who have been diligently working for destabilisation in the North-Eastern region and advocating the creation of an independent State in that region.

The Foreign Hand

The American Central Intelligence Agency has for long been active in the North-Eastern region. Its agents were directed to study social tension and how to use them for the purpose of destabilising the situation in underdeveloped countries. The "Project Brahmaputra" is now a widely known document. This is the notorious circular sent by the United States Information Service, dated June 12, 1979, and titled "Project Brahmaputra". The circular says: "With the agreement of the State Department, the Special Operation Research Office (SORO) of the George Washington University has asked the U.S. outfit (read: CIA) in India for help in conducting sociological research in the Eastern States of India, including Sikkim as well as Bhutan". What is the purpose? "The aim is to throw light on public opinion in these regions to establish in what measure the present status of these States remains acceptable or whether there are indications that *the formation of a new State is a current problem*" (Emphasis original). In short, find out reactionary separatist elements in the Eastern States of India—West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and incite them and finance them to launch an agitation for an independent State.

The aim to advance U.S. imperialist influence through this so-called research is freely admitted. "Our organisation has already carried out this type of work in a number of countries with satisfactory results, particularly in helping us to evaluate the political situation and *to choose the best ways and means for our own influence there*". Then there is the warning to the conspirators not to expose themselves and their doings. "Past experience in conducting such operations shows that sociological research (read: conspiracy against the people) in India must be carried out with such discretion that we cannot be accused, on the eve of the elections, of interference in the internal affairs of the country . . . It has occurred in other countries that we sometimes create the

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impression on the local population that we have been caught with our pants down." Nothing is left unsaid. The desire to incite the agitation for an independent State in the Eastern region, the secrecy, the connection with the elections, and the warning to the conspirators not to expose the game—all are there. Only the blind or the treacherous will fail to see the connection between this circular and the happenings in Assam.

In the 1950s, the noted American writer, Selig T. Harrison, in his book, "India: The Most Dangerous Decades", predicted, the disintegration of India and among other things referred to Assamese linguistic fanaticism.

Recently, after the directive in the "Project Brahmaputra", a well-known American political scientist has published "A Study of the Problem of the Migration" in the North-Eastern region. The so-called "data" that he provides have no relevance. The exaggerated accounts have been seized upon by the secessionists to proclaim that as many as seven million persons had migrated from East Bengal to Assam.

Another "research scholar" was Myron Wiener, a noted political scientist and a Ford Foundation International Professor at MIT. He spent three years in India and published a book, "Sons of the Soil—Migration and Ethnic Conflicts in India" in 1978. He discussed in the book migration and citizenship problems in "multi-ethnic" India and sought to establish that single citizenship would not meet the needs and that there would be inevitable demands of "ethnic collections" in India. He concluded that if the present policies in respect of this continued to be pursued, "there are likely to be far-reaching consequences for the pace and distribution of development, the pattern of social and spatial mobility, the relationship between Governmental units and, above all, for the kinds of identities and loyalties that Indians choose". This is clear incitement of the people that they would ever remain undeveloped and had no hope of prospering within India.

Dr. Lee Rose, an American national of Chinese origin and Director of the Himalayan Border Countries' Project, University of California, and the author of "Nepal: Strategy for Survival", had stated that a Confederation of the Himalayan Kingdoms of

Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, with Nepal as the nucleus, could become a reality in conditions of extreme insurgency in North-Eastern India. This is not an innocent statement or an academic study. The U.S. Press had, in 1967, published that Dr. Rose had received for the Himalayan Border Countries' Project, financial support from the U.S. Defence Department through the California University. Following this disclosure, a question in Parliament forced the Government of India to withdraw the permission to continue this project. But, meanwhile, he had collected enough material from the mischievous project.

Is it not obvious that these so-called "research scholars", their "projects" and publications supply the material to the CIA to prosecute its subversive destabilisation activities? And this is exactly what has been done.

Christian Missions

It is well-known that Western imperialist agencies operate through certain Christian missions and missionaries. One such institution is the Baptist Christian Mission. Each of the North-Eastern States has a separate Baptist organisation and there is also the North-East India Christian Council with its headquarters in Shillong, obviously to coordinate their subversive activities. Each of these missions has affiliations with the Baptist Mission of one country or another in the international arena. But the ultimate headquarters of the Baptist Missionary Societies is the World Baptist Alliance of the USA. These Christian missions have well-known and close links with the Mizo National Front, the Naga Underground, etc. They have been getting huge funds in the name of educational and philanthropic activities from the USA routed through many sources.

In 1978, Dr. R. Kunville, an associate of the World Baptist Alliance, in a pamphlet under the title, "Church Grows through the People's Movement" clearly enjoined upon the missionary societies to involve themselves in these secessionist movements for the growth of Christianity. A new edition of the 18th Century dictum, "The Church precedes the Empire". In his pamphlet Dr. Kunville also expressed satisfaction over the tribal movement organised by the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti in that State to wean away the tribal people from the influence of the CPI(M).

With all these preparations, when the time was ripe, a meeting of "friends" from all the seven States of the North-East was held on the occasion of the "Bihu" (New Year) Festival in April 1979. The venue of the meeting, Sibsagar, has also much significance; it was the seat of the Ahom Kings who ruled Assam before the British took it over. The meeting was given the romantic name of "Seven Sisters' Bihu". The Chief Guest at the Festival was the Ambassador of Thailand in India who suddenly remembered his kinsmen who had left Thailand eight centuries ago and founded the Ahom dynasty and the Kingdom of Ahom in Assam. The festival was also attended by U.S. Consular officials from Calcutta. The coordination of "friends" from the seven States took place at this function. The Thai Ambassador toured Assam for a month, to revive the links with the descendents of his kinsmen whom the Thais had forgotten for eight centuries.

It is in this context that the item in the 35-point programme of the underground headquarters of the agitation, to "establish friendship with the Thai Buddhist Societies", assumes importance. Thailand, there is no need to mention, is a stooge of U.S. imperialism. It is no surprise that the organisers of the festival became the leaders of secessionist agitations.

The U.S. Embassy in India, too, has been evincing extraordinary interest in the North-Eastern region. The U.S. Ambassador Goheen had visited Assam and extensively toured the State. Commenting on this, Nagen Saikia, General Secretary of the Assam Sahitya Sabha, wrote in a weekly, "Nagarik" of April 26, 1979, that the U.S. Ambassador "stayed in the bungalow of a tea estate manager in Golaghat as a guest, and in a three-hour-long dinner party that night, a number of select people were invitees". Was this, and the subsequent tour of Assam by the U.S. Ambassador, till he was recently stopped from going there by the Government of India, a part of the execution of "Project Brahmaputra"? An American national, Goodman by name, who was staying in the North-Eastern region unauthorisedly, was only a few weeks ago asked to leave India after incriminating papers had been seized from him. "Newsweek" magazine was not just making a mistake when it printed a map showing Assam outside India.

The preparatory phase of the Assam agitation, its subsequent development, the slogans put forward by the agitators, fit in neatly with the whole plan of "Project Brahmaputra".

The guiding hand and its executors are unmistakable. Their aim is secession.

The "Foreigners" Issue

The carefully prepared agitation was launched on the demand for expulsion of all "foreigners" who had entered Assam since 1961. But this was only a facade.

There had been a flow of people into Assam from the eastern part of united Bengal in the 1930s. There was not much protest against this due to economic considerations. First, the migrants from eastern Bengal were converting marshy lands into cultivable lands of paddy and jute. Secondly, many Assamese landlords themselves were in need of these sturdy Muslim agricultural labourers. Thirdly, the British jute millowners were also encouraging this process of migration for the cultivation of jute in Assam, and Assam as a whole benefited by this process. When, in 1937, some Assamese chauvinists presented a memorandum to Jawaharlal Nehru who was then President of the Congress, expressing apprehensions about this flow of Bengalees into Assam, he told them that "it was an economic necessity which no amount of sentiment, not even law, could stop". He said further, "from the economic point of view of developing Assam and making it a wealthy Province, it could not be said to be harmful".

With the partition of India into India and Pakistan, there was a large influx of Bengali Hindu refugees from East Bengal into all the States of the North-East and West Bengal. But because the wholly Bengali-speaking district of Sylhet became part of the East Bengal Province of Pakistan, the 1951 Census showed an actual increase in the percentage of Assamese-speaking people in Assam. When there were communal disturbances in East Bengal in 1951 and 1964, there was again another influx of refugees. There was also a big influx, mostly of Bengali Muslims, during the liberation struggle of East Bengal from Pakistan in 1970-71. But most of these refugees returned after the liberation and formation of

Bangladesh. There was one more influx, but on a smaller scale, after the assassination of Mujibur Rahman.

The refugee problem was an inevitable consequence of the partition of the country on the basis of religion. The leaders had given solemn assurances that they would accept these refugees. Mahatma Gandhi, in his post-prayer speech on July 21, 1947, said, "My friends ask whether those who being mortally afraid, or otherwise leave Pakistan, will get shelter in the Indian Union. My opinion is emphatic on this point. Such refugees should get proper shelter in the Indian Union". It is significant that he did not make any distinction of the refugees on the basis of the religion they professed. Jawaharlal Nehru had stated in Parliament: "There is no doubt, of course, that those displaced persons who have come to India are bound to have citizenship. If the law is inadequate in this respect, that has to be changed".

In the light of these assurances, a special Ministry of Rehabilitation was functioning after Independence. Questions have been asked repeatedly in Parliament for eliciting facts regarding the total number of refugees, the number of those that have already been rehabilitated, of those still awaiting rehabilitation, the amount of money spent on rehabilitation. Seventyfive such questions had been asked in the period between April 1961 and March 1976. The members who asked these questions belonged to all political parties, they also included members from Assam and West Bengal. The questions related to periods both before the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and after the liberation up to 1976. No question was ever raised which alleged the presence of large number of foreigners in Assam or in any other State during all these years, or about any steps taken by the Government to deport them. It is also relevant that the question of foreigners was not raised during the 1977 Lok Sabha election or the subsequent Assembly election. This does not, of course, mean that there has been no illegal immigration of foreigners.

The 1961 Census had suggested that there were about 2.23 lakh persons whose Indian citizenship was open to question. The then Congress Government of the State had appointed tribunals in the districts of Kamrup, Goalpara, Darrang and Nowgong where a

large number of immigrants from East Pakistan had settled. Generally the senior District Magistrate constituted the tribunal and a person alleged to be a foreigner was expected to prove that he was not so. Documents of lands, citizenship certificates, oral evidence or affidavits of a locally well-known Indian citizen, a person's place of birth, his father's place of birth, the duration of a person's stay in India—any of these was accepted by the tribunals as identifying a person for being termed as an Indian citizen. In other words, these tribunals functioned strictly according to the Indian Citizenship Act. According to the figures published by the Government of Assam from year to year in the Assam Gazette, on the basis of the decisions of these tribunals, a total of a little over three lakh persons had been deported between 1962 and 1972. The State Government had wound up these tribunals on the ground that the work of detecting such "illegal" immigrants and deporting them had been completed. As stated earlier, the question of foreigners was never raised in Parliament nor by anyone in Assam at the time of the Lok Sabha election in 1977 or the subsequent Assembly election. It was raised for the first time at the time of the by-election from Mangaldoi to the Lok Sabha.

Against The Minorities

Thus the "foreigner" issue was artificially raised and blown out of all proportion to launch the agitation. But right from the beginning the target of attack was the minorities—religious and linguistic. There was a carnage of the minorities—both Bengali Hindus and Muslims, in North Kamrup in January 1980. Hundreds, including women and children, were killed, thousands were wounded, 20,000 people were rendered homeless. Posters appeared with inscriptions like "Indian dogs get out", "If you see a snake and a Bengalee at the same time, kill the Bengalee first" and so on. Throughout the agitation, there have been harassment of the minorities, many murders, forcible occupation of shops and landed property, insults and humiliations. Reference has already been made earlier to the training in firearms that is being given to AASU volunteers. The agitation has been one of violence against the minorities despite the claims of the agitation leaders and certificates

of peacefulness given by Opposition leaders like A. B. Vajpayee and Ravindra Varma, and ruling party leaders like Yashpal Kapoor and Shankar Dayal Sharma. Did these "fact-finding" missions visit a single one of the camps set up in Kamrup district where thousands of Bengali Hindu and Muslim refugee families have taken shelter? Have they met any of the 13,000 people who have fled from Assam and gone to West Bengal? There is not a single foreigner among them, they are Indian citizens and they are the victims of the violent agitation. In contrast to these motivated "fact-finding" missions is the report of the team sent by the Delhi Branch of the People's Union of Civil Liberties. This is what the team says after its visit to Assam:

".....a reign of hate campaign has been launched against the minorities, more particularly against the Bengali-speaking minority. For nearly four months now, the Gana Samgram Parishad and the AASU have acquired absolute control over the official machinery in the State and are running a parallel Government. They have incited, and in any case not objected to wall paintings and posters inciting violence against all *bahiragatas* (outsiders). Here are a few examples: 'If you see a snake and a Bengalee, kill the Bengalee first'. The Bengali-speaking community is terrorised. The Press has already reported the murder of the famous geologist in Dulligaon. He was lynched to death on January 18. We would be pleasantly surprised if the murderers of Anjan Chakravarty were actually apprehended and punished.

"The fact remains that the worst incidents of violence took place in the Mukalmau and Nalbari areas of Barpeta sub-division of Kamrup district. According to the Deputy Commissioner himself, four thousand houses have been burnt, fortytwo persons have been killed We visited the Mukalmau camp where 510 inmates, all Bengali Muslims, are living. According to the account given to us by the villagers there, some four thousand Assamese people came shouting slogans, armed with spears and other lethal weapons. They set the houses of the Bengali-speaking people living in the area on fire, killed many people and wounded many others. The most pathetic scenes were seen in Rangafali camp, also in the Nalbari area. There are more than 4000 inmates in this

camp. Most of them are Bengali Hindus. We saw hundreds of badly wounded people. The attacks were indeed barbarous". Of course, the movement is peaceful towards the administration. The Fact-Finding Committee comments: "Otherwise, the satyagraha itself has been rather peaceful. But it could hardly be otherwise. The entire Government machinery is party to the satyagraha.....As one witness told us, 'The Government of Assam is running the movement and the AASU is running the Government'".

The extent of chauvinist fanaticism and hatred of the minorities can be seen from one or two instances.

A woman social worker who had visited some refugee camps and heard from the refugees their tales of woe, narrations of mass killings and arson, gave publicity to these in a journal. She was thereafter physically prevented from leaving her house and had to discontinue her activities.

After the violence in North Kamrup, Nirupama Borgohain, an Assamese woman journalist on the staff of the ultra-Rightist weekly "Neelachal", spent two days visiting refugee camps in Nalbari, Mukalmau, Naherbari and Rangafali. What she saw and was told by the inmates of these camps horrified her. The refugees were Bengalees, both Hindus and Muslims, who had been settled in Assam for generations. They had integrated with the Assamese people to the extent that many of them had changed their names as, for instance, the Bengali "Biswas" to the Assamese "Baishya". There was no evidence of even a single Bengali school in the area.

Nirupama visited another camp in Jolkhana. Here there were 105 inmates, all Assamese women. The camp was being managed entirely by AASU volunteers. She had been told on the way to the camp that the women had taken shelter in the camp because their houses had been burnt down. But she was surprised when the women told her that their men were in the villages guarding their homes. Unlike in the other camps of minorities which she had visited, here none of the inmates had any physical injuries. By careful questioning she found out that they had been scared away from their homes by rumours that Bengalees were going to attack their homes. Nirupama came away convinced that things had been deftly stage-managed.

On her way out of the camp, Nirupama saw a bus of the Gauhati Medical College parked on the roadside. She asked a few young

doctors whom she saw whether they had visited the camps where the inmates were badly in need of medical help. The doctors told her that they had not come all the way from Gauhati to give medical aid to "foreigners". Shocked Nirupama protested that doctors were not supposed to make such differentiations.

When she reached the bus stop and boarded a bus, it was surrounded and she was abused as a traitor. Next day at a rally in Gauhati, the "black deeds" of Nirupama Borgohain were described in detail and a resolution was adopted condemning her actions as unworthy of an Assamese. Later, when she went to her office, she found a sealed cover on her table marked "confidential". It was the order of her summary dismissal because her conduct was unbecoming of the high standards of the journal and because of her rude behaviour towards the young doctors!

The complicity of the State administration cannot be concealed. When the killings and violence in Kamrup district continued for four days before the army arrived, the State bureaucracy connived at it. The Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup was at Nalbari during all these days to "cover" his own Sub-divisional Officer. In Barpeta, during these four days of arson and killings, one Additional Deputy Commissioner, known for his open support to the movement, was posted to cover the local Sub-divisional Officer who was non-Assamese.

Confirmation of the complicity of the State's bureaucracy in this organised violence against the minorities has come straight from the horse's mouth. In an interview to the Bombay weekly, *Current* (March 15), the leaders of the AASU hinted clearly enough that they had the solid backing of the Assam police and officialdom.

On May 26, after the AASU and AAGSP had issued their threat to "detect and deport foreigners" on their own after May 15, when the minorities—Bengali Hindus and Muslims, plains tribals, Nepalees, other linguistic minorities—organised a protest day to present petitions to district authorities demanding security to their lives and properties, the agitators attacked the demonstrators. But the Assam State police opened fire on the minorities' procession, killing twelve persons and injuring many. In order to create the facade that they were "neutral", they fired in the air when the attacking Assamese crowd was pressing forward.

The Prime Minister herself, in her concluding speech at her meeting with trade union leaders on July 1, confirmed this complicity of the State's bureaucracy. According to *The Times of India* report of the meeting, the Prime Minister said, "The present unfortunate situation was that Government employees were not only cooperating but had assumed leadership of the movement. The State police was also completely with the movement. Even when some undertakings like banks did not want to close, the police intervened and forced them to shut down in the name of a hartal".

The attack on the linguistic and religious minorities have been mounted on the plea that there is a danger of the State's Assamese population being swamped by non-Assamese people. This cannot bear a moment's scrutiny. Though the majority of the real work force in the State is non-Assamese, there is no such danger as can be seen from a few figures.

According to Census figures, the Assamese formed 31.42 per cent of Assam's population in 1931, Bangalees 26.79 per cent and others 42.2 per cent. The last included Nepalees, the hills tribals who are now in Mizoram, Nagaland, etc., the plains tribals settled in the Brahmaputra Valley and tea garden and other workers from Orissa, U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, etc. The 1951 Census figures showed a steep fall in the Bengali population. The percentages were: Assamese—56.69; Bengalees—16.50; others—25.51. Although there was an influx of Bengali Hindu refugees after partition, the fall was due to the Bengali-speaking division of Sylhet going to Pakistan. The 1971 Census figures show that the Assamese form 60.89 per cent and Bengalees 19.71 per cent. The formation of separate States like Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal brought the percentage of others from 25.51 in 1951 to 19.90 per cent. An overwhelming majority of the Bengalees and others are poor peasants and agricultural workers and workers in various industries. How can they become a threat to the Assamese, their separate identity, culture and language?

There is no danger, either, of the Muslims swamping the Hindu population. Again, Census figures show that in 1931, before Independence, the percentage of Muslims was 31, after Independence in 1961 it was 25.31 and in 1971, 24.56.

The General Secretary of the RSS, Rajendra Singh, after his visit to Assam, raised this bogey of Muslim domination when he declared that all Hindu immigrants from East Pakistan should be treated as Indian citizens and Muslims declared as "aliens". This has not been accepted by the leaders of the agitation who have other aims, those of driving out all the non-Assamese from the State.

The vested interests in the State are giving all support to the agitation and its aim of throwing the non-Assamese out of the State. They are out to grab the land and property that have been developed by the non-Assamese minorities, and the professions and jobs they now hold. The foreigners issue is the facade, the violence and terror against the religious and linguistic minorities are the reality.

The vested interests have also been able to use the agitation to mount an attack on the CPI(M) and mass organisations like the CITU, Kisan Sabha, SFI, Democratic Youth Federation, etc. The Party and these mass organisations have been gathering strength in the recent period. The CPI(M) had won a Lok Sabha by-election after the 1971 general election, it had also won eleven seats in the State Assembly in 1978. Later, it had won a majority in the Municipal Corporation of Gauhati. The CITU had begun to grow even in what was the preserve of the INTUC, the tea gardens, in the railways and among middle class employees. The SFI had won a number of college and university union elections and the CPI(M) was gaining ground in the teachers' movement. The awakening of the consciousness of the peasantry due to the activities of the Kisan Sabha had roused the wrath of the Assamese landlords. A systematic hate campaign had been carried on against the Party and these mass organisations. The Party was slandered as a vehicle of Bengali aggression and passions were whipped up. Attacks on the offices of the Party and mass organisations, on their leaders and cadres, even murders had been organised. In the later phase of the agitation, the attack has been extended to the CPI and other Left forces.

Government's Failures

How is it that such an anti-national movement, a movement directed against the unity and integrity of the country, has been

able to rally mass support? The Assamese people have fought with the people in the rest of the country for its freedom, they have the traditions of the freedom movement. Yet they are participating in a movement which tramples underfoot all these traditions. There has been coercion and intimidation to gather support for the movement. But there is no denying that people in large numbers have been drawn into it. And the reason for this has to a large extent to be seen in the policies pursued by the Congress rulers for thirty years and the Janata Government in the next two and a half years.

In the three decades of the Congress rule since Independence, the Congress rulers embarked upon developing India along the capitalist path, without abolishing the feudal and semi-feudal relations in land, and in collaboration with foreign imperialism, despite all the sham slogans of Socialism. Notwithstanding the tirades and abuses against the monopolists, the "planned development" of the country has actually resulted in the concentration of wealth and resources in the hands of a few monopoly houses which are increasingly collaborating with foreign multinationals. Despite all the so-called land reform measures, concentration of land has continued in the hands of a few in the rural areas and the number of landless has been increasing.

The result of the "planned development" of the country under Congress rule is the growing pauperisation of the peasantry, uprooting of the small peasants from their land, growing unemployment among the working class, educated middle class youth, rising prices, speculation, blackmarketing and profiteering, colossal growth of black money and a parallel economy which defies all Government controls, and the tremendous growth of corruption.

While this has been the case in the country as a whole, the pursuit of the capitalist path has played a special role in Assam and the North-Eastern region. They remained more underdeveloped, more backward than other parts of the country. In Assam, neither agricultural development nor industrialisation kept pace with the growing needs of the population. Today 77 per cent of the State's rural population is either completely landless or owns only small plots, totally uneconomic holdings.

Since centralised planning has been done in the interests of the monopolists, there has been no attempt worth the name to establish major industries. The tremendous potential for hydro-power generation has remained untapped. This non-development has gone to the ridiculous extent of the burning up every year of large quantities of natural gas which could be exploited for producing useful products like fertilisers, and also for saving energy resources. Lack of communications, of course, has been one of the biggest handicaps. Given the political will, this could have been developed on a priority basis to the benefit of not only Assam and the North-Eastern States but of the entire country.

Partition of the country has had another detrimental effect on the people of these States. Before partition essential articles used to be carried through what is now Bangladesh, through railways and river transport. Partition has meant a long circuitous route and freight charges are more than two times what they were before partition. The people of these States have had to bear the additional cost of this transportation. Naturally, the prices of essential articles like salt, cloth, sugar, edible oils, etc., have always remained higher in these States than in other parts. In the conditions of neglected development, one can imagine how much more misery all this inflicts on the common people.

Weakening of Sense of Unity

The Congress rulers have been responsible for another serious development. During its three decades of rule, the Congress did nothing to strengthen the sense of national solidarity and unity. On the contrary, they did everything to fritter away this precious heritage of the days of the freedom struggle. The British had to retreat before the mighty force of national unity which took nearly a hundred years to come into being.

The Congress Party's policy of working for a dominant Centre with State Governments reduced to the status of sub-feudatories, has created a sense of alienation. The Janata Government led by Morarji Desai also had no other policy. The Congress Party, on each critical occasion, took steps that went contrary to the sense of national unity and imposed on the people of the States a sense

of inferior status. The Congress had opposed the formation of linguistic States—a legitimate democratic demand. It made all efforts to suppress the agitation for linguistic States in cold blood, killing scores of people. For long it has dreamed of imposing Hindi as the official language, which helped the separatist agitation in Tamil Nadu at one time, helping the DMK to come forward and make a regional appeal.

By growingly appropriating all power to the Centre, it not only reduced democracy in the States to a farce, it enabled the vested interests dominating the State Governments to escape responsibility for solving the problems of the people and gave them an alibi. They pleaded their helplessness pointing out that all power lay with the Centre. This enabled them to rouse regional and chauvinist feelings against the Centre whenever it suited them, which finally went against the sense of national unity.

The concentration of power in the hands of the Centre reached its peak during the Emergency leading to further accentuation of regional and chauvinistic feelings. Shortsighted political parties and individuals appealed to local and caste feelings to fight this advance of dictatorial forces, instead of making a straight appeal for the unity of democratic forces in all States. Till this day the Congress(I) and other bourgeois landlord parties fail to understand the political importance of a new redistribution of power between the Centre and the States and the role it can play in promoting a sense of equality among constituent States, and with it strengthening national unity.

In this background the consequences of the capitalist path, the economic stagnation and crisis, the rising unemployment and growth of mass destitution in the rural areas and the general increase in impoverishment, have dealt serious blows against national unity, undermining it and initiating a process of disintegration.

Though all States and regions are confronted with the same problem of poverty and unemployment, despite some marginal differences and unevenness, each region and State feels that it is not having a fair deal, that it has been specially chosen for discrimination. And there are enough elements in each State to

rouse regional feelings by pointing out some statistical differences between their States and some other State or region. Instead of understanding all this as the common problem of the Indian people in the struggle against poverty, as the dire consequence of the anti-people capitalist path ire is roused against other regions. This is an approach which is extremely helpful to the vested interests both in the States and at the Centre, because it prevents the people from uniting and challenging the capitalist path itself.

Along this road, the Congress leaders made several compromises. Indira Gandhi herself had at one stage encouraged the slogan of sons of the soil raised at first by the Shiv Sena of Bombay. There it was raised against the workers and employees from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, etc. Only a few days ago, two Shiv Sena members were elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Council with Congress(I) support.

With the transfer of administration of employment exchanges to the States, the State Governments imposed restrictions, by orders against "outsiders" in order to give preference to sons of the soil. The State Governments of Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh imposed various restrictions on recruitment through employment exchanges to keep out "outsiders". A number of these restrictions are considered to be in violation of the Constitution. After seeing the great damage such pernicious slogans have done to Assam, Indira Gandhi recently repudiated this "sons of the soil" cry. But leaders of her party, like Karnataka Chief Minister Gundu Rao, are again raising this slogan in a threatening manner. When ruling party leaders indulge in such anti-national slogans, other chauvinists go even further, and one of them has threatened to turn Karnataka into another Assam.

The essence of the situation is that the ruling bourgeois-landlord classes and their political parties are unable to protect the unity of the country.

The present challenge in Assam to the integrity of the country has to be seen in this context. Because of poverty, lack of jobs and all the other evil consequences of the capitalist path and the attempts to concentrate all power at the Centre, Assam is full of

frustration and discontent. It is this frustration and discontent which the leaders of the agitation are exploiting, telling the Assamese that they are unemployed because outsiders are grabbing all jobs, etc., to carry on their secessionist movement and torpedo the unity and integrity of the country.

Instead of rousing the people to take up the challenge of the capitalist path, to fight the common battle against unemployment, impoverishment, bourgeois-landlord rule, the leaders of the movement are directing it against other Indians. Foreigner, in the terminology of the agitation leaders, includes each and everybody who is non-Assamese—Indian citizens, Bengalees, Hindus, Muslims, Biharis and people from U.P. and Rajasthan and people who for generations have settled in Assam. The fact is that the agitation has now become an openly secessionist movement demanding Assam's break with India.

For a Solution

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) had in the middle of June, put forward a seven-point proposal for a solution of the problem in Assam. The points are: (1) the secessionist agitation should be withdrawn and following it, all repressive administrative measures should be withdrawn; (2) steps should be taken to instil confidence in the minorities by revamping the local administration; (3) the Centre should announce firm measures to stop all further immigration across the border; (4) discussions should be started with 1971 as the cut-off year; (5) an impartial machinery having the confidence of the minorities should be set up to detect foreigners; (6) a joint campaign by all democratic parties to explain to the people of Assam the vital issues at stake and win them over to protect national unity; and (7) an agreed programme for the economic development of Assam to overcome problems of unemployment, landlessness and poverty.

The CPI(M) had originally stood for 1977 as the cut-off year because at the time of the Lok Sabha election in that year, no question had been raised about foreigners in the electoral rolls. But for the sake of the consensus the Party has accepted 1971.

The leaders of the agitation, even while saying that they are for a solution on the basis of the Constitution and Indian citizenship

laws, insist on 1951 as the cut-off year which is a violation of both. Under the Citizenship Act any child born in India is an Indian citizen unless the parents who happen to be foreign nationals do not desire it. During the three decades since 1950, many children have been born in India. Are they to be considered as Indian citizens or not? Again, anyone residing in India for a period of ten years is entitled to Indian citizenship. There is at least one ruling by the Assam High Court that the National Register of Citizens has no evidentiary value. Is it not then preposterous to demand 1951 as the cut-off year and the National Register of Citizens as the basis for deciding who are foreigners, as the agitation leaders are doing?

Give All Help to Minorities

It has become clear by now that the leaders of the agitation—the All-Assam Students' Union and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad—are not interested in finding any solution to the genuine grievances of the Assamese people. Their latest rejection of the Prime Minister's offer for talks without any pre-conditions only confirms this. They are demanding the withdrawal of all administrative measures taken so far without any promise from their side that the agitation would be withdrawn simultaneously. They are still harping on the so-called 1951 National Register of Citizens for finding a solution to the "foreigners" issue. What they are demanding is that they should be left free to carry on their movement against the linguistic and religious minorities without any hindrance, till they achieve their goal of throwing out all the non-Assamese people from the State. They made this very clear when, on July 14, the AASU reiterated that it would continue the current agitation against "foreign nationals" till an acceptable solution was reached. What is of even more serious concern is that the AASU President, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, has stated, "if the Government failed to solve the vexed problem, the people of Assam should have to make preparations to solve the problem in their own way". This is a more dangerous reiteration of the earlier threat to detect and deport foreigners on their own if the Government did not initiate action towards that by May 15.

This threat to Indian integrity, the threat of mass expulsions from Assam, cannot be met simply by administrative measures alone.

The safety, security and the lives of minority citizens cannot be protected only by the usual law and order measures. All the more so because the local administration is a partisan of the separatist movement as was clearly seen once more on the minorities' protest day on May 26. The minorities cannot expect any protection from this partisan State administration. If the present situation is to be remedied, they have to stand up and assert their rights on their own. They have as much right to remain in Assam as the Assamese themselves and they have to assert this right. It is a matter of satisfaction that the organisations of minorities are realising the danger and bestirring themselves. The people of Assam who are now victims of the wrong policies of their leaders, have to be won over by the joint appeal of the minorities so that all fratricidal conflicts end.

It is also encouraging that the sober-minded among the Assamese people are coming out in opposition to the agitation, condemning it as anti-national and against the people of Assam also. Such personalities like Prof. Hiren Gohain of the Gauhati University have been carrying on a consistent campaign against the chauvinists through articles, seminars, publications and so on. For this, they have had to suffer insults, humiliations, harassment and even physical assaults. Prof. Gohain who has been courageously running a weekly and writing articles in journals outside Assam and participating in seminars against the agitation, was severely assaulted on the streets of Gauhati in broad daylight. He had to be hospitalised. This has not daunted other such personalities. Recently eightyone professors, advocates of the Gauhati High Court, artists, trade union leaders and others issued an appeal calling for defence of democratic values. They condemned the attack on Prof. Gohain and called on the people to end the atmosphere in which all democratic expression is stifled.

The task before the minorities in Assam is difficult as they have mostly to stand on their own legs and brave all difficulties. Under President's rule it is the duty of the Central Government to grant them all the protection they need. It is equally the task of the political parties in Assam to stand by the minorities and give them courage and strength to carry on the struggle for the country's unity and integrity.

Above all, it is the responsibility of the people all over the country, in all the States, to raise their voice by all possible means to protect national unity and against the anti-national secessionist policies of the leaders of the Assam movement. It will be an act of treachery if the people in all the States fail to speak in defence of the minorities in Assam, in defence of their citizenship rights and leave the matter to be dealt with by the Government of India alone. This is all the more necessary because the Bharatiya Janata Party of the RSS and Jana Sangh, which swears by "Akhand Bharat", is lending its support to the secessionist movement to fish in troubled waters. The leaders of this party should be made aware that the entire people of India consider their stand to be divisive and disruptive of national unity and reject their stand.

Let people everywhere raise their voice against the disruptive forces in Assam and in defence of national unity. Their united protest will help the people of Assam realise the gravity of the situation and turn away from the path of disruption along which their leaders are taking them.

National Convention Of Six Opposition Parties On Price-Rise, Communal Harmony And Civil Liberties*

The Two-day National Convention on Price-Rise, Communal Harmony and Civil Liberties organised by the Coordination Committee of Six Opposition parties, the Lok Dal, Congress(U), CPI, Forward Bloc, RSP and CPI(M), has elicited various reactions from different sections, from the media, from political leaders and so on. Some are seeing it a "front" or "alliance" which eventually want to pose itself as "an alternative" to the present Government. Some others are wondering what a combination of such "unlike-minded" parties can ever achieve.

The CPI(M) and other parties in the 6-Party Coordination Committee hold the view, that we are satisfied with the outcome of the convention. We did not set out to form a national alternative "front" or "alliance" and we were aware of the ideological-political-tactical differences that do exist between the six parties. But these did not come in the way of our agreeing to build up a countrywide movement on three immediate and important issues, i.e., price-rise, communal harmony and defence of civil liberties.

We are satisfied also because the convention was the most representative of such assemblies, attended as it was by representatives of the six parties from most parts of the country, as also of mass organisations representing different sections of the people.

For quite a long time, the CPI(M) has been striving for the forging of a broad popular movement in defence of the interests of the people by the coming together of various Left, democratic

*Press Communique dated October 2, 1980 covering the decisions of this National Convention released from the Central Committee Office of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), New Delhi.

and opposition parties and non-party democratic elements in the country. It was such a coming together of various parties and organisations that made it possible to unitedly stand behind the striking railway workers in the year 1974, and the widest mobilisation against the wage-freeze. Another occasion when such a convention took place was in 1976 on the question of Constitutional amendments and in defence of civil liberties. Later, there was the widest mobilisation of parties and mass organisations in opposition to the anti-working class Industrial Relations Bill.

On such previous occasions, the coming together had taken place on one specific issue, and the parties which came together on one occasion were not necessarily the same on the other occasion. Today's situation is that, with the return to power of the Congress(I), and the disappointing performance of the Congress(I) Governments at the Centre and States facing the country and the people are unresolved and getting intensified. The experience of the past has made us in various parties think along the lines of joining hands to unitedly struggle for the vital interests of the people. The result has been the coming together of the six Opposition parties, the setting up of their Coordination Committee, the holding of the convention and the adoption of a "Call to Action" by it.

It has been repeatedly stated right from the beginning that the coming together of the six parties is neither a "political front" nor an "alliance" to fight elections with a view to forming a Government. It can easily be seen that it is very much different from the fronts that are running Governments in some States. However, the significance of the six parties coming together for leading the struggling people is not to be lost sight of. One aspect of this significance is that in a period of dissensions and conflicts inside parties and between parties, the six parties have agreed to join hands to launch a countrywide united movement on three burning issues.

Though movement is to be launched is confined to the issues of price-rise, communal harmony and defence of civil liberties, the document adopted by the convention shows a wider consensus on the analysis of the problems facing the country and the people and solutions to these problems. As the movement at present envisaged

develops, it is possible that the area of agreement will further expand, encompassing more issues, and the present combination will itself expand embracing more parties, organisations and elements. In various States, depending on the conditions there, different combinations have come up which are launching united actions on many more pressing issues than the three taken up for the countrywide campaign.

It is a bounden duty for all the Left, democratic and opposition parties to provide leadership to the discontented and disenchanted people. Any failure in this regard throws the masses into the hands of parochial, communal and other disruptive forces.

Here lies another aspect of the significance of the party combination and the National Convention and its "Call to Action". Each of the parties which have now come together, has by itself not found it possible to launch effective countrywide movements, but a combination of the six parties is strong enough to launch such movement and draw the vast suffering masses of the people into it. It is also to be hoped that the "Call to Action" given jointly can be made the beginning for breaking the sense of frustration of the people till recently.

This is a development of great significance in the present politico-economic situation in the country. That is why the six parties have emerged from the convention with the determination to throw all their strength into the movement that has been planned, to organise local conventions, rallies and other programmes which will bring together and masses following all the six parties, and along with them many others in joint agitation and united action.

Planning Commission Silent On All Crucial Issues*

Speech Delivered by Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal, at the Meeting of the National Development Council Held in New Delhi on February 13-14, 1981

I am participating at this meeting of the National Development Council, let me confess, with considerable misgivings. We are assembled here to discuss the *Draft Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85* prepared by the Planning Commission. This is supposed to be a follow-up of the discussions we had last year on the document *Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85—A Framework*. At the end of the meeting of the NDC held on August 30 and 31, 1980, it was decided, my colleagues will remember, that the Planning Commission could proceed with the preparation of the draft of the Sixth Five Year Plan, but, while doing so, it should take into account the views of the State Governments. The Preface to the *Draft* by the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission says that 'extensive discussions' were held with the States on the State Plans for 1980-85. Formally this is true, but the mandate of the National Development Council was to discuss with the State Governments not just the size of the State Plans but also the objectives, programmes and instrumentalities of the overall national Plan itself. There is no evidence that such discussions took place. The Government of West Bengal on its own sought a meeting with the Commission to discuss these basic questions. However, when we attempted to raise with it certain matters which we consider to be crucial to integrated economic planning in the country, we were informed by the Commission that while it was aware of the significance of these issues, it had no mandate to discuss them. Such issues as the inter-regional pattern of

outlays undertaken by the Union Government since the beginning of the so-called planned economic endeavour in 1951, the inter-regional pattern of investments undertaken by banks and public financial institutions, the consequences of the Union Government's policy of freight-equalisation with respect to certain basic commodities while such policy is not applied in the case of some other basic commodities, the implications for policy of the concentrated incidence of poverty in such States as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and West Bengal, or the limitations imposed on resource-raising by individual States because to certain Central decisions, must be, in our view, gone into in very great detail by the Commission if any meaningful framework for this nation's future economic growth it is to emerge. But the Commission, as the *Draft* presented to us would indicate, has thought otherwise. The entire discussions with the States were in effect concerned only with the quantum of Central assistance to be made available to the State Governments for financing the State Plans. Given the federal nature of our polity, I consider it altogether illegitimate for the commission to have prepared a document which does not take into account the points of view of the States and which purposely stays away from referring to factors regarded by many as the principal determinants of the pace and pattern of this nation's future development.

2. Adequate consultation with the State Governments is of great importance since the Commission is not a body equidistant from the Centre and the States. The Commission is an integral part of the Union Government—its views, to all intents and purposes, are the views of the Centre. The essential prerequisites of economic planning in a federal polity are thus lacking from the very beginning. The document prepared by the Commission can at most serve the public relations purpose of the Union Government; but it would neither serve the cause of balanced economic development nor bring the States and the Union Governments together.

3. As I said at the last meeting of the National Development Council, given the feudal-cum-capitalistic structure of the polity, we are altogether aware of the limitations of planning in the

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The "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", published an abridged version of this speech. The full speech is given here.

country at this juncture. But certain measures, which could provide selective relief to the masses, are still enforceable. The *Draft of the Plan*, as prepared by the Commission, throws out little hope that this is at all the intention. Not that the usual quota of cliches is missing from the document; some new slogans too have now been added. The basic objectives of planning, we have been informed by the Commission, are growth, modernisation, self-reliance and social justice. While different terminologies have from time to time been used, these have been the objectives of planning from the First Five Year Plan onward; it is the failure to attain even the minimal milestones with respect to these objectives which is the most crucial issue in Indian economic life. The document does not lack the penchant to stray into abstractions in the name of analysis. But since the principal reasons responsible for the growing economic crisis are unpalatable to the Union Government and the feudal-capitalist classes, these are not mentioned. It is a tautology to say—as the Commission says—that our inability to attain a satisfactory rate of economic growth is on account of the prevalence of high capital-output ratios. The Commission, however, does not provide a clue why this has been so. According to its own admission, agricultural growth has been uneven in the different regions; there have been wide year-to-year fluctuations in farm output, stagnation has marked several important crops such as pulses and oil seeds; new technology and public assistance have not reached all parts of the country; small and marginal farmers have been left out of the productive stream. But these are merely enumeration of our failure; they do not tell us the causes of the failure. The Commission has not analysed these causes because politically it would not be convenient to do so. This huge document thus deals only with secondary symptoms.

4. My colleagues in the Council will, therefore, kindly bear with me if, during the rest of the time at my disposal, by and large, I leave the document aside. I will have occasion to refer to one of two aspects of it; that would be just to illustrate some of the issues I have in mind. What is, however, more important is to invite the attention of my colleagues to the major problem facing the country, which, unless speedily tackled, might, in my view, even jeopardise the very integrity of our nation.

5. The rate of economic growth over the thirty-odd years since 1951 has been barely 1.3 per cent or thereabouts per annum. It is little use concealing the fact that this is a less than modest achievement, or that, even amongst Third World countries, we remain one of the poorest. What is worse, even this most modest growth has been extremely unequally divided between classes and regions. I cannot afford not to mention this phenomenon of growing income inequalities between classes, because it is this factor which also largely explains the poor rate of growth attained by the economy as a whole. Because of policies systematically pursued over the past thirty years, the poor, who constitute the nation's overwhelming majority, have been kept away from their share of assets and opportunities. The consequence has been the failure to develop an internal market even in a country which can today boast of a population of 680 million. The poor lack purchasing power; as long as they lack purchasing power, the constraint of demand will hamper the growth of our economy. But the poor cannot have purchasing power without widespread institutional transformations, such as land reforms, the re-ordering of the distribution of inputs and credit, the curbing of the depredations of multinational corporations, big monopoly houses and big traders who exploit both the small producers and the consumers, or the development of an effective system of public distribution which ensures that the basic articles of consumption and investment are made available at uniform prices all over the country. You can scan the Planning Commission document over and over again; these pivotal issues are either carefully skirted around, or discussed in generalities. Such being the case, I am afraid, I cannot accept with any degree of earnestness the projections of growth included in it.

6. Land reforms are a case in point. In the entire document there is just a single stray reference to the issue and almost a total lack of awareness of the close relationship between growth of farm output and the rearrangement of land relations. One can draw up a hundred different programmes for the improvement of agriculture or irrigation or for the supply of fertilisers or high-yielding varieties of seeds or credit from the banks. None of

these will have an impact till as long as the task of ensuring security of tenure for share-croppers and of redistribution of land in favour of the landless is not first tackled effectively. For instance, the banking sector is now, for all practical purposes, a part of the public domain; this fact has not made the slightest difference to the availability of credit for the poor, including the rural poor. Despite the admonition that commercial banks must channel at least 1 per cent of their aggregate advances to the poor under the Scheme of Differential Interest Rate, and despite the fact that such advances to the poor are supposed to be fully covered by the Credit Guarantee Corporation, in West Bengal advances under the DRI scheme are barely 0.16 per cent of the total. The entrenched class bias affects the quality of administrative measures which could promote land reforms. The same genre of class bias affects the realignment of credit and of other inputs; the several biases reinforce one another. Abstract perorations of the kind the Planning Commission has indulged in will be of no avail in our present circumstances; they will not make the slightest difference to the rate of growth in the economy, nor to the distribution of income and assets.

7. Or take the question of prices. A stable climate of prices is an essential pre-requisite for stable economic growth. Even private investment decisions are, up to a point, determined by price stability. This stability has been missing for the past two years, and almost exclusively because of policies adopted by the Union Government. The huge deficits in the Union Government's budget during both 1979-80 and the current year have meant an additional injection of inflationary potential to the extent of nearly Rs. 5,000 crores. Moreover, the Union Government, through a series of administrative decisions, has steeply raised the prices of a number of strategic commodities. It is little use arguing that such price increases were inevitable for paying the higher costs of inputs, as is being argued in the context of the announced increases in the prices of petroleum products. Additional foreign exchange does not accrue if domestic prices of petroleum products are raised. If anything, such price increases, by making the domestic cost structure more expensive, make exports more

difficult and therefore, affect adversely the prospects of earning more foreign exchange. Because of its immediate revenue needs, the Centre has raised these prices; the consequence is a general increase in the level of prices, making it much more difficult for everybody, including the working class as well as the State Governments, to balance their income and expenditure accounts. The short-term fiscal advantage for the Centre will evaporate in no time and the entire nation will have to shoulder the burden of rampaging inflation; the Union Government itself cannot be immune from this development.

8. Notwithstanding the nominal raising of the outlay between the document circulated last August and the present one, inflation has already eroded the size of the Plan in real terms. And the method adopted for financing the Plan is, it would seem, primarily designed to load the entire burden of development on the poorer sections of the community. At one end there is the reliance on deficit financing, which will certainly be many times more than the magnitude of Rs. 5,000 crores mentioned in the *Draft*. The major part of the additional taxes proposed is also likely to be borne by the poor. While the *Draft* proposes an additional tax effort of Rs. 12,000 crores in the Central sector, the Union Government is busy scaling down the rates of direct taxation and is providing larger and larger tax reliefs to the rich. The scandalous instance of the issue of an Ordinance to legitimise black money and to accord benefits to shady profiteers and dishonest persons which are not available to the honest tax-paying public provides a clue of what the Union Government has in mind.

9. The Commission has avoided mentioning the obvious fact that if the objective is to conserve foreign exchange and cut back the consumption of petroleum products, the answer lies in a system of rationing under public auspices. This method would enable us to avoid the consequences of spiralling prices and would also ensure that the products reach the different sections of the community in an equitable manner. Such an arrangement, whereby the use of scarce products is regulated, is also a means of reaching the goal of self-reliance. Despite the enumeration of

this latter goal as a particular objective of policy, nowhere in the *Draft* is there even a cursory mention of any particular instruments through which the objective is to be pursued. On the contrary, going by the proposed proportion of the Plan outlay to be financed by external accommodation—nearly Rs. 10,000 crores—it would appear that we are really moving away from the objective of self-reliance.

10. This is where the class character of the *Draft* is most glaringly revealed. Self-reliance does not suit the interests of monopolists who have their link with multinational corporations. Self-reliance implies a re-ordering of the structure of domestic consumption; it implies a drastic curtailment of investment in the sector of luxury and semi-luxury goods; it implies a total reversal of the policy of blanket export promotion. Self-reliance also implies a deliberate shift in the preferred technology and an intensification of land reforms; it implies involving the common people in public procurement operations. If only the Commission were interested, it could have studied the experiments in all these spheres we are doing in West Bengal despite all the limitations a State Government suffers from.

11. The anxiety of the Commission and the Union to elevate export promotion as almost an absolute objective of State policy is comprehensible only in terms of an implicit decision arrived at to scuttle the national goals such as with respect to self-reliance, employment and income distribution. A self-denying arrangement, which makes the population subject to a modicum of discipline in the use of scarce goods, would have enabled us to reduce the dependence on international resources; to that extent, it would also have enabled us to reduce the need for indiscriminate export promotion. The Planning Commission is not altogether unaware of the intricate inter-relationships between a package of policies which proclaims simultaneously the virtues of export promotion as well as of other national objectives, but it has no doubt in its mind where the choice lies for the next few years: '...there could be a conflict as between different objectives of the Plan and... in making a choice of the appropriate foreign trade policy it would be necessary to keep in

mind the other objectives of the Plan as well. When it comes to exports, however, it seems clear that over the next five years or so the balance of payments prospects facing the country are such that it can ill afford not to give high priority to the promotion of exports and other foreign exchange earning activities'.

12. Given this clear-cut enunciation of policy, the only conclusion that is drawable is that the Union Government—and the Commission—are deliberately planning for a regime which will be marked by increasing dependence on foreign sources of funds, increasing inequalities in the distribution of income and assets, and increasing unemployment, and all this in order that exports might take place and foreign exchange earned for the sake of sustaining and furthering a most inequitable social and class structure. It would not be unfair to sum up that the essence of the framework of policy suggested in the *Draft* is that resources be squeezed from the poor through deficit financing and indirect taxes and these resources be invested to provide certain basic commodities at subsidised prices to capitalists, big traders and landlords, as also to subsidise the export activities undertaken by these classes.

13. In fact, in the matter of reducing income inequalities and the incidence of poverty and unemployment, all that the document says is that emphasis is to be placed on the Integrated Rural Development, National Rural Employment as well as the Minimum Needs Programmes. There is, however little analysis of the factors which have impeded the implementation of these programmes till now. The Integrated Rural Development Programme is supposedly intended to create income and assets for the poorer sections of the agrarian community. But since the Programme has been linked to the availability of finance from the banking sector and the banks have continued to insist upon the preconditions of availability of collateral, security, etc., in practice the IRD Programme is in danger of being completely taken over by the affluent sections. In those States where the local administration has tried to orient the Programme in favour of the rural poor, the banks have refused to cooperate. It would be

truly astounding if the Planning Commission and the Union Government were to be ignorant of this fact. The National Rural Employment Programme, which is really the Food-for-Work Programme under another name, is in danger of collapse because of the severe cut-back in the supply of foodgrains and the insistence on the part of the latter that State Governments must henceforth bear 50 per cent of the costs of the foodgrains supplied under it. It is not without significance that in a Plan which in the overall would cost close to Rs. 100,000 crores, the lack of resources is sought to be used as alibi for effecting reductions in precisely those programmes which are intended to promote the welfare of the poor.

14. On the issue of remunerative prices for farm products, the Commission displays a similar class bias. Vagaries of price fluctuations in the recent period have affected most adversely the huge majority of the agrarian community. There has to be an explicit declaration that prices of farm commodities would be kept at levels which would ensure growth and equity. The specific policy measures by which this objective could be attained are not referred to at all in the *Draft*. Nor are there any indications about how the benefits of remunerative prices are proposed to be reached particularly to the middle and small farmers, the share-croppers and the landless agricultural workers in terms of increased earnings for each of them.

15. Several paragraphs in the *Draft* mention the need to have an enlarged public distribution system. But apart from listing a number of commodities which, according to it, should be supplied through public distribution, the Commission offers no views about how the enlarged scheme is to be put into effect. The suggestion to start commodity corporations in the States—or to extend the ambit of the corporations that already exist—does not attack the central problem: there can be no effective system of public distribution without an effective system of public procurement in the first place. Public distribution would also be bereft of context if prices cannot be kept both reasonably low and stable as well as uniform all over the country, in case necessary through a system of subsidies; occasionally, imports will also be

called for. The failure to mention these details leads to the suspicion that the Commission and the Centre would like to foist the responsibility for public distribution entirely on the State Governments. More than one year has elapsed since the new Government was installed at the Centre and promises were held out about improved arrangements in regard to the supply of essential commodities so that prices could be disciplined. The promises have remained promises, and, going by the evidence of the *Draft*, are likely to remain so.

16. For raising resources for the Plan, the Commission suggests a reduction in budgetary subsidies. But it would seem that the only effective subsidy the Planning Commission and the Centre can think of reducing is the subsidy in the distribution of foodgrains, that is, a subsidy of which the benefits accrue to the poor, while it is our point of view that this particular programme of subsidy—which ought to be the lynchpin of public distribution—should be further strengthened.

17. Our point of view in such matters needs to be expressed unequivocally. We have little faith that the stated objectives of planning as enumerated in the *Draft* would be advanced at all through the policies indicated—or hinted at—despite what the Commission is claiming. The issue is not one of availability of investible resources, but of the lack of will—and, let me also add, the inability, for political reasons, to confront effectively those who hold sway over our economy. The self-contradictory nature of the policies proposed to be pursued, the obsession with export promotion, the reluctance to have institutional reforms essential for stimulating production, and the absence of an adequate base of demand because of the existing structure of assets distribution which the Commission dares not suggest dismantling and the Union Government will not dismantle—all these add up to a grim prospect of continued economic stagnation. In such a milieu, a more effective system of public distribution, by keeping the prices of essential commodities somewhat on leash, could have at least provided some relief to the millions of our poor countrymen. But such price stability would perhaps injure the class interests of those whom the Union Government would like to keep happy.

18. Let me now mention what I consider to be the other outstanding deficiency in the *Draft*. If we have to summarise the economic history of the nation over the past thirty years, alongside with the extremely poor rate of growth, we also have to refer to the fact of increasing disparities in the rates of growth between region and region and State and State. I had raised this issue at the last meeting of the National Development Council. Apparently, our point of view has had no impact on the thinking of the Planning Commission. Some parts and regions of the country have been fortunate enough to have maintained a rate of growth of more than 5 per cent per annum; there are, however, certain other parts and States where this rate is less than 1 per cent—and, in certain cases, even negative. It would be absurd for the National Development Council or the Planning Commission to pretend that this matter is outside the domain of economic planning. True, in the *Draft*, there is a reference to the need to eradicate, or narrow, inter-regional disparities. One, however, gets the impression that the Commission is more interested in the problem of inter-regional disparities *within* a State rather than in the issue of disparate growth *between* State and State. We will be deluding ourselves if we do not admit that the inter-regional pattern of investments and other outlays by the Centre, the inter-regional pattern of investments on the part of public financial institutions, the inter-regional pattern of advances on the part of banks, and particular price policies pursued by the Union Government have been mainly responsible for this growing chasm between State and State. The Commission, I regret to say, has not shown any awareness of the gravity of the problem—a problem, which, I dare say, might one day affect the very basis of our polity.

19. Please take a look at the magnitudes of Plan outlays for the individual States recommended by the Commission. The Commission, it would seem, has decided to follow the edict that the more affluent States should continue to grow more affluent and, therefore, the per-capita Plan outlay should be higher for the more advanced States than for the less advanced ones. It is, of course, arguable that States in a position to raise more resources

compared to others should be allowed to go ahead. But is it not the Commission's responsibility to enquire whether some structural factors inhibit the task of raising additional resources by some States, or whether the enforcement of certain Central directives and laws, such as with respect to the so-called 'goods of special importance', have not hampered some States in their resource-raising efforts, or whether the Centre's obsession over the enlargement of the scheme of additional excise duties is not likely to affect further the pool of resources at the disposal of the States? The Commission has not placed even one detail regarding the pattern of allocation of the outlay proposed in the Central sector close to Rs. 50,000 crores. If only an analysis is made of the proposed region-wise breakdown of this allocation, it would be seen that it would further aggravate the inter-regional disparities.

20. It is certainly not my purpose to offer encouragement to chauvinistic or regional emotions; my purpose is precisely the reverse. I would like the total isolation of elements who would like nothing better than harm the cause of national unity by taking advantage of acts of injustice done to this or that region or that State; it would be most unwise to provide ammunition to such elements. I wish it could be explained why, notwithstanding the fact that the shortage of power is acutest in the eastern and north-eastern region, the expansion of capacity proposed in the *Draft* is the lowest for this region. I wish it could also be explained to the people in our State why, while provision could be made in the Central sector outlay of the Plan for the proposed petrochemical complexes in Maharashtra and Gujarat, a similar provision has not been found possible for the proposed project in West Bengal, or why, while the absolute amount of Plan assistance for the Annual Plan for 1981-82 could be increased over that for 1980-81 for all other States, it has been reduced for my State.

21. I had mentioned my conviction at the last meeting of the National Development Council that planning in our country would continue to be infructuous as long as the compulsions of the essentially federal nature of the polity are not kept in mind.

One major reason for both our poor rate of growth and growing regional disparities is the increasing trend towards over-centralisation of decision-making. Our State Government, along with some of my colleagues from other States, have been stressing this point over and over again. But the *Draft* would indicate that the Planning Commission is yet to appreciate the underlying implications of what we have been trying to say.

22. These are issues which, I feel, we have to discuss in the National Development Council. We must discuss the fiscal policies of the Union Government which attach such an inordinate importance to deficit financing and to resource-raising devices that are patently inflationary and most burdensome for the poor. We must discuss the consequences for inter-regional growth of the investment and pricing policies pursued by the Union Government during the past thirty years. We must discuss the policies of banks and public financial institutions. We must take into account the intolerable strains which the Centre's recent policies have imposed on the house-keeping of the State Governments, which are at least physically much closer to the people and have, therefore, to bear the impact of repercussions of price increases triggered off by acts and decisions of the Union Government. We must also discuss the absurd suggestion made to us by the Planning Commission and the Union Ministry of Finance that the Plan outlay proposed for a State in a particular year should be reduced by the carry-over of the fiscal deficit from the previous year. In 1979-80, the fiscal deficit of the Union Government exceeded Rs. 2,700 crores, while that of the 22 State Governments considered together was less than Rs. 450 crores; similarly, in the current year, the accounts of the Union Government will perhaps end with a deficit of more than Rs. 2,000 crores; for the State Governments, the combined deficit is unlikely to exceed Rs. 400 crores. As far as I am aware, no suggestion has been offered that the Plan outlay for the Union Government be reduced by the deficit in its budget in the preceding year. One fails to see why a different rationale is to be applied in the case of State Governments, the inflationary consequence of whose budgets is a microscopic fraction of that of

the Union Government's budget. That such a rationale is still sought to be put across is a frightening instance of the outcome of the increasing concentration of authority and financial powers at the Centre.

23. While concluding this presentation of our point of view, I would like, in all sincerity, to appeal to the Chairman of this Council to take stock of the dangerous implications of what we consider to be the mindless exercises on the part of the Union Government and the Planning Commission. The proposals incorporated in the *Draft* prepared by the Commission would be incapable of extricating our economy from the morass of stagnation, and would actually lead to a further aggravation of the disparities between class and class, State and State and region and region. The single-minded pursuit of the goal of export promotion would provide a field day to the monopolists, the industrial and commercial profiteers and the multinational units. Unemployment would not only persist, but continue to grow. These developments, and the fiscal and monetary policies pursued by the Union Government, would inevitably lead to mounting social tension and the method of issuing fights above and curbing of democratic rights, which have been of late increasingly in evidence, would ultimately be counter-productive.

24. It is in this connection that I have to ask the Centre to what depths it proposes to push this nation. Over the past one year, the incidence of communal disturbances and atrocities against the *Harijans* has increased, and we have seen little of effective action against the elements engaged in the perpetration of those heinous offences. But there has been no lack of action against the toiling masses whenever they have agitated for the defence of their rights. In recent months, we have witnessed several events, beginning with the introduction of the National Security Act and its application against political activists and trade unionists, the proposal to ban strikes, the dismissal of railway workers, the denial of the legitimate rights of workers through the promulgation of ordinances, as was done about a fortnight ago when dealing with the demands of the employees of the Life Insurance Corporation. Where there is no appreciable growth in

the economy and whatever little growth is there, is unequally shared between different sections of people, there can be no avoidance of the emergence of deep and widespread discontent. Rising prices would further contribute to this discontent. Punitive measures cannot take care of such developments, but can only further destabilise the economy. The cure lies in taking a detached, dispassionate and sympathetic look at the entire pattern of growth over the past thirty years and in freely admitting that application of the kind of class-biased as exemplified in the *Draft* policies can only accelerate the collapse of our polity. I would plead with my colleagues that the views I have expressed be considered with some care. There can be no meaningful planning of economic development if the people are not involved in the process. The endeavour of economic planning will be bereft of context if, at the same time, a confrontation is sought with the people in matters which concern their life and living.

Massive Peasant Rally In New Delhi On March 26, 1981*

The March 26 Kisan March and Rally in the Capital was yet another landmark in the peasant upsurge sweeping the country, an upsurge unparalleled in the history of post-Independence India.

That the peasantry was in ferment became clear months ago when struggles began breaking out in various States of the country demanding remunerative prices for peasant produce along with other demands on water charges, electricity rates, debt-relief and so on. The Congress(I) rulers were ruthlessly beating down the peasantry, trying to shove the main burden of the economic crisis created by their policies on to the rural population.

The peasant movements began under the leadership of persons like Narayanaswami Naidu in Tamil Nadu, Rudrappa in Karnataka, Sharad Joshi in Maharashtra. These are States where the organised peasant movement is weak, where the Left and democratic movement is also not powerful. These leaders claimed themselves to be non-political, they also banned political parties from entering their movements.

But different combinations of Opposition parties in various States determinedly intervened in the struggles, gave them a popular sweep, combined the demands of the peasants for remunerative prices with the wage and other demands of the agricultural workers and the demand of the consumers for essential commodities at reasonable prices, and imparted an all-India character to the growing movement. Though joint

*Report published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, April 5, 1981.

actions in some States had begun earlier, the National Convention of six Opposition parties in New Delhi on September 28 and its "Call to Action" were of great significance to the development of the movement.

In Maharashtra, the front consisting of the Congress(U) under the leadership of Sharad Pawar, the CPI(M), CPI, Peasants' and Workers' Party, the Republican Party (Gavai) and also the Janata Party which had not joined the National Convention of Opposition parties, was already active. These fronts varied from State to State—there was a nine-party front in Andhra Pradesh which was also active before the National Convention, a five-party front in Bihar, a four-party front in Punjab and another four-party front in Karnataka. Under the leadership of these fronts, peasants in thousands were going into action putting up road blocks, stopping traffic, organising marches, bandhs and gheraos of Assemblies.

To mention a few of these actions, bandhs in Andhra Pradesh (September 24), Maharashtra (October 15), Bihar (November 27), and Mandi Bandh and Rasta Roko in Punjab on October 25; the Statewide Satyagraha in Maharashtra on October 2, and the Long March (Dindi) from December 7 to 26; the Malaprabha agitation in Karnataka and the mass peasant movement in Kolar district under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha in which 10,000 were arrested and the kisan jathas in that State from January 16 to February 5, culminating in the massive worker-kisan march in Bangalore on February 5; gheraos of the Maharashtra Assembly in Nagpur at the end of the Dindi on December 26, and of the Punjab Assembly in Chandigarh on January 21; the march to the Maharashtra Assembly on March 3; the marches in Lucknow, Jaipur and Bhopal—these were some of the highlights of the developing movement. Not only was peasant unity being forged and strengthened in these actions, there were also demonstrations of active working class support to the demands and struggles of the rural people.

The peasantry had to wage these struggles facing the severest repression of the Congress(I) rulers. Twentythree persons were killed in the Malaprabha agitation alone in Karnataka. There were

firings and killings in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. Both in Nagpur when the Dindi reached to gherao the Assembly outmanoeuvring Antulay's police barricades and other counter-measures, and in Chandigarh on the day of the Assembly gherao, the police went berserk, made indiscriminate lathi-charges, arrested tens of thousands of persons. In Andhra Pradesh, there were brutal lathi-charges and mass arrests in various parts of the State at the time of every action, the mammoth Vijaywada demonstration, the Andhra Pradesh Bandh, the bus bandh day and so on. The National Security Act, the enactment that was put on the Statute Book with the pledge that it would be used only against anti-social and criminal elements, was brought into operation in some of the States against the peasant movement. It is defying all this intense repression that the peasants have been marching forward. All glory to them!

And the fighting peasantry did wrest many concessions from the Congress(I) rulers. In regard to sugarcane, the Central Government had announced a price of Rs. 13 per quintal and was not prepared to give a paisa more than Rs. 16. In face of the powerful peasant agitation, all States had to agree to Rs. 23 as minimum price and a maximum of Rs. 28 in certain areas. Paddy price had also to be increased in some States. In Karnataka, the State Government had to concede Rs. 85 crore worth of relief and in Andhra Pradesh Rs. 90 crore worth. In Punjab, too, concessions were won.

The National Convention of six Opposition parties and the Convention's "Call to Action" had given great impetus to the movement. Many forms of action, facing brutal Congress(I) repression, as mentioned above, were resorted to strengthen the united actions of the peasantry.

At the beginning of the Winter Session of Parliament, the six parties jointly submitted a memorandum to the President which gave further momentum to the movement. The demand of the peasantry for remunerative prices was again and again pressed during the session and was supported by large numbers of members including those belonging to the Congress(I).

The session of the All-India Kisan Council in Trichur, from November 29 to December 1, thoroughly discussed all aspects of the growing movement and unanimously adopted a resolution fully supporting the united actions that were developing, and called upon all Kisan Sabha units to throw themselves into the movement and organise joint actions with different organisations of the peasantry.

The landlord elements, the Narayanaswami Naidus, Rudrappas and Sharad Joshis, finding that the movement was slipping away from their hands, seeing that it was taking a direction which they had not in the least desired with the intervention of the Left and democratic forces and the organised kisan movement, made an attempt to retrieve the situation and remain at its head. A meeting was held in Hyderabad at the invitation of Narayanaswami Naidu and the formation of an all-India farmers' organisation was announced.

A meeting was convened in Delhi, too, by Bhanu Pratap Singh, a former Central Minister in the Janata Government and leader of the Farmers' Forum, but to this meeting all kisan organisations were invited. Its outcome was different from the one in Hyderabad because of the presence of representatives of the two All-India Kisan Sabhas and other kisan organisations and of parties other than the Congress(I), as also non-party personalities. The meeting adopted a resolution supporting the peasant movement and on remunerative prices, set up a Central Kisan Coordination Committee and gave a call for observance of Kisan Solidarity Day on January 17. The day was jointly and successfully observed.

The Maharashtra Coordination Committee also joined the Central Kisan Coordination Committee. Bhanu Pratap Singh who, till then, had been the Chairman of the Committee, proposed Sharad Pawar to take his place and it was accepted. Devi Lal continues as the Convener.

The Central Coordination Committee met in New Delhi on January 6, heard reports of how the movements were going on in the various States, appointed a sub-committee to draft a Charter of Demands of the peasantry to be presented to Parliament on March 26.

The Charter of Demands finalised by the sub-committee (text printed in *People's Democracy*, March 1) includes the peasantry's demands on remunerative prices; increased allocation in the Sixth Plan for agricultural and rural development; abolition of betterment levies, withdrawal of increase in electricity charges and full tax-relief to small peasants; debt-relief; minimum wages, house-sites and houses for agricultural workers, extensive organisation of food-for-work programmes; replacement of the 1894 Land Acquisition Act with a new Act; land reforms, expeditious implementation of existing land ceiling laws and distribution of surplus land; supply of essential commodities throughout the country including the villages at reasonable prices through a network of fair-price shops supervised by people's committees; decentralisation of power; withdrawal of the National Security Act, release of all persons arrested during the peasants agitation and withdrawal of all cases connected with them.

These are demands of all sections of the peasantry and of agricultural workers and consumers, and they were all represented among the lakhs who marched in the Capital on March 26.

Appendix (xix)

Order of Election Commission On Re-Poll In Garhwal Parliamentary Constituency*

The following is the Text of the Order issued by the Election Commission on the question of re-poll in Garhwal Parliamentary Constituency issued on June 20, 1981:

The bye-election in this constituency which had become necessary on account of the resignation of Shri H.N. Bahuguna on 19.5.81 was ordered by the Commission with the date of polling on 14, June 1981.

After the poll was over, Shri Bahuguna made complaints in writing about the capturing of booths on a wide scale. He gave specific instances. He also came to see me on the 16th June in this connection. He further stated that the police forces from the State of Haryana and other neighboring States had been inducted in the constituency and they had spread terror. I immediately called for a report from the Government of Uttar Pradesh and wanted to know why the Commission had not been informed of the induction of these police forces from outside the State and the circumstances in which it was done. To this day there has been no reply to this.

On the day of the poll and immediately thereafter, Shri Bahuguna and his representative have lodged a number of complaints with the R.O., A.R.O.s, Observers, Sector Magistrate and the Commission about the alleged booth-capturing resorted to by the Congress(I) workers with the connivance of the local administration and the police force. About 56 specific cases of booth-capturing have been furnished by Shri Bahuguna with full details in his representation dated 15th June, 1981 and presented to the Commission on the 16th June, 1981.

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Immediately I sent a team of officers headed by the Secretary of the Commission, Shri, K. Ganesan, to investigate the matter both at Pauri and Dehra Dun where the election records of 4 out of 5 assembly segments of the parliamentary constituency are stored.

The Secretary of the Commission, after investigations, gave a detailed report to the Commission. This detailed report referred to booth-capturing as established based on contemporaneous documentary evidence, like presiding officers' diaries, their independent reports, Sector Magistrate's reports, reports of the Observers, the R.O. and the A.R.O.s

There are also complaints received from the Congress(I) in respect of Badri-Kedar assembly segment specifying the places where the alleged booth capturing by Shri Bahuguna's supporters had taken place. These complaints were, however, received in the Commission on 17th June, 1981 after the Commission's team had left for Pauri, and by the R.O. on 16th June, 1981. There were further complaints from this party which were received on the 16th June, 1981 but which had been earlier lodged with the R.O. alleging attacks made on the Congress(I) workers by the workers of the Shri Bahuguna's party. It was not, therefore, possible to make any investigation by the Commission's team into these complaints at Badri-Kedar, which was not visited by the team of the Commission. If a detailed enquiry is held now, it will take many days to complete it.

In this connection, it is relevant to mention that when Shri Bahuguna met me on the 16th, he suggested that the proposed team headed by Shri Ganesan should also visit Gopeshwar where the election records of Badri-Kedar have been stored. Immediately I asked the U.P. Government to place a helicopter at the disposal of the team so that the investigation could be done quickly. Unfortunately, the Government did not place the helicopter at the disposal of the Commission.

Apart from the representatives of the Congress(I) who met the Commission's team at Dehra Dun, the other representatives, namely Shri Darbara Singh, Shri Buta Singh, Shri C.P.N. Singh, Shri Rajesh Pilot, Shri Karupia Moopnar and others met me on 19th and 20th June, 1981 and made a representation to the effect that there is at

present a 'surcharged atmosphere of class war' in the constituency with the result that any re-poll now in the constituency would be vitiated. The Government of U.P. have also informed me that the present law and order situation is very tense and violence cannot be ruled out if a repoll is held now.

Apart from the findings of the team regarding booth-capturing, the report of the team also discloses the surcharged atmosphere in the constituency immediately before the date of poll and on the day of poll by the presence of the Haryana Police on a large-scale.

The R.O. of the constituency who is the D.M. of Pauri-Garhwal District has stated in the report of the Commission that he had not made any request for Haryana and Punjab Police being posted during the election to Garhwal District, and confirmed that their deployment in the district of Pauri-Garhwal was not made by him.

From the report of the Commission's team and the D.M. of Pauri Garhwal, it is quite evident that Haryana Police had been deployed in the constituency on a large-scale. The Commission, which is vested with the superintendence, direction and control of the election has not even informed of the deployment of the police force from outside and the presence of outside forces has naturally vitiated the free and fair conduct of the poll in the constituency.

I consider that induction of the police forces from outside the State without the knowledge and approval of the Commission is a serious matter and has interfered with the conduct of a free and fair poll. There should not only be a free and fair poll but it must appear to be so.

The present state of affairs is not conducive to holding a poll of selected booths only. There is need that the outside State forces must first be withdrawn, and normal peace and law and order must be restored, before any repoll, selective or total is held.

Having regard to the above circumstances, I feel that the re-poll in the entire parliamentary constituency would be justified and that this re-poll should be conducted without any intervention of the outside forces and under the closer superintendence, direction and control of the Election Commission.

Therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred on the Commission under Article 324 of the Constitution, Section 58 of the R.P. Act, 1951 and all other powers enabling it in that behalf, I hereby declare the poll taken on the 14th June, 1981 at all the polling stations in 2-Garhwal Parliamentary Constituency to be void. A fresh poll shall be taken at all the polling stations in the constituency for which the Commission would, after taking into account all the relevant facts and circumstances, fix a suitable programme.

Sd/-

(S.L. Shakdhar)

Chief Election Commissioner of India

On The Resolution of The Plenary Session of The Central Committee of The Communist Party of China*

M. Basavapunnaiah

A Plenary Session of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee was held in the last week of June 1981, which adopted a lengthy resolution, "On Questions of Party History" since 1949. The resolution makes an assessment of the achievements and failures of the period from 1949 to 1981, the period since the victory of the New Democratic Revolution and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in October 1949. Since Mao Zedong happened to be the unquestioned leader of the Chinese Communist Party which led the historic Chinese revolution, the assessment of his role has occupied the central place in the resolution.

The Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921, and it celebrated its Sixtieth Anniversary on July 1, 1981. Mao Zedong was one of the founder-members of the Party, and was at the head of the Party for full 41 years from 1935 to 1976 when he died. It is but quite natural that the historic achievements scored and also the grievous mistakes committed during this 41-year-long period of the Chinese Communist Party and revolution cannot be reviewed and assessed in isolation from the role of the Mao Zedong who was at the head of the Party.

Controversial Subject

The role of Mao Zedong in the Chinese revolution and Socialist construction in People's China, has become one of the most controversial subjects in the world Communist movement, especially in the Chinese Communist Party. We of the

Communist Party of India (Marxist) are also keenly interested in the assessment and evaluation of Mao Zedong's role, his theoretical and political writings and activities as the foremost leader of the successful Chinese revolution, which constituted one of the four world-shaking events of the 20th century, namely, the great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, the victory in the anti-fascist war of the Soviet Union and its allies, the victory of the Chinese Revolution and the defeat of the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam and the victory of the national liberation and Socialist revolution of the people of Vietnam.

We are keenly interested in a Marxist-Leninist evaluation of the role of Mao Zedong in the revolution and socialist construction of China, so that we might be able to learn from such an evaluation and be able to imbibe the correct lessons and avoid the errors in our own revolutionary movement.

It is an undeniable fact that it is the Chinese Communist Party that has the full facts at its disposal, and it alone is the competent authority to undertake such a highly complex subject as the assessment of the role of Mao Zedong. It does not, of course, mean that any and every such assessment is, *ipso facto*, fully correct, objective and Marxist-Leninist. Every Communist Party has its own right to independently evaluate the role of Mao Zedong, using its discretion in accepting, amending or rejecting the assessment made by the Chinese Communist Party. We wish to express our views on the assessment made by the CPC Central Committee's Plenum, while striving our utmost not to allow our scientific vision to be blurred by the hostile activities directed against our Party by the Chinese Communist Party during the ten-year-period of the "cultural revolution".

Signal Successes

At the outset, we wish to express our great relief and joy to know from the resolution of the Plenary Session that Socialist China has scored signal successes in industrial construction and registered big increases in agricultural production during the last 28 years since 1952, despite the immense damage caused by the grievous mistakes committed by the Chinese Communist Party,

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its Central Committee and its top-most leader, Mao Zedong, during the years 1958-1976, especially in the decade of the so-called great "cultural revolution".

Fixed industrial assets, calculated on the basis of their original prices, were more than 27 times greater in 1980 compared with 1952, exceeding 410,000 million yuan.

Coal output had risen by 9.11 times, reaching 620 million tons.

The production of electricity had gone up by 41 times, exceeding 300,000 million kwh.

The output of crude oil had exceeded 105 million tons, while steel production reached 37 million tons.

The value of goods produced by the engineering industry had gone up by 54 times, exceeding 127,000 million yuan.

The output of cotton yarn was four-and-a-half times greater reaching 2,930,000 tons, in the same period of 28 years.

The amount of land under irrigation had grown from 300 million in 1952 to over 670 million mu in 1980.

The total output of grain was nearly doubled and of cotton more than doubled.

There has been considerable progress in education, science, culture, public health and physical culture.

These are by no means small achievements in a 28-year-period for an economically backward China, which has a population of roughly a billion or nearly one-fourth of the world population. Note should also be taken that in the ten-year-period preceding the "cultural revolution", China had achieved big successes despite serious set-backs. Such successes were made possible, basically due to the existence of a Socialist regime in China, a regime that could be established after a prolonged and bitter civil war, national liberation war and a second prolonged and bitter civil war for 22 years between 1927 and 1949, in which millions of lives had to be sacrificed.

All Communists and genuine anti-imperialists in the world cannot but be elated at these achievements of Socialist China, as these successes and gains have added to the strengthening of the forces of world Socialism, severely undermining the positions of world capitalism and imperialism. The mistakes of the Chinese Communist Party, though grievous and very costly, should not

come in the way of appreciating the enormous victories scored by the Chinese People's Republic and their impact on global development.

Corrections Being Made

We have been eagerly following the many corrections that are being made to several mistakes and distortions that crept into the political-ideological and organisational thinking and activities of the Chinese Communist Party, especially during the period of the "cultural revolution". We wholeheartedly wish full success to this great endeavour of the Chinese Party's leadership. We are also of the view that there are many more things still to be corrected that concern the assessment made of the world class and political alignments during the very decade of the "cultural revolution". Our Party had made, in the past, certain criticisms of the decisions of the Ninth and Tenth Congresses of the CPC, and also on its theses such as the "Three Worlds" and the characterising of the Socialist USSR as social-imperialism. We earnestly look forward with great hope to the complete correction of every deviation and distortion that had crept in.

The resolution of the Plenary Session is frank enough to state, "Our Party had made mistakes owing to its meagre experience in leading the cause of Socialism and subjective errors in the Party leadership's analysis of the situation and its understanding of Chinese conditions". Speaking about the ten-year-long "cultural revolution", the resolution says, "there was the comprehensive, long-drawn-out and grave blunder of the 'cultural revolution'. All these errors prevented us from scoring greater achievements. It is impermissible to overlook or whitewash mistakes, which in itself would be a mistake and would give rise to more and worse mistakes".

Lenin on Mistakes

We well remember the statements of Lenin on the topic of mistakes and the manner in which a Communist Party has to overcome the mistakes. He writes: "Defects, mistakes, blunders in such a new, difficult and great undertaking are inevitable. Those who are afraid of the difficulties of building Socialism, those who allow themselves to be scared by them, those who give way to despair or cowardly dismay, are no Socialists."

Having mentioned the possible and probable mistakes that might take place in the course of building Socialism, Lenin directs, "Communists are in duty-bound, not to gloss over shortcomings in their movement, but to criticise them openly so as to remedy them more speedily and radically". He stipulates: "A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfils *in practice* its obligations towards its *class and masses*." (Emphasis in original)

On studying the contents of the resolution of the Chinese Plenum, in the light of what we have cited above from Lenin, we observe certain lacunae in this regard.

First of all, it appears that the leadership of the Chinese C.P. is taking an unduly long time to pinpoint and rectify the mistakes—a delay that might lead to some further mistakes. It has taken nearly five years, following the death of Mao Zedong in September 1976, to arrive at a certain evaluation of his role—his great contribution and his serious and grave errors that harmed and retarded the progress of Socialist construction.

Secondly, the resolution which takes pains to narrate the errors of Mao Zedong and how he persisted in them tenaciously, and for a very long period, is unable to provide a convincing answer as to why and how the Chinese Communist Party and its battle-steered Central Committee could not checkmate Mao's persistent drive towards subjectivism, Leftism and ultra-Left adventurism.

Serious Errors

Writing about the decade between 1956 and 1966, the resolution admits: "In the course of this decade, there were serious faults and errors in the guidelines of the Party's work which developed through twists and turns." Further: "Left errors, characterised by excessive targets, the issuing of arbitrary directions, boastfulness and the stirring up of a Communist wind spread unchecked throughout the country." It is then observed: "more important, it was due to the fact that Comrade Mao Zedong and many leading comrades, both at the Centre and in the

localities, had become smug about their successes and impatient for quick results and overestimated man's subjective will and efforts."

While describing the initial attempts at correction of the Left errors in 1958 and 1959, the resolution tells the readers that in the latter part of the Lushan meeting of the Political Bureau, Mao Zedong "erred in initiating criticism of Comrade Peng Dehuai and then in launching a Partywide struggle against 'Right opportunism', a struggle which is entirely wrong and gravely undermined inner-Party democracy from the central level down to the grass roots", and "it was mainly due to the errors of the great leap forward and of the struggle against 'Right opportunism', together with a succession of natural calamities and the perfidious scrapping of contracts by the Soviet Government", etc.

The Plenum resolution goes on to explain how this struggle, unleashed by Mao Zedong, had unjustly dealt with a number of comrades at grass roots level, how his erroneous thesis of fighting against "those Party persons in power taking the capitalist road" had led to increasingly serious Left mistakes, and how these errors eventually culminated in the "cultural revolution". It is said, 'during this period, his theoretical and practical mistakes concerning class struggle in a socialist society . . . his personal arbitrariness gradually undermined democratic centralism in Party life and the personality cult grew grave and graver.'

Erroneous Appraisal

The Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the CPC, clearly and categorically asserts that the so-called 'cultural revolution' "was initiated and led by Comrade Mao Zedong". Further, it pins down the grave error with the statement: "The history of the 'cultural revolution' has proved that Comrade Mao Zedong's principal theses for initiating this revolution conformed neither to Marxism-Leninism nor to Chinese reality. They represent an entirely erroneous appraisal of the prevailing class relations and political situation in the Party and State."

The resolution of the Plenary Session has evaluated the results of the Ninth and Tenth Congresses of the Chinese Communist

Party, the Congresses that were guided by Mao Zedong in the years 1969 and 1973 respectively, in the following words: "The Ninth Congress of the Party legitimised the erroneous theories and practices of the cultural revolution. The guidelines of the Ninth Congress were wrong, ideologically, politically and organisationally." "The Tenth Congress of the Party perpetuated the Left errors of the Ninth Congress and made Wang Hongwen a Vice-Chairman of the Party. Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen formed a gang of four inside the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, thus strengthening the influence of the counter-revolutionary Jiang Qing clique."

Further, the resolution goes on to say: "Mao Zedong could not bear to accept systematic correction of the errors of the 'cultural revolution' by Comrade Deng Xiaoping and triggered the movement to 'criticise Deng and counter the Right-deviationist trend to reverse correct verdicts', once again plunging the nation into turmoil." "Chief responsibility for the grave 'Left' error of the 'cultural revolution', an error comprehensive in magnitude and protracted in duration, does indeed lie with Comrade Mao Zedong." "Comrade Mao Zedong's prestige reached a peak and he began to get arrogant at the very time when the Party was confronted with the new task of shifting the focus of its work to Socialist construction . . . He gradually divorced himself from practice and from the masses, acted more and more arbitrarily and subjectively, and increasingly put himself above the Central Committee of the Party." "In his later years, however, far from making a correct analysis of many problems, he confused right and wrong and the people with the enemy . . .".

Veritable Indictment

This, indeed, is a veritable indictment on Mao's political-tactical line and his theoretical-ideological stand during the years following the great leap and the Lushan Polit Bureau meeting of 1958, particularly during the decade of the so-called "cultural revolution". Mao's negative features began dominating, steadily leading to subjectivism, arbitrariness, Leftism and the building up of the unbridled cult of Mao's personality. There

emerged thus a clear demarcation between the two important periods of Mao's leadership, the first period from 1935 to 1958 and the second from 1958 to 1976. If Marxism-Leninism was on the ascendancy in the thinking and activities of Mao Zedong during the first period, it was subjective, non-Marxist and ultra-Left thinking and activities that determined his latter period. There was a clear demarcation between the two periods under discussion, one from 1927 to 1958, and the second from 1958 to 1976, though the former period is not entirely free from mistakes and the latter period contains some correct contributions also.

However, a sweeping generalisation like, "after all it was the error of a great proletarian revolutionary", tends to cover up and whitewash the grievous errors of Mao Zedong, persisted in over long years and which immensely damaged the cause of China's Socialist construction. These are not ordinary errors, but serious deviations and departures from the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism.

Unobjective Anti-Marxist

There are numerous instances in history, including the history of the world Communist movement, where some leaders, for some period and some years, played the role of outstanding proletarian revolutionaries, and the very same leaders fumbled, erred and even totally deviated and departed from the scientific thinking of Marxism-Leninism. For a Marxist historian, it is incumbent to be strictly objective in assessing concretely the role of leaders in different concrete periods and conditions. It follows from this, that either the downright denigration of the outstanding role of Mao and his great contribution to the Chinese revolution by citing a formidable list of errors made by him in the latter period of his life, or to acclaim him as a proletarian hero during his entire life, whitewashing his grievous failures, mistakes and dangerous departures from Marxism in his later years, is unobjective and anti-Marxist.

Marx approvingly cited the saying of Helvetius who stated that "every social epoch needs its great men, and when it does not find them, it invents them". This idea of Marx was further

elaborated by Engels thus: "This is where the so-called great men come in for treatment. That such and such a man, precisely that man arises at a particular time in a particular country is, of course, a pure chance. But cut him out and there will be a demand for a substitute, and this substitute will be found, good or bad, but in the long run he will be found."

Product of the Revolution

Mao Zedong, along with several other leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, was the product of the great Chinese revolution, though all these leaders, in their turn, contributed to that great revolution. The mistakes and errors of Mao Zedong, in his later years, do not efface either his greatness or the greatness of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese revolution. Mao Zedong remained as the outstanding leader of the Chinese Communist Party for full 41 years between 1935 and 1976 when he died. Any attempt to belittle the role of Mao in the Chinese revolution depicting it as a bundle of anti-Marxist crimes and howlers, with a view to denigrating his entire role is un-Marxist and Nihilist. He was a part and parcel of the Chinese revolution—its great successes and failures. The total negation of Mao Zedong's role in the Chinese revolution does violence to truth and objective reality; and it cannot be done without negating the role of the Chinese Communist Party in leading the triumphant world-historic Chinese revolution, no matter what big troubles and turmoils it has been going through since the period of the "cultural revolution". If such a negation and summary denigration of Mao Zedong is wrong and impermissible even for the Chinese Communist Party, it would be a thousand times more wrong and grievous mistake if one or the other Party in the international Communist movement embarks on such a venture. That would be completely counter-productive.

Complex Problem

The evaluation of the role of Mao in terms of Marxism-Leninism, no doubt, presents a complex problem. He gave leadership to the Chinese Communist Party which led the historic

Chinese revolution to victory. And the very same leaders, departing from correct Marxist-Leninist thought, had committed mistakes and persisted in them for long years, immensely damaging the cause of Socialist construction. Hence, it would be totally wrong and un-Marxist to belittle his revolutionary contribution and his role in Chinese revolution; and it would be equally incorrect to paint the entire period of his leadership of the Chinese Party in rosy Marxist-Leninist colours, while underplaying his anti-Marxist, subjective and Left-opportunist blunders. Statements such as, Mao Zedong was 70 per cent correct and 30 per cent wrong, after all, his errors were those of a great proletarian revolutionary, his merits are primary and his errors are secondary, etc., come under the category of over-simplified generalisations, instead of an objective Marxist-Leninist evaluation.

We shall examine some other aspects of the resolution subsequently.

Recent Developments In Punjab*

Harkishan Singh Surjeet

The situation in Punjab is far from normal despite all the claims of official spokesmen at the Centre and in the State. The anti-national hijacking of the Indian Airlines Boeing plane to Pakistan by extremist Sikhs only highlighted the seriousness of the developments that were taking place. There were attempts at sabotage of railway tracks after the Mehta Chowk firing on September 20, and as late as October 6, bombs went off in various parts of Punjab. These continuing incidents do not bespeak of a normal situation. The hijacking of the plane and the other incidents are known to be the handiwork of some extremists in the Sikh community who, in recent days, have been aggressively pressing the demand for a separate Sikh State of Khalistan based on religion.

The extent of the tension that has developed in Punjab can be felt even in minor incidents. For instance, a Sikh member of a local Bar Association issued a statement on behalf of the Association demanding the release of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The President of the Bar Association belonging to the Hindu community denied that the Association had passed any such resolution. For this, he was slapped by the Sikh member, and the Bar Association got divided on a communal basis. This is the extent of the tension that has developed in the State.

Gravity of Situation

Till the assassination of Lala Jagat Narain on September 9, neither the Central nor the State authorities had taken the Khalistan demand and its proponents seriously. The attitude of the authorities

was that only a few people subscribed to the demand, and, hence, it did not deserve any particular attention.

True, many do not extend support of the demand for a separate religious State. But the fact that the Akali leaders have not denounced such an anti-national act as the hijacking of the plane to demonstratively press the demand for Khalistan, is an index of the gravity of the situation.

Maybe the leaders of the Sikh community have many grievances. The police firing and killings in Mehta Chowk, the brutal repression in Chandoa Kalan where religious books were set on fire by the police and burnt, had roused passions in the Sikh community. But that is no reason why the leaders of the Akali Dal should have remained silent when it came to the question of denouncing the hijacking of the plane.

What is happening in Punjab is no sudden development. Even in the days of British rule, the imperialist rulers had tried to exploit communal divisions to carry on their policy of divide and rule. In 1947, by the time of the partition of the country, communal tensions had been roused so much that a major section of the Congress party itself fell a prey to communalism and took part in the riots. The present Chief Minister of Punjab, Darbara Singh, was himself a leading figure in the incidents of those days.

Within three years of the partition of the country and the near-total migration of the Muslims from that part of Punjab which remained with India, communalism in the State took the form of Hindu-Sikh tensions.

Communal Colour

The demand for a Punjabi-speaking linguistic State was given a Sikh communal colour by Master Tara Singh. On the other side, the majority of the Hindus were prevailed upon by the Hindu communalists to oppose the Punjabi language. In the 1951 Census, even a majority of Hindu Congressmen openly called on the Hindus in Punjab to write down their language in the Census from as Hindi and not Punjabi. This contributed in a big way to the wedge that was created between the two communities.

*Published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, October 18, 1981.

We do not want to go into the whole history of the post-Independence Punjab here. What has to be noted is that the Congress has been trying to utilise the communal factor for its narrow partisan purposes, at times making compromises with the Akalis, at other times inciting the Hindus against the Sikh community. This has led to the perpetuation of communal tension which has continued even after the formation of the Punjabi-speaking State in 1966.

Unresolved Issues

The State itself was not formed wholly on a linguistic basis, but on the basis of the 1961 Census. The result was that the linguistic basis was distorted and a number of issues were left unresolved—issues like the inclusion of Chandigarh in Punjab, the Punjabi-speaking areas that were excluded from the new State, the distribution of river water resources, the denial of sanction even after ten years for the Thien Dam project, and so on. It is eleven years since a major struggle was fought for the inclusion of Chandigarh in Punjab, but, despite many assurances, nothing has been done in this regard.

These are issues which concern the entire Punjabi people, Hindus and Sikhs alike. But the Akali leadership has been projecting these demands as issues of discrimination against the Sikh community. This not only vitiates the common struggle against the Centre for a just deal for Punjab, it further intensifies the communal division in the State.

No doubt, the Sikhs as a religious community also have complaints about discrimination against them. The Delhi Gurdwara Act was amended recently with the only purpose of installing a Congressite Sikh belonging to the ruling party as the head of the Delhi Gurdwara Committee. The rules for sending Sikh pilgrims to the holy shrines in Pakistan have been changed so as to virtually exclude the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Both these acts are blatant interference in the religious affairs of the Sikhs by the Congress(I) Government. Added to these grievances is the one that their demand for an all-India Gurdwara Act has not yet been conceded.

Perpetuating Division

These are genuine grievances of the Sikhs as a religious community, and in fighting against such discrimination and interference in their religious affairs by the Government, they will have the support of all the democratic forces. But when the leaders of the community mix up these genuine grievances with the common demands of the Hindus and Sikhs who constitute the Punjabi-speaking people, and give a communal colouring to these common demands, the not only get alienated from the democratic and progressive forces, they not only help to perpetuate the communal division in the State, they play into the hands of the extremists who are demanding a separate Sikh State.

The recent split in the Akali Dal has further contributed to taking Punjab's politics into communal channels. The Akali group led by Talwandi and the Akali Dal led by Sant Longowal, in the initial stages after the split, vied with each other in voicing extremist slogans. Initially, there was also lurking sympathy for the demand for Khalistan. But later developments forced them to demarcate themselves from this demand, though both still swear by the Anandpur Saheb resolution which was adopted in 1973. Basing on this resolution, and for the demands raised in it, the Talwandi group organised a morcha which did not draw much mass support.

Anandpur Resolution

There are varying interpretations of the Anandpur Saheb resolution. But there is no doubt that it provides the ideological basis for the demand for Khalistan.

According to the resolution, among the aims for the realisation of which the Akali Dal is committed is: "Maintaining the feeling of a separate independent entity of the Sikh Panth and creation of an environment in which the 'National Expression' of the Sikhs can be full and satisfactory." From this it is only one steps towards the demand for Khalistan. Whatever interpretation is given to the resolution, no group which bases itself on this theory of Sikh nation, can fight the separate State demand.

In other paragraph, the resolution says: "The organisation considers the present foreign policy (framed by the Congress

Government) 'defective, ineffective and dangerous for the country and harmful to mankind'. The Akali Dal will support a foreign policy based on peace and helpfulness to the cause of promotion of national interests, especially the cause of friendship with and goodwill for the neighbouring countries where Sikhs live and their sacred places are situated."

The Anandpur Saheb resolution was adopted in 1973, two years after the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. And it is this treaty, and the close relation with the Soviet Union, that are the targets of the resolution when it talks of the foreign policy being "defective, ineffective and dangerous for the country and harmful to mankind."

U.S. Imperialist Inspiration

The Indian people stand for friendly and close relations with all neighbouring countries. But that is not what the Akali resolution is talking about; they are talking only of friendship with Pakistan. Seen against the background of the resolution itself being adopted under pressure of the Khalistan demand, whose original proponent, the British-based Jagjit Singh, had visited Pakistan in 1971 at a time when the Pakistani military dictatorship, backed by the U.S. imperialists, was committing genocide in Bangladesh, it is clear whose foreign policy interests the resolution serves—those of U.S. imperialism and its client State in the sub-continent, Pakistan.

Recent developments in Punjab have followed from the extremists among the Sikhs and among the Akalis aggressively propagating the slogans of Sikh nation and Khalistan. They had organised a very provocative demonstration in Amritsar demanding ban on tobacco in their "holy city". This demonstration had been preceded by an equally provocative demonstration by the Hindus.

Links With Ruling Party

Here, it is necessary to note that religious obscurantists like Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and those who have formed the Dal Khalsa which is spearheading the activities on the demand for Khalistan, had, for long, their links with the ruling Congress. The Congress in the State had utilised them in its fight against the

Akali Dal in the Gurdwara elections and the subsequent Parliament election. Bhindranwale himself had openly worked for the Congress. Various religious leaders and fanatics belonging to the Sikh community have their links still with the Congress high-ups, including Ministers. They have been consistently encouraged by the ruling party.

Even at the time of Bhindranwale's surrender to the police, the Congressite Sikh leader, Santokh Singh, who had been installed as the head of the Delhi Gurdwara Committee by the ruling party, went to Mehta Chowk and pledged support to Bhindranwale.

In this entire background, Lala Jagat Narain's assassination touched off a series of events. This dastardly act was condemned by all sober sections. The assassination and the mishandling by the State Government of the situation that followed, aggravated the situation further. The procession with the body of Lala Jagat Narain raised anti-Sikh slogans. Congress(I) men themselves raised these slogans and they were led by the local ruling party MLA. Two Punjabi newspaper offices were attacked. On the same day that the commemoration meeting was held for Lala Jagat Narain, Bhindranwale's surrender also took place in Mehta Chowk. In both places, inflammatory speeches were made.

Government Bungling

The police raid on Chandoa Kalan and the wanton and indiscriminate police firing in Mehta Chowk in which scores were killed worsened the situation. What incensed the Sikh community the most was that religious books had been burned by the police in Chandoa Kalan. A few extremist Sikh youths fired on the people in an open place in Jullundur and Taran Taran killing five innocent persons.

The Darbara Singh Government has to be held entirely responsible for the mishandling of the situation. When the Prime Minister air-dashed to Chandigarh in view of the grave situation, there was an assurance of a judicial enquiry. But that enquiry has still not been set up. This has roused passions further and the extremists are trying to take full advantage of it.

Isolate Extremists

The main task today in Punjab is to isolate these extremists and defeat their game. It is a very dangerous situation for the democratic movement in the State. Across the border, the U.S. imperialists are arming the Pakistani military dictatorship with very sophisticated fighter aircraft and other weapons. The U.S. imperialists have been engaged in destabilisation activities in the North-Eastern border, now they have extended their activities to the North-Western border in a big way. The extremists among the Sikhs and among the Akalis, led by such foreign-based persons like Jagjit Singh and Ganga Singh Dhillon, are playing this imperialist game in Punjab.

The Akali leaders have always been claiming that they lag behind none in patriotism and defence of the country. They have said they have nothing to do with the Khalistan slogan. The Akali Dal (Longowal) has also expelled its General Secretary Sukhjinder Singh for openly advocating Khalistan. But their silence today on the activities of the extremists, their refusal to demarcate from them, cannot but encourage the advocates of Khalistan, those who indulge in such anti-national activities as the highjacking of the plane. In this background the "Dharma Yudh" which the Longowal Akali Dal is planning will be utilised by the extremists for their own ends.

The Akali leaders have to openly come out against the extremists and announce their readiness to fight them. They have to see that the grievances of the Sikh community are not mixed up with the common demands of the Punjabi people. They have to ensure that the Gurdwaras are not made bases for anti-national activities by the extremists. Otherwise, the leadership of the community will be snatched by the extremists and the religious fanatics. The Akali leaders cannot be unaware of their aims. And the time to frustrate them is now.

Institute Enquiry

The Darbara Singh Government has also to mend its ways if the situation is not to go out of hand and in favour of the extremists. The minimum that it has to do immediately is to institute the

promised judicial enquiry into the police atrocities in Chandoa Kalan including the burning of religious books and into the indiscriminate firing in Mehta Chowk in which scores of people were killed; arrest and punish the killers of Lala Jagat Narain so that an end is put to the cult of political murders; arrest and punish those who were involved in the firing and killings of innocent people in Jullundur and Taran Taran.

The situation in Punjab, one of our border States, has assumed dangerous proportions. It becomes the urgent task of the patriotic and secular sections of the people of the State to isolate the extremists, defeat their game and safeguard communal peace at all costs. If this task is not taken up seriously, if it is neglected, not only will the situation in Punjab deteriorate further, it will have an adverse impact on the whole of the country.

**Resolution Of Workers' Rally
On November 23, 1981:
All-India Industrial General Strike
On January 19, 1982***

This historic and united rally of working people from all over the country has been convened by the National Campaign Committee of Trade Unions in pursuance of the decisions adopted at the National Convention of Central Trade Unions and Industrial Federations held in Bombay on June 4, 1981.

We have come here (in New Delhi) from all corners of the country to register our condemnation of the Central Government's policies which are (a) daily aggravating the burden of galloping prices of essential commodities, causing unbearable suffering to the toiling masses, and (b) attacking the workers' wages emoluments, living standards, trade union rights of the people which have been secured through decades of bitter struggles and heroic sacrifices.

Since the Bombay convention the anti-working class and pro-exploiter policies of the Government have been further highlighted by the enactment of the Essential Services Maintenance Act, a black measure which empowers the Government to destroy the workers' basic right of strike. The Government has not so far denied the charge that this repressive law is connected with the conditions attached to the Rs. 5,000 crore loan recently negotiated with the International Monetary Fund.

The crisis is intensifying everyday due to the heavy concessions being made to the monopolies, multinationals and other

*This Resolution adopted by the Workers' Rally, held in New Delhi, was published in "PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY", New Delhi, November 29, 1981. Refer Document under Item No. 69 of this Volume.

anti-social forces, and resultant further concentration of economic power and wealth. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that the working class should carry forward a countrywide united movement against the continuing price-rise and the Government's anti-labour and anti-democratic policies.

We demand of the Central Government that the following urgent measures and policies be adopted in the interests of the vast majority of the people:

- Sale of all essential commodities such as foodgrains, edible oil, cloth, sugar, etc., at subsidised prices through a network of shops in a comprehensive public distribution system, under the control and supervision of popular committees to ensure adequate and uninterrupted supply of essential commodities;
- Remunerative prices to the peasants and guaranteed supply of inputs;
- Enactment and implementation of legislation to guarantee a minimum living wage and job security for agricultural workers;
- Stringent measures against blackmarketeers, hoarders, smugglers, speculators and officials protecting them;
- Repeal of the National Security Act, 1980, and the Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1981;
- Need-based minimum wages for the working class on the basis of the norms laid down by the 15th Indian Labour Conference;
- Full neutralisation of the rise in the cost of living, and removal of the ceiling of Rs. 1.30 per point rise in the price index (1960 base) arbitrarily fixed by the Bureau of Public Enterprises;
- Amendment of the Payment of Bonus Act providing bonus to all workers without ceiling or preconditions;
- Ban on retrenchment and closures; introduction of unemployment allowance to the unemployed;
- Withdrawal of all victimisation measures against trade union workers and activists;
- Rectification of the fraudulent cost of living indices;
- Recognition of trade unions on the basis of secret ballot;
- Full guarantee of collective bargaining and trade union rights.

We condemn the Government for its refusal to respond to these long-standing demands of the working class and the urgent needs of the people. The Government instead of seeking the cooperation of the working class is adopting a policy of confrontation with it.

In these circumstances, we are firmly of the opinion that more united, organised determined and sustained mass actions are required in order to halt and reverse the Government's disastrous policies of inflation, price-rise and all-round attacks on trade union and democratic rights.

With this end in view, we resolve that the working class should observe a *ONE DAY, COUNTRYWIDE, INDUSTRIAL GENERAL STRIKE on January 19, 1982*, and appeals to all sections of the workers and employees, and to all trade unions in public and private sectors alike, to make it a historic success in a peaceful, united, disciplined and organised manner.

We further appeal to all democratic forces, the toiling peasants, agricultural labourers, youth, students, women, intelligentsia and others, to come forward in support of this struggle.

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