

Let The Revolution Overtake The Advance Of Fascistic Reaction



Hail The Immortal Memory of Comrade Mao Tsetung, **THE STORM-RIDER**

Come December 26, 1953, the world proletariat and oppressed people of various lands will be commemorating Com. Mao Tsetung's birth centenary. They will be expressing, in various ways, their appreciation, gratitude and love for that man of titanic stature who, in his life, steered the struggling millions to national and social liberation and, even after his death, continue to inspire millions more and illuminate their path of revolutionary advance, through his immortal teachings. Projecting of his revolutionary life and work, far and wide, will be the focal concern of these commemorations.

The master rider of the waves of ceaselessly unfolding contradictions, Mao Tsetung profoundly conceived turbulence of

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In a way, most of those who were shocked by the Ayodhya outrage and the subsequent Bombay carnage, felt more anger and disgust towards the prevaricating Rao-government than towards the direct perpetrators of that barbarity. That was so because the Rao Govt., rather than the Sangh Parivar or the Shiv Sena, was mainly responsible for the use or non-use of the power of the Indian state in connection with the Ayodhya outrage and the Bombay carnage. In that respect, its attitude and conduct, as expressed in the communally selective non-use as well as use of state-power, made the Indian state an accomplice of the Hindu chauvinists in the communal-fascist assault on the muslim community. That factor i.e. role of the state lent the communal fascist assault a terrible effectiveness that was out of proportion to the actual worth of the Sangh-Parivar or the Shiv Sena, and made them look an overwhelming force to the victims. Their actual worth, like that of any other bully, would show up only when confronted by an organised force, whether of the state or of the people's self-defence.

The palpable anger and disgust towards the Rao-government, as noticed among sections of common people, particularly the muslim masses, and among most of the intelligentsia too, were the result of their shattered expectations from the government. The sections of common people (because of the lack of any other source of protection) and sections of the intelligentsia (because of their illusory notions regarding the modern bourgeois democratic character of the Indian state-system) did entertain the minimum expectation that the Rao government like any other central govt. would not slide to such abysmal levels of politicking as to irretrievably compromise the public image of the Indian state.

No doubt, the Rao government is guilty of extreme dereliction

of elementary state-duty towards its citizens, particularly the muslim masses. Still, its conduct in this matter is not out of character either with the Indira-Rajiv legacy since 1982 or with the thrust of its current economic policy-measures.

The 1984 anti-sikh pogrom in Delhi and some other cities with the connivance of the Rajiv-government was a curtain-raiser to this medieval show of a state virtually washing its hands of the civil security of ordinary citizens, particularly the religious minorities. The Rao government is only generalising and carrying ahead that process of political degeneration of the Indian state.

The thrust of the current policy-measures, which are essentially backed up by all the ruling classes' political parties, is towards slashing the governmental expenditure on developmental investment, social services and social welfare schemes, and on the other hand, towards dismantling all formal restraints on the rampage of the foreign and native monopoly capital. That means, the state lets drop the mantle of its obligation to bother about the economic survival of the great mass of ordinary people.

Thus, the disgusting conduct of the Rao-government in the whole chain of events connected with the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, in essence, is not something peculiar to a particular congress government or only to the congress party government. Rather, its conduct is merely a specific expression of the general disregard of the fate of ordinary masses that runs through the ruling classes' politics and economics today. While specific expressions may vary under compulsions of electoral politics, the essential conduct or attitude of other ruling class parties is no different. However, the unabashedness of their respective expressions of such disregard generally vary in proportion to the proximity of these parties to the seat of governmental power, for they are obliged, then, to clearly reflect in their conduct the prevailing perception and orientation of the ruling classes. No wonder the two major political parties of the ruling classes, namely the congress and the BJP today are also the major actors in the politics of jeopardizing the livelihood and security of

the ordinary masses.

It follows from the preceding observations that while the congress and the BJP deservedly attract more ire of the democratic and secular people, on account of the pronounced role of these parties in directly or indirectly promoting Hindu communal fascism, this menace needs to be seen and combatted as a necessary dimension of the unconcealed anti-popular thrust of the ruling classes' economics and politics today, and of their stepped-up violence against the common people. That means, the targetting of a particular political party of the ruling classes does not have much significance for tackling the menace of Hindu communal-fascism. Rather, that can prove to be a point of derailment of the people's struggle against communal fascism. Further that means, the struggle against communal fascism cannot be effectively waged without focussing on the class-political substance of this fight. Without laying bare the underlying economic-political stakes in this fight, the common people cannot be mobilised for a combative struggle against communal-fascism and the whole thing would boil down to a toothless, liberal campaign of preaching communal fraternity and peace.

Unlike conventional communalism and religious fundamentalism, the struggle against which never acquires the status of a major political task of the revolutionary movement but generally takes place as a part of long-term ideological struggle against social reaction, communal-fascism confronts the people as a political challenge and requires to be treated in tandem with the major political tasks of the moment. It is so because, it goes beyond playing a mere diversionary and divisive role and acts as a major channel of the unfolding class-offensive of the ruling classes against the people. Because of that, the struggle against communal-fascism gets bound up with the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggles of the people.

Now, Hindu communal-fascism has obvious anti-muslim orientation. However, the crusade against the muslims is the convenient casing under which it seeks to attain its substantive

and strategic objective, i.e., the re-enforced subjugation of the Indian people to the differently painted yoke of ruling classes' oppression and exploitation.

The anti-muslim edge of Hindu communal-fascism does pose the issue of dignity and security of the muslim community. Yet, the muslims constitute only about 14% of the Indian population. Their subjugation, as such can serve no worthwhile socio-political purpose of the ruling classes. So, actually the target of subjugation mainly comprises of the Hindus themselves. Accordingly, the communal-fascist coercion and atrocities would tend to move on from the muslims to the Hindus who do not fall in line. This inherent tendency of diversification and expansion of the range of communal-fascist onslaught eventually gets focussed upon the democratic movement and organisation of the people, that is where it really belongs to. That means, the issue of dignity and security of the muslims, though an important issue, is not the central issue of the struggle against Hindu communal-fascism; democracy is the central issue, i.e. real democracy that resides and grows in the struggles and organisations of the people, particularly the working people.

There is another aspect too to the dynamics of Hindu communal-fascism. Religio-communal sentiments are highly inflammable but poorly sustainable material as a source of mass motivation and mobilisation for political activity. The protagonists of Hindu communal-fascism seek to make up that deficiency by whipping up virulent national chauvinism. Their pseudo-nationalism is addressed not to the problem of sovereignty of Indian people, thus remaining on the safe side of imperialism, but to the problem of territorial integrity of India so as to stamp out any assertion of national identity and self-determination by various nationalities in India.

In the given historical and geo-political background the carefully nurtured hostility between India and Pakistan enables Hindu communal-fascism to couch its communal appeal in patriotic exhortations against Pakistan; and the resultant combin-

ation acquires greater potency for evoking elemental passions. In view of the fact that Indian muslims are hardly in competition either in economy or in civil and military bureaucracy, they objectively make a weak source of social heart-burning and insecurity among the non-muslims. Demonisation of Pakistan alongwith bracketting of Indian muslims with Pakistan is the vital pin that plugs that gap in the actual social situation of Indian muslims and the projected threat-perception from them. Thus, national chauvinism, mainly with reference to Pakistan as 'the enemy', is the indispensable prop of Hindu communal-fascism : at the immediate level, for stoking the ambers of hate-campaign against the Indian muslims and; at a deeper level, for black-washing and ruthlessly suppressing national assertions by various peoples in India, and finally, for intimidating into silence all those who do not subscribe to national-chauvinism, by branding them "anti-national".

While it should be obvious that the platform of opposition to Hindu communal-fascism has to be a consistently secular platform, so much so that even the issue of dignity and security of Indian muslims must be addressed only from a secular platform, it won't do to pit an anaemic liberal-bourgeois secularism against Hindu communal-fascism that has the weight of social orthodoxy and reaction behind it. To be effective and full of punch, it has to be a platform of secular defence of people's democracy against the dictat, coercion and tyranny of socio-political and religious hierarchies, a platform of secular opposition to national chauvinism for the defence of just national concerns of Indian people, collectively and severally. Only thus can it be a militant, mass-based secular platform that can go into political offensive against Hindu communal-fascism.

The main reason why Hindu-communal-fascism has faced no serious challenge from any of the main stream bourgeois political parties despite there being a lot of fretting and fuming on their part against communalism and for national integration in recent times, is this that none of them would venture to attack Hindu communal-fascism on the substantive issues involved, namely,

its extremely anti-democratic thrust and national chauvinism. They won't do that because they themselves are either hostile to or scared of people's democracy, and steeped in national-chauvinism.

Opposition to Hindu communal-fascism at this juncture of time has its own importance. By now, Hindu communal-fascism has revealed its sinister features enough to cause revulsion and concern among large sections of the people throughout India but it has still not consolidated itself and, given a determined fight on correct lines by the secular, democratic and revolutionary forces, can be stopped in its tracks. Although this menace cannot be taken lightly since (a) its communalised national—chauvinist credo do fetch social backing from some sections of the people, along with a sort of communal-political legitimacy for its gangsterism, and (b) the ruling classes have not been able yet to devise a better alternative for embodying their requirement of a sterner regime; Hindu communal-fascism's inherent limitations out-weigh its strong points.

For from being a homogenous community, the broad Hindu community encompasses great diversity, not only of socio-economic entities, but also of cultural and even religious entities, that is not amenable to politico-religious regimentation and commandeering by communal-fascists. Moreover, the caste divisions and antagonisms within the Hindu community are more pronounced and enduring than the tenuous religious affinity of its component parts. Even its major ideological plank of national-chauvinism has a counter-productive potential too for being national chauvinism of a subservient bourgeoisie rather than that of an independent one. So, the conflicting demands of maintaining a 'super-patriotic' posture as an attribute of national chauvinism, on the one hand, and essentially complying with the increasingly arrogant, hegemonic wishes of imperialism on the other hand, indicate the vulnerability of Hindu communal-fascism on its apparently strong aspect. The political offensive against Hindu communal—fascism should miss no

opportunity to press it hard on this sensitive spot while focussing on its utterly anti-democratic character and conduct.

Although the main deviationist trend, on this question, among revolutionary forces is that of over-estimating the sway and prospects of Hindu communal-fascism and seeking a united front with ruling classes' political parties to counter it, there also exists an erroneous notion that it can be countered merely by counter-posing economic or partial issues of the people. The root of such an erroneous notion lies in judging Hindu communal-fascism to be just a diversionary phenomenon and not a serious political challenge to the popular forces and movement. The negative experience of the past one year of Hindu communal-fascist onslaught particularly the Bombay carnage, should have jolted out such economic notions lurking in revolutionary quarters. The painful reality of the failure of working class centres generally to react, not to speak of emerging as bulwarks of resistance to the rampaging mobs of hooligans marshalled by Hindu communal-fascists, and the fact that in many cases the combine of Management and reactionary trade union leadership could debar the muslim workers from returning to work after the disturbance subsided, tellingly reveal how far the long sway of economic orientation has politically disarmed the workers and blunted their class-initiative. On the other hand only such elements among the workers and other sections, however small in number, as realised the necessity and importance of politically responding to that onslaught, could boldly initiate some oppositional moves under difficult circumstances and, thus, at least give the message to friend and foe that Hindu communal-fascism should not and would not go unchallenged. Only when the economic or partial issues of the people are projected as a part of, or in association with, the political campaign, against Hindu communal-fascism can they contribute in countering it.

The mainstream bourgeois political parties and the bourgeois media continuously foster parliamentary cretinism. On this question too, they foster the erroneous notion, which finds its echo

in democratic quarters, that the fate of Hindu communal-fascism is dependent on the electoral fortunes of this or that political party. Accordingly, it is made out as if the people have no option but of voting for this or that political party so as to prevent Hindu communal-fascists to acquire parliamentary supremacy and governmental power. Such a notion objectively plays the same role as does the fore-mentioned, main deviationist trend—the role of tying the popular forces arrayed against Hindu communal-fascism to the apron-strings of the ruling classes' political parties. The status of Hindu communal-fascism is essentially determined by the shift, one way or the other, in its social support-base as a result of the extra parliamentary political battle for the minds of the people. Election-results can, at best, reflect that ground reality and to that extent, get determined by it (and that too can meaningfully occur in bourgeois democratic republics). Any electoral outcome can, in turn, possibly play a mere supplementary role, in the process of development of Hindu communal-fascism, on the basis of the obtaining balance of socio-political forces outside the sphere of parliamentary politics. It is true though, Hindu communal-fascism is fully effective by operating in league with the Indian state set-up, yet parliamentary majority or ministry is not the only access-route for it to the levers of state power; presence of its votaries in the Administration, the judiciary and the security forces was so evident in their biased conduct during the past one or two years. Moreover, no set of elected bourgeois parliamentarians can be counted upon to act as barriers even to the parliamentary ascendancy of Hindu communal-fascism, considering the frequency and fluency of their defections and "home-comings" (witness the latest case of Yashwant Sinha—ex-minister in the Janta Dal—National Front govt, led by V.P. Singh; ex-minister in the congress-supported SJP government led by Chander Shekhar; till recently senior leader of SJP and vociferous critic of the Hindutva combine—defecting to the BJP).

While parliamentary political parties are expected to go on

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Some Observations On The Experience Of The Joint Activities Within The Communist Revolutionary Camp

In Punjab

—A Representative
(State Committee, CCRI)

The reactionary ruling classes of India had launched, during the mid-eighties, a fierce and all-pervasive onslaught against the people of Punjab, in the form of communal fascist terrorism and state terrorism. This reactionary onslaught, especially the direct murderous attacks by the communal fascist Khalistanis against the communist revolutionary and other democratic revolutionary forces, had very grave negative implications not only for the promotion of usual democratic revolutionary struggles of the people, but also for the very survival of the revolutionary forces. Thus, the situation created by this violent reactionary onslaught had made it obligatory for the forces belonging to the communist revolutionary camp in Punjab to join their forces, in one form or the other, and to launch joint activities against this dual monster.

As a result, there had been since then, a plenty of successful or unsuccessful efforts from within the communist revolutionary camp for undertaking bilateral or multilateral joint activities on several issues—ranging from the burning economic issues like soaring price-rise to the important political developments in the international arena such as the gulf-war. But most of these efforts were concentrated, one way or the other, on the issue of joint opposition and resistance to the communal fascist terrorism and state terrorism, since this task had, objectively, emerged before these forces as a special priority task.

All of these successful and unsuccessful efforts and their pursuance had amply reflected different approaches, attitudes and behaviour-patterns on the part of different forces, and had provided, in the process a lot of practical experience—both positive as well as negative—that needs to be discussed, summed up and assimilated by the communist revolutionary and other democratic revolutionary forces, so that correct lessons may be drawn from it

and a common and comprehensive understanding for successful launching of the much-needed joint activities may collectively be developed.

We, on our part, are initiating the desired process with these observations. We call upon all concerned forces to come forward with their views and comments on the subject.

I. Kind of The Platform To Be Forged

One of the major problems that confronted the forces belonging to the communist revolutionary camp in their attempts at planning or launching of the joint activities in the given situation was as to what kind of a platform should be formed. Should it be formed at the plane of political organisations of the camp, or at the plane of the mass organisations or in the form of some mass-political platform specially created for this purpose?

The answer to this question depended on the analysis of the prevailing objective situation, concrete evaluation of the strength and condition of the subjective forces and the nature and requirements of the issue involved. Since there were serious differences, among these forces, regarding all of these aspects, the issue generated a lot of controversies, discussions and debates, as well as hectic bilateral/multilateral activities among these forces, resulting, ultimately, in their polarisation into two broad camps— one lending its weight to the formation of a special mass-political front in the name of “Front against Communalism and Repression, Punjab”, while the other one formed the “Revolutionary Unity Centre Punjab” on the political plane comprising different political groups and individuals belonging to the communist revolutionary camp.

“The Front against Communalism and Repression, Punjab”, was based on a concrete proposal (jointly sponsored by erstwhile UCCRIML (Nagi Reddy group) and the CT, CPI (ML) which was later finalised and adopted by other groups belonging to the communist revolutionary camp—such as RCP (Takra) (which later merged alongwith the UCCRI (ML) into the CCRI), Revolutionary Communist Centre of India (ML), CPIML (Party

Untty) and the Communist League of India. This proposal, forming the basis of the Front, was based on the basis of minimum common understanding among these formations for the joint opposition and resistance to the two monsters of communal fascist terrorism and state terrorism, with clearly defined objectives and scope of the movement to be launched alongwith clearcut identification of the class/political forces that were to be taken as targets of the Front and of those that could be the possible entrants into it. Further, the proposal was also based on the common understanding regarding the nature and requirements of the issue involved, i.e., it could not be a front comprising the revolutionary democratic mass organisations belonging to the respective organisations, as the issue, as such, was beyond the scope of these mass organisations, because of its predominantly political content as well as the level of the fight emanating therefrom, though such mass organisations could take up the issue as one of their tasks by linking it with the happenings in, and impact on, their respective fields; similarly, it could not be the front comprising the political organisations belonging to the communist revolutionary camp, as the issue had a much wider mass appeal for the involvement of such broader sections of democratic, secular and non-communal forces, whose participation in the struggles of the Front would not be possible, if it is comprised of the communist revolutionary forces based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao-tsetung Thought. Hence the need for the formation of a mass-political front specially formed for this specific task.

On the other hand, “The Revolutionary Unity Centre, Punjab”, was based on the proposal sponsored by Gursharn Singh, a well-known dramatist and well-wisher of the communist movement, which was later finalised and adopted by The CPIML (Poola Reddy Group), The CPIML (S. N. Group) and other sections and individuals belonging to the communist revolutionary camp. The proposal declared Marxism-Leninism-Mao-tsetung Thought as its guiding ideology, and the unity among communist revolutionary forces and the intensification of revolutionary class

struggles as its professed goals to be achieved. The proposal did not contain any concrete specific programme rather it contained so broad and vague a programme that comprised elements of a communist unity centre as well as those of a revolutionary united front, thus, being capable of accommodating in its fold all sorts of heterogeneous forces having fundamental differences among them. The programme announced by the "Centre" sometime after its formation was also equally vague and non-specific. Neither the proposal nor the subsequent programme gave importance to the task of joint opposition and resistance to communal fascist and state terrorism, as a special priority task.

One of the most controversial issues, regarding the kind of joint platforms to be forged, was the rejection of the concept of special mass-political platforms on the part of the CPIML (Ramachandran group), as being something alien to Marxism-Leninism. Though this issue did not come under much discussion during the process of the formation of the above-mentioned parallel joint platforms, but later on it continued to be the most controversial issue and at the practical plane, a serious stumbling block in the way of joint activities among these forces, despite there being a common minimum basis for such activities on several occasions.

Basing on its erroneous and simplistic view-point regarding the concept of mass organisations and the style of functioning of the communist parties, it upheld the view that mass organisations are the economic organisations and the party is the political organisation of the proletariat. So if the joint activity is to be taken up on some economic issue, it should be taken up at the joint platforms formed at the level of mass organisations, and if the issue has a, more or less, political content, then it should be taken up at the level of the party organisations, there is no in between. As a result, it had always been prohibiting its mass organisations from taking up issues having political content, or their interaction with special mass-political fronts on such issues, and had always been insisting on joining such platforms only at the party level.

We, on our part, held the view that Ramachandran group's concept of the mass-organisations was totally un-Marxist and reformist one. Communists never consider the mass organisations as purely economic organisations, rather they always try to raise their political level and introduce political elements into their struggles (though they do so in a gradual way, in accordance with the already existing level of their consciousness i.e. to the extent that may be assimilated by their respective leaderships along with large sections of their followings) thus, during the process try to turn the ordinary mass organisations into revolutionary mass organisations and bring them under their leadership.

Similarly, far from being alien to Marxism, the formation of mass-political fronts on various issues and various occasions in the broader interests of the promotion of revolutionary movement as a whole, is the part and parcel of the general practice of the Marxist-Leninists. They not only form the united front institutions at various levels, that are nothing but the mass political fronts, rather they also form such special mass political fronts for some special political tasks emerging before them on various occasions.

Its argument that political issues should be taken up only at the plane of the political party is too simplistic. Whether taking up of any issue is more feasible and advantageous for the promotion of the democratic revolutionary movement as a whole at the political or at the mass-political plane, depends on two considerations, One, on the existing basis of unity among communist revolutionary forces on the proletarian line of the revolution, and secondly, on the nature and requirements of the issue concerned.

Seen from the angle of the point one, we find that differences among communist revolutionary forces, in the present situation, are so sharp and pervasive that they are generally unable to work unitedly in a single body at the plane of the mass organisations, and even their existing level of unity is being overshadowed by prejudices, suspicions and resultant bitterness among them. So a very limited scope is left with them to find a real common

minimum basis, and to work out some concrete plan of action based on this basis for the successful launching of any joint activities on any issue. On the basis of the existing limited basis of unity among communist revolutionary forces as well as on the basis of practical (successful and unsuccessful) experience of joint activities among them in the recent past, it can be said with certainty that joint activities among these forces are practically feasible only on specific political issues that also in the form of general propaganda campaigns, though in case of the representatives of the correct proletarian revolutionary trend in the communist revolutionary camp, the feasibility of joint activities on some struggle-oriented issues is also there, owing to the relatively stronger basis of unity among them.

Seen from the angle of point two above, if the nature of the issue is such that calls for taking it up at the level of mass revolutionary struggles and if it has a popular appeal that goes much beyond the extremely limited following and spheres of influence of the communist revolutionary organisations, as for example in the instance of the issue of joint opposition and resistance to the dual monster of terrorism, then it would certainly be more feasible and advantageous, that the issue be taken up on the plane of some mass-political platform specialty created for such a purpose. The successful and unsuccessful experience of the Front and the Centre respectively, unmistakably corroborate this assessment.

In the obtaining situation of unity and mutual relationships among communist revolutionary forces as described in point one and in the case of the nature and requirement of the issues as described in point two above, the thinking of mixing the party platforms with the mass platforms, instead of supporting such platforms from outside if one so desires, would definitely result in narrowing the base of the mass support to such platforms because in that case, large sections of the people, who may be prepared to join the struggle from such mass-political platforms owing to the appeal of the issues concerned, but not yet prepared to accept

the leadership of the party or its ideology as such, will be pushed away from such struggles. Secondly, keeping in mind the mutual relationships among the forces of the communist revolutionary camp and the prevalence of erroneous approaches, attitudes and behaviour-patterns on the part of many among these forces, mixing of party platform with such mass platforms, would certainly mean imposing the political controversies and political wrangling among these forces on such mass-platforms, which, in turn, will certainly vitiate the united impact of the joint struggles from these platform and ultimately threaten their existence as such.

This is the real basis on which we had been advocating, in most cases, the formation of such mass-political platforms and had consistently been opposing the mixing of party platforms with the mass-political platforms. And, certainly, it was not because of the secret party structure of our Organisation, as it had been implicitly alleged, time and again, by the leadership of the Ramachandran group. No doubt mixing of party and mass-political platforms has some negative implications in respect of the secret functioning and structure of the secret u.g. party organisations, but some form of overcoming such limitations and negative implications could be found, had it been, really correct and beneficial to the revolutionary movement as a whole, but our point is that it is neither correct nor beneficial to the revolutionary movement, rather it militates against its overall interests.

On the practical plane such an erroneous and adamant attitude of the Ramachandran group has scuttled the possibility of joint activity among the communist revolutionary forces on several occasions—for example it had rebuffed, more than once, the effort of the Front against communalism and repression for launching of some possible joint activities with the mass-organisations led by it on some specific issues; scuttled the possibility of forging some mass-political platform for putting up joint opposition and resistance against both types of terrorism in the July '90 and January '91 meetings of various organisations of the communist revolutionary camp; and lastly, it rejected,

resistance against the dual reactionary monster of terrorism.

On the other hand, The Revolutionary Unity Centre, Punjab, as it did not have any real and concrete basis for the fulfillment of its declared aims and objectives, it miserably failed not only in realizing these lofty aims and objective but also in maintaining its existence as such.

It did not, and could not, unify any two of its constituents, not to speak of achieving a complete unity of all communist revolutionary forces as it intended to do, because there was no real basis for their unification into a single communist revolutionary organisation : It had among its constituents such sort of political forces as even did not consider one another as part of the communist revolutionary forces; some of its constituents upheld the New Democratic Revolution as their goal at the present stage of revolution in India, while others were dreaming of accomplishing the socialist revolution without passing through the stage of new democratic revolution; again, there were others, who, though, agreed on the new democratic stage, but did pursue basically different lines for the accomplishment of this goal. How such sort of heterogeneous lot of forces could successfully be united into a single communist revolutionary organisation with unity of will and action ? !

Then, as mentioned earlier, the proposal and the subsequent joint programme, contained the elements of a revolutionary united front. This again, was full of contradictions that made the attempt at formation of a revolutionary united front as an utterly futile exercise. First of all, the very formation of the Centre was self-contradictory, because how a centre forged for the achievement of the specific goal of unity among different communist revolutionary organisations be the same as is created for the creation of a revolutionary united front ? Secondly, how the upholders of the socialist revolution as a goal at this stage could agree with the upholders of the new democratic revolution as their goal at this stage, on any concrete programme or the alignment of class forces necessary

for the creation of the revolutionary united front ? Again, how could those, who, in the name of unity among "left" forces wanted the known pro-Khalistani Paigampanthies (a section of the deserters of the communist revolutionary camp) and the revisionists and nec-revisionists to join the Centre, on the one hand, and those, who considered these forces as traitors of the communist revolutionary and democratic revolutionary movement of the country, on the other hand, could agree on any common line of action in the proposed united front ? And how, on the one hand, those who considered the communal fascist Khalistanies as "misled children" of the people amenable to persuasion, and advocated the round-table conference between the representatives of the communal fascist Khalistani gangs and the cong. rulers at the centre for the solution of the Punjab problem, and those, on the other hand, who considered communal fascist Khalistanies and the cong. rulers as the sworn enemies of the people of Punjab, could agree on any common programme of action against them ?

It is because of these unresolvable contradictions that the Centre miserably failed to work out any specific and concrete programme for the "intensification of class struggles" for advancing the revolutionary movement of the country to "new heights" as it intended to do, rather it failed to take up any mass activity on any class/democratic issue of the people or put up any joint opposition and resistance on the mass scale against the dual monster of terrorism. What it actually could do was, merely to undertake some propaganda campaigns or some seminar type activities (these also with the help of the cultural troops of Gursharan Singh and the licenced guns acquired from the govt. on the party plane by Ramachandran group), wherein the speakers representing various groups would declare their latest positions on various issues, contradicting one another's positions declared from the same stage. Given the utter lack of any specific concrete programme on any issue, the Centre, as a revolutionary united front, was bound to do so, and could not do otherwise, despite its high-flown claims of promoting the revolutionary movement to "new heights".

If, instead, the supponors of the Centre could have formed it as a political platform representing all such forces on the minimum common specific democratic revolutionary programme, as suggested by us to the supponors, even before the formation of this hotch-potch Centre, it could have played a far better and constructive role in developing the movement towards the creation of a democratic revolutionary front, and could, as well, have listed the support of other communist revolutionary and democratic revolutionary forces, as promised by the erstwhile UCCRIML (Nagi Reddy group), erstwhile RCP(Takra) and the CT,CPI (ML).

So in a nutshell the Revolutionary Unity Centre, Punjab, turned out to be a glaring negative example of how the question of joint activities should never be handled, and had proved, by this negative example, that without the real commensurate basis of minimum common understanding and concrete plan of action based on it, any attempt at joint activity is bound to end up in a fiasco. How sad a comment it is on the formation of a joint front based on communist revolutionary and other revolutionary forces with so vociferous declaration of so lofty aims, that it not only utterly failed in unifying any two of its constituents or even in reducing their differences as a communist unity centre; miserably failed in taking up any concrete programme of action or in launching any class democratic struggles as a centre for revolutionary united front; rather it completely failed in taking up the joint opposition and resistance to both types of terrorism as a priority task, or play any considerable constructive role in this respect in response to which the pressing need for forming such joint platforms had, mainly, arisen; and consequently turned out to be a hotch-potch platform providing a stage for political controversy and wrangling among its heterogeneous constituents. And ultimately, as the accumulated effect of all these factors, failed to maintain, for long, its existence as such, when most influential of its constituents (CPIML, Ramachandran) left without any explanation and when the chief supponor of the Centre (Gursharn Singh) stepped aside in utter disappointment at

disgust, throwing the revolutionary ranks into another round of disillusionment and demoralisation, whose expectations it had raised inordinately by highflown declarations of its professed goals!

III. Role Of Serious And Responsible Conduct

Serious and responsible conduct on the part of all the participants in any joint activity on any issue or in any form, is also one of the most essential pre-requisites for the successful planning or launching of such activities. Obviously, in case of the joint activities being planned or launched by the forces belonging to the communist revolutionary camp, it is expected to be the most natural expression of their behaviour-patterns.

But unfortunately, the conduct of most of these forces at the time of joining or leaving any joint platform or while working together in such joint platforms and interacting with one another during the process of joint activities, turned out to be far from being serious and responsible one. Their behaviour, on all such occasions, was not governed by any principles or norms of serious and responsible conduct naturally expected to be observed by the communist revolutionary or even other revolutionary forces, but was generally governed by pragmatism and narrow sectarianism, as is quite evident from the following erroneous tendencies and practices reflected in their respective behaviours, on most of these occasions:

A. Erroneous Mode Of Joining Or Leaving Joint Platform

It is quite natural to expect from any of the communist revolutionary or even other revolutionary forces, that whenever they take a serious decision like that of joining any joint platform, they must do so on the basis of their well-considered positions and are expected to continue their presence in such platforms so long as the minimum basis of understanding and the objective need for such joint activities exist. And, if under any unexpected turn of events or unavoidable reasons they feel it necessary to come out of such a joint platform, they must feel themselves duty-bound to give due information and explanation regarding this, to other participants in the joint platforms. But what was the actual

behaviour of most of the forces belonging to the communist revolutionary camp in Punjab, in this regard?

The most pervasive tendency that reflected itself, time and again, during the successful or unsuccessful planning or launching of joint activities among these forces, is that they do not attach due importance to the essential factor of the existence or non-existence of the common minimum basis of understanding in deciding to join or leave any of such platforms. What matters for them most is as seems more convenient to them for furthering their narrow political objectives (such as for the sake of projecting their total political positions on the issue concerned, or for the projection of the image of their respective political organisations, or for the possibility of weaning away the cadres from other organisations participating in that joint platform etc.) or what suits them most, in the given situation, for their other narrow political considerations (such as saving themselves from getting isolated or releasing the pressure of the rank and file for participating in such joint activities etc.)

Here are some of the glaring examples :

RCCI (ML) group of communist revolutionaries broke away from The Front against Communalism and Repression, Punjab, on the false plea that the erstwhile UCCRIML (Nagireddy group) was violating the common understanding of the Front (ie, of taking the Khalistani terrorism and state terrorism as equal enemies of the people in respect of their joint opposition and resistance to this dual reactionary phenomenon, while laying more emphasis on any of them in accordance with the prevailing situation at different places and different occasions) and was continually laying more emphasis against Khalistani terrorism. None of the participants accepted their accusation and the erstwhile UCCRIML said, that, though it adhered firmly to the common understanding, it was willing to mend any such aberration if it existed at some local level. But the RCCIML faction in the Front remained adamant and went to the extent of forming its own front in the name of "Revolutionary Centre, Punjab", parallel to the existing Front. The real reason behind their move was that they felt constrained in the existing Front

respect of projection of their own understanding on the issue—that central ing. rulers were mainly responsible for the obtaining situation in Punjab, hence they should be the main target of attack in the fight against both types of terrorism, which meant, in practice, softening the edge of fight against Akalis and other communal forces aiding and abetting the Khalistani communal fascist terrorism. Their false plea for breaking away from the Front against communalism and repression got clearly exposed when they formed the new front on the basis of their new understanding instead of forming it on the basis of the commonly agreed minimum understanding of the Front to which they pretended their commitment while in the Front. As a matter of fact, this new understanding of theirs was not at all "new", they held it even before joining the Front, but had, even then, joined the Front by agreeing to its minimum common basis of taking both the terrorisms as equal enemies of the people, because it seemed more suitable to their narrow political considerations at that time, and left it later as it looked more convenient to them, in the changed situation, for similar considerations.

On the other hand, CPIML (Poola Reddy group) had joined the Revolutionary Unity Centre, Punjab, despite their differences on the basis of the Centre, and despite having enough opportunity to take a well-considered position, but later (after year or so) left it even without giving any explanation to the other participants. And later on, both of these break-away groups (one from the Front (RCCIML) and the other from the Centre (CPIML Poola Reddy group) joined hands to form another joint front, but soon parted their ways without explaining as to on what basis had they joined hands and on what basis had they subsequently parted ways!

For a more ridiculous instance, the Communist League of India and the CPIML (Party Unity) had joined the Front against communalism and repression by agreeing to its minimum basis of understanding, but later left it to join the "Revolutionary Unity Centre, Punjab" on the untenable plea that they had the basis to join both of these parallel platforms, but did not have enough

cadre force required to join the both. The plea was untenable because it failed to explain: a) did not they know about the scarcity of their cadres in joining the parallel platforms even at the time of their formation, and why then, they opted for joining the Front, instead of joining the Centre, despite there being enough opportunity to take a well-considered position at the time of their almost simultaneous formation; what sort of a common basis could they find in the Centre that intended to function as a centre for unity of communist revolutionary forces and as a centre for a revolutionary united front, when one of them (CLI) upheld the socialist revolution as a goal at the present stage, while the other (CPIML) upheld the new democratic revolution as its goal at the present stage of Indian revolution; and c) if they have come to know of the scarcity of their cadre-force even after a year and more of the formation of these parallel platforms, then why to leave the one, where they were already working, and join the other, though the latter was less suitable (as was shown by the practice of a year or more) for launching mass revolutionary struggles and, thus furthering the cause of democratic revolutionary movement as a whole? The real answer to all these questions was that the Revolutionary Unity Centre looked to them more convenient; because of its loose basis of understanding and organisational structure, for the purpose of projecting their respective political positions in totality.

Again, to cite another example from another field. In Oct., '91, six political organisations belonging to the communist revolutionary camp in Punjab, had agreed to form a joint action committee at the plane of mass organisations (under their influence) at the state level, to launch a joint campaign against the soaring price-rise. The campaign was a great success at its outset, but was scuttled half-way by the CPIML (Ramachandran group) for its petty political considerations. The Ramachandran group disbanded the joint action committee at the state level on the false pretext that the CCRI and others had formed such joint action committees at the local levels as well. Their pretext was utterly false

and unreasonable, because, for one thing the committees formed at lower levels were not in any way parallel committees to the one at the state level rather were formed simply to effectively implement the decisions and plans of the joint action committee at the state level, and secondly, the factions belonging to the Ramachandran group were also there in these committees at several places. So, the Ramachandran faction had nothing to justify its indefensible and disruptionist position. The only reason behind this unreasonable attitude of the Ramachandran faction was that it looked upon single committee at the state level as more suitable for the projection of the image of their organisation as being the organiser of such a huge campaign, (because the convener of the state action committee belonged to their faction), while with the formation of committees at lower levels, this 'credit' was in danger of being shared by others as well. But, the position of some other participants was not less unreasonable and opportunistic, because of their own equally narrow and petty political considerations. They unequivocally condemned the unreasonable and disruptionist stand of the Ramachandran group, but themselves were not prepared to carry forward the campaign without the participation of the Ramachandran group in it. Thus, this potentially successful joint campaign met its unnatural end, despite there being sufficient minimum basis for it and enthusiastic popular response to it.

B. Erroneous Mode Of Interaction

Another important point regarding serious and responsible behaviour among the participants in any joint activity, that is essential for the successful conduction of such activities, is related to the question, as to how these forces should interact with each other during the process of such joint activities.

The correct approach to this question, in our view, should be like this: Since such joint platforms are formed for united projection of the common views and positions of the participants on the concerned issue/issues and for the sake of launching joint mass activities on them on the common minimum basis

of the concerned platform, there must be maximum possible co-operation among them for the fulfillment of the desired goals. Secondly, since there are differences in the respective political understandings and styles of functioning among different participants, which are bound to reflect in differing views and approaches among them on various problems emerging during the process of implementation of the common minimum programme or plan of action, that certainly would give rise to struggle among them. So, the relationship among the participants in any joint activity would naturally be characterised both by co-operation and struggle among them.

But as this co-operation and struggle take place among the positive friendly forces united in joint struggle against the common enemy on the concerned issue or issues, so co-operation among them should form the basic aspect, and struggle among them should remain subservient to it serving the needs of that co-operation in the form of ensuring the correct implementation of the agreed decisions or plans of action, and fighting out possible wrong tendencies and deviations coming in the way of such an implementation. Such a struggle among them should naturally, take the form of patient, persuasive and constructive criticism, that may be able not only to ensure the correct implementation of the common agreed plans of action but also, if properly handled, for developing more cordial relations among them, reducing some of their differences and further widening the basis for such joint activities in future.

But in the actual practice of such joint activities, especially during the joint activities from the platform of The Front against Repression and Communalism, Punjab, some wrong tendencies and practices in this regard have come to light in the following way :

The most serious erroneous tendency in this regard, got itself reflected through the vehemance and style of criticism, on the part of some of the forces against some other participants in such joint activities. Being oblivious of the fact that the main objective of

such joint activities is to put up joint opposition against the common enemies and the main thrust of their criticism should be to ensure the correct implementation of the joint programme of such opposition through constructive criticism, and being oblivious of the fact that their criticism was aimed at those positive friendly forces whose co-operation in such joint opposition is essential, they behaved in his regard in such a way as if they were not dealing with positive friendly forces but with some counter-revolutionary or revisionist forces who were sabotaging such joint opposition, and as if the main thrust of their criticism were designed not to ensure the co-operation of these forces for the correct implementation of the joint programmes of opposition to enemies but to ensure, instead, the exposure and routing of these forces ; What made this negative form of criticism even more grave was the fact, that some of critics did it willfully. The main reason behind such sort of behaviour on their part was that though they considered some of the participants in such joint activities as communist revolutionary forces at a formal plane, in their practical behaviour they treated them as revisionist forces. In that case their position becomes even more erroneous and opportunistic, because, for one thing, there should not exist such a dichotomy in the sayings and deeds of any communist revolutionary force, and secondly, if the objective role of such forces is helpful, at the given moment, in the building up of joint movement on the given issue, they should be treated, in the given context, in a non-antagonistic manner though they may not be communist revolutionary forces as such. As a natural corollary to such sort of negative criticism, some of them would make the criticism of some other participants public and publish in their respective mass papers. Such an attempt on their part, far from ensuring the correct implementation of the collective programmes, not only vitiates the cordial atmosphere in the concerned bodies of the joint platform, that is so necessary for such positive co-operation, it also, undermines the unified projection of the communist revolutionary forces on the issue concerned, that is so essential in a situation when the aspect of the differences and

controversies among these forces stand unduly projected (as compared to the aspect of their unity and agreement) among the ranks of the democratic revolutionary movement and as a consequence, are causing undue demoralisation among them.

Another wrong tendency that got reflected in the practice of such forces was the basing of their criticism on the total positions of various participants regarding the issues concerned, instead of limiting it to the common minimum agreed basis of such platforms. We have dealt in the previous chapters, as to how the total projection of the views and positions of different participants from the platforms of such joint activities harms the common cause of such joint activities, but it should also be taken care of, during the criticism in different bodies of the joint platforms, because such criticism based on the total positions of the participants tantamounts to sheer wastage of energies and time on unnecessary controversies, as it also vitiates the cordial atmosphere of the concerned bodies and creates unnecessary bitterness among them. Hence, the need to limit the criticism within the bodies of the joint platforms to the minimum basis of such platforms and the actual practice on this basis.

Another wrong tendency reflected at the lower levels of our ranks was that they would get impatient and intemperate at the erroneous practices and behaviour of such forces and start viewing the presence of such forces in the united platforms as something unnecessary. This impatient reaction of theirs negated the correct approach that so long as such forces retain their overall positive and revolutionary character, their erroneous practices or behaviour on one or two points should not be allowed to overwhelm our sense of proportion and nerves, rather that should form the basis of learning the art of skilful handling of such situations and in using the patient and persuasive methods for helping such forces in rectifying their errors.

Further, two other erroneous tendencies regarding the co-operation in the joint platforms also got reflected in the practice of some forces at the lower levels of such platforms.

One, that got reflected in the practice of some of the participants in the Front in those pockets where they were not in the leadership of the Front. They would not participate in the activities of the front with full force or enthusiasm and participate in them only as a formality or would remain totally inactive. On some occasions would go even to the extent of launching some parallel activities to ensure the non-participation of their cadre into the activities of the front. This they did on two counts. a) lest such activities should help their rival faction to further strengthen their hold in the area, and b) lest such an activity should expose their cadre—force to the influence of the dominant faction in the area. This view is totally negative and wrong because it amounts to negating the very purpose of the joint activity and joint struggle against the enemy forces identified as target of struggle in the common minimum programme and secondly because it negates the fact that it is a joint activity among the positive forces whose development and growth is not against each other rather it is against the class/political forces identified as the targets of the joint activity. Lastly, it is wrong because preservation or growth of their own forces cannot be attained by remaining inactive in such activities but by participating in them with full force and enthusiasm on the basis of correct line.

Two, that was reflected among our ranks at lower levels at some places. They were reluctant or did not bother about accepting the leadership at the local level even when it was due to them because of our strength in the concerned area. They seemed influenced by the idea that when common agreed programme and plan of action have been decided upon collectively, then why to bother about the leadership? This view was wrong because it negated the fact that leadership at local levels was also necessary for the correct implementation of the common agreed plan of action, for fighting out wrong views and trends which may hamper the correct implementation of such programmes, and lastly for ensuring the truly representative character of such joint platforms through structuring the local units on the basis of the actual mass-

political strength of the respective participants in that joint venture.

C. Erroneous Attitude towards the identify and discipline of joint platforms

The joint platforms are formed on the basis of minimum common understanding among its participants for some specific purpose, the policy decisions are taken on such platforms only with consensus and not on the basis of majority/minority on such issues as these issues are likely to have some implications for the total positions of the participants where they may have serious differences. Even so such joint platforms must have their independent identity that must be acknowledged and nourished by all of the participants and they must observe minimum discipline, ie, at least on the decisions collectively reached by them, if these joint platforms are to fulfill successfully their desired goals. But in the actual practice of different forces belonging to the communist revolutionary camp, we have found that most of them did not acknowledge or pay due regard to the independent identity of such platforms or the decisions collectively reached through such platforms. Here are some glaring examples :

It was found, during the joint activities from the platform of the Front against communalism and repression, that some factions would not submit their informations, collected through their own means to the concerned bodies of the Front, but would use such information at the state level as a basis for criticism against the representatives of the faction that is dominant locally. Such erroneous practices do represent not only the dubious and conspiratorial method of building up a case for criticism thus, blatantly violating the spirit of constructive criticism, but also the lack of any regard for the independent identity of the joint platforms and the collective concern for the overall interests of the common cause.

In another instance, the faction belonging to the RCCI (ML) in the state committee of the Front, did not attend the committee meetings since Sept. 23, to Nov. 23 1987, nor have they been

participating in the activities of the Front. In the meanwhile the state committee of the Front had been issuing letters and notices to the faction concerned. And what was their response? Their representatives turned up in the Nov. 23rd meeting of the state committee, with a poster regarding the formation of a parallel platform to the Front and declared 'proudly' this is our answer to your queries! Your letters and notices have no meaning for us. Do what you can, we are not going to attend any of your meetings or answering your letters or notices? They could have gone ahead in forming any parallel centre if they so desired, but such an attitude to the Front as long as they were formally in it, is nothing but totally irresponsible and reprehensible.

In January 91, a meeting of seven groups belonging to the communist revolutionary camp in Punjab was called for forming some joint platform for joint resistance to terrorism. Although it could not succeed in its mission but even then it took two practical decisions at the end. One was making attempts at the level of the mass papers of the respective organisations, regarding which it was unanimously decided that what concrete steps could be taken in this regard, would be concretely discussed in the next meeting to be held after two weeks. The other was regarding some joint activity on the gulf war. Though there were differences among the participants on the approach to this question, even then some of the participants insisted on organising a joint demonstration on the issue. Representatives of the CCRI told the meeting that they would give their views on the date of the demonstration only after discussing it in their Organisation. So, it was unanimously decided that final decision regarding the date of demonstration will be taken in the next meeting to be held after two weeks. But then, after the termination of this meeting some of organisations sat in a meeting of their Lok Morcha Punjab, and decided on the date of the demonstration to be held by their Lok morcha at Chandigarh. The CCRI was not even informed of this decision, and no meeting was ever called for discussing concrete steps at the level of the mass papers as was

unanimously decided upon.

Such a non-serious and irresponsible attitude towards the independent identity of joint platforms and unanimously agreed decisions of joint meetings on the part of such organisations, not only vitiates the existing cordality among communist revolutionary forces but it also impairs their credibility for any further attempts for joint activities in future.

IV. Importance of Preparatory Work

Another noteworthy point that must be kept in mind at the outset of the attempts for any joint activities is the importance of the necessary preparatory work to be done on the part of the initiators of such a move, if it is expected to be a serious and fruitful attempt. It is necessary on the part of the sponsors of any move for joint activities that they should not only form the concrete agenda for such a meeting, but also should put forward this agenda in some sort of a concrete proposal on the issue concerned. They should ascertain through informal bilateral/multilateral meetings, the views of the possible participants, sort out the points of agreement and disagreement, identify the problems to be faced and even try to find out possible solutions to these problems. Only then the formal meeting should be convened to finalise such concrete proposal, through necessary additions and deletions, and chalk out concrete programme of action on the basis of such a proposal. If, instead, such necessary preparations are not made, and a very casual attitude is adopted in convening such meetings in the form of sending the simple message with mere mention of the date, venue and name of the agenda, then, such meetings are bound to be bogged down in unnecessary fruitless discussions and to end in a fiasco.

But, what is the attitude in this regard on the part of the most of the organisations belonging to communist revolutionary camp, is evident from these examples :

In July 1990, an attempt was made by some organisations for the formation of a joint platform in the name of Lok Morcha, Punjab. A formal meeting was called without any necessary

preparatory work, and without any concrete proposal (at least it was not in our information, though we were also invited) and without any common analysis of the outstanding problems eg. why the Ramachandran group had to come out of The Revolutionary Unity Centre, Punjab? why the chief sponsor of the Centre had to step aside? Why the RCCIML and others had to come out of the Front against Communalism, and Repression Punjab, and why later on, so many efforts on their part with various combinations and permutations did not bear fruit? And what is the basis to think that the new attempt will yield fruit? And as a result of all this the meeting failed to yield the desired results.

Again, in January 1991, another attempt was made by RCCIML and the Communist League of India, again without any preparations for it. The preparation they can be said to have made was to the effect that they tried to ascertain whether the Ramachandran group had changed its position regarding its adamant attitude in insisting on participating into mass political joint platforms only at the party plane, as in their opinion this was the main hurdle in the formation of any joint platform. And, they got the impression that the Ramachandran group has changed its attitude on the issue. So, a very casual message was sent, that also orally, mentioning only date and venue of the meeting. Surprisingly enough, the sponsors of the move did not try to contact any of our state committee members for conveying this formal message. So, it was sent to us through one of our lower-ranked comrades. (It was by chance that one of our state committee members happened to meet one of their comrades and could have some information about the agenda of the meeting). And what was the end result of the meeting called in such a casual manner? There was no common analysis of the major problems being faced by these forces in forming the much-needed joint front and there was no concrete proposal for the purpose. All that came into focus there was the objective need of such a joint front and the subjective wish to do so. And so far as

the question of the change in the position of Ramachandran group was concerned, it came out, after a discussion for 20 minutes, that the supponors of the move got the wrong impression, and there was no change in the position of Ramachandran group. And that was all. So the meeting served no purpose at all and ended in a fiasco.

But what is surprising is, that after so long an experience of the failure of such attempts, most of the forces belonging to the communist revolutionary camp in Punjab, are far from realising the importance and purpose of such necessary preparations! Rather they question attempts on our part in this respect by saying that if every-thing is to be done before the meeting, what remains there to be done at the meeting! What is more astonishing in this regard is that we are finding ourselves unable to make them understand that making necessary preparations is not 'doing everything' before the meeting, and further, that this method of necessary preparations before the formal meeting is not our 'invention' rather it is a very established practice with communists all over the world, even for their inner organisational functioning!

In the end, it may be said on the basis of these observations that most of the experience gained during the process of joint activities, is of a negative nature. Though we have some positive experience of joint activities with the CPI (ML)—CT, that helped us a lot, not only in developing cordial relations between our two Organisations, but also in developing a very useful practical/political co-operation in all phases of our activity. But, it itself is a very limited experience. So, what we need to develop a common and comprehensive understanding on the question of joint activities, is a lot of more concrete and positive experience. We are confident that our observations will provide a sound basis for developing such an understanding.

Women's Liberation And Class Struggle

[Editor's Note :—We are reproducing here a paper from the AILRC's "Seminar On Women's Liberation and Class Struggle." The paper is selected for reproduction in "The Comrade" owing to its striking class-ideological consistency and lucidity of expression, and moreover, its theoretical exploration of the indirect exploitation of the proletarian women's domestic labour by the capitalists that underpins the orientation regarding the primacy of class struggle over the gender conflict between the oppressed men and women.]

Comrades,

The following is only a note, not a full-fledged paper.

We are assembled here today not merely for academic debate on the question of women, but to assert the power of women for revolutionary change (including for their own liberation) and to consolidate the strength we already have.

Assertion and consolidation involve two processes: positively building for what we want and clearly demarcating from what we do not want.

We are about half the population. We live in a society in which the status of families is determined by the property they have and our status we have by the families to which we belong. The overwhelming majority of families live under severe exploitation, without security of job, land, or means of subsistence and without a decent livelihood—whether in the countryside or in the cities. Most of us belong to these families. It is true that within these exploited wretched families too we are assigned, over thousands of years, an inferior miserable status. But now our ambition is not limited to gaining equality within such ground-down families. Certainly we would like equal status within the existing families too. But this is because we want equality with the men in the ultimate society liberated from exploitation and from the oppressive institution of private property. And so, right now we want to be free to be equals in the social fight for that liberated society. And we know that in the

process of that protracted fight, by participating in that fight, we women will acquire democratic power step by step to assert our rights, not just as women, but as people equally with the men.

Equality, without this long-term ambition to inherit equally with the men a world free from exploitation and oppression, has no serious content. We do not want to better share the crumbs with our men. As Faiz said, "*Ek khet nahin, ek desh nahin, Hum saari duniya mangenge*". We want more for us all: we want freedom to be more productive and to invest the surplus we then produce in a way that is best for our long-term interest. We want that freedom for our men too. We have a common interest there with our men and we have a contradiction with our men in so far as they do not see that we need freedom and respect so that we too can organise together with them to free ourselves from the present stranglehold of the landlord, the moneylender, the employer, the contractor, the revenue officials, the courts, the police and the military.

So our fight against the landlord, the moneylender, the employer, etc is primary. It is our main fight. It is antagonistic in that without demolishing their present status, their control of the means of production and therefore control over our lives, our lot cannot improve. Our struggle with the men who live with us and stand with us in that fight is non-antagonistic, in that, both we and our men would gain by we women winning a better status and a greater freedom to fight side by side with them.

This difference, and this interrelation, we should never forget. Our main fight is against our exploiters and it is an antagonistic fight. Part of that fight is against the patriarchal culture that the ruling classes employ to keep us suppressed. In order to carry on this fight, we must also struggle with the men and the women of our own class who are made into instruments of this patriarchal culture. While this struggle in individual cases can assume fierce and bitter forms, at the general level it is non-antagonistic because all of us exploited and oppressed would commonly gain when we win each step in this second kind of fight. However, while this second is non-antagonistic and secondary, it is a very necessary

struggle. Because it will free half the fighting force of working people for participating in the main fight.

The women's question is thus a democratic question; and its demands at the present stage pertain to people's democracy: such as equal claims to the means of production, equal say and vote within the movement, rights not to be oppressed.

But I take it that those of us who are assembled here today are women who take the proletarian viewpoint, are Marxist in their world view, are committed to carrying our society into socialism and beyond. As such they have a greater responsibility for theirs is a longer view and with it comes the obligation not to lose our way on that long haul. It is important not to lose our bearings. It is important to take stock of our resources—ideological, political and practical heritage, including on the question of women. And to learn how to carry it forward.

The work of Marx and Engels has three component parts, apart from their contribution to practice: their contribution to the theory of knowledge—dialectical materialism; the application of this theory to discover the laws of motion of human society; and in particular the analysis of capitalist society. While the women's question is not dealt with in a lengthy, exclusive fashion, their work crucially locates the basis of women's oppression and maps out the basic course for women's liberation. (There are several other major questions, too, such as the nature of socialism and communism, which are similarly dealt with in a very brief manner; yet we are given crucial basic indicators and analytical concepts from which we can extrapolate.) Specifically, the Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State traces the roots of women's subordination, Wage Labour and Capital and Capital analytically describe and place that part of labour which is actually women's labour, thus implying the strategy that needs to be employed for the liberation of women; and the Communist Manifesto and Principles of Communism (as early as 1848) raise the specific slogans whose fulfilment is required for the liberation of women. (Since then, through practical experience, various further brilliant

clarifications are available as in Lenin's correspondence and interviews. However we have not touched here on the very material contribution by Lenin on specific questions of the women's movement. This would be a subject of a separate note because the controversies he treats are essentially those that trouble the women's movement today.)

The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State outlines the essence of the exploitation of women, the subordination of the women by virtue of the social demotion of domestic work because of the vast surplus production outside the home by the reigning mode and the social power invested by the surplus to the inheritors of it. With the perspective of the Origin...we can also see the suppressive and repressive role of the family, the head of which must (for survival and betterment within the given mode) bring his family members in line with social mores and customs that serve the very mode that exploits his family and him. Women, throughout these early modes remained isolated in their homes: their labour, of creating domestic goods and services for family consumption or minor exchange and their labour of procreation and child rearing, supporting by such contribution the system that exploited them and their families. The Origin points to the exploitative role of the family, private property, and the state in all the modes of production indicating which class in the main, in each mode, benefitted from this social division (among these three institutions) of the expropriating role. And, again, the Origin...projects the course for the future, the major landmarks in the course for ending the exploitation of women's labour and bodies and the mode of production needed for the final liberation of women.

None of these writings prettifies the relation between man and woman as it is lived out under the various exploitative modes. Marriage is called: "institutionalised prostitution", the "economic dependence" of woman is denoted as the immediate obvious reason for her social and personal subordination. Marx and Engels are categorical in seeing domestic labour as isolated and isolating.

They argue that the "emancipation of women will be possible (note: not automatic-FXD) only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention to a minor degree". The refusal to acknowledge this material reality is to prettify the isolation and drudgery of domestic labour.

However, the exact position of woman's indirect exploitation by the exploiter, via her socially eulogised but actually damned role of provider of domestic services and procreator, can be seen in the context of the wage provided to the worker. This concept is precisely sketched in *Capital and Wage Labour and Capital* by Marx. There, Marx shows how wages are the price of labour power: how like other commodities labour power too is bought by the capitalist taking into account the cost of its production. Marx shows how the cost of production of labour power is composed of (1) the cost of training, (2) the price of the necessary means of subsistence, and (3) the cost of reproduction, whereby the race of workers is enabled to multiply and to replace worn-out workers by new ones. All these together are what is called "necessary labour", the cost of labour power. The more you suppress and devalue the labour (i.e. lower the living needs) of whoever is daily recreating the worker's labour power and is preparing the ranks of the future workers to replace him in the labour market, the lower the necessary labour (or labour's cost of production) on these two counts.

The foundations are laid here for comprehending a few crucial principles about women's exploitation.

That is, the capitalist is exploiting the woman's domestic work, which is accounted for within these two latter components (viz. subsistence and reproduction), via the worker—via his exploitation of the worker. He pays the worker the "necessary labour", keeping the surplus for himself; the greater the unseen and unaccounted labour of the domestic worker (the women in his daily life) the lower is the value of the necessary labour paid to the factory worker. In the competition among workers for the jobs in the labour market, this component can be suppressed and there

are social mores to support that. The inferior education, feeding, self-sacrificing character-promotion for the women stand as deathly reminders of this indirect and insidious exploitation.

This exploitation is made easier because it is indirect, unseen, supported by moral exhortations about the family rule of the woman. The unpaid labour of the woman is unpaid for by the capitalist. The worker himself is only an unconscious conduit (however immediately oppressive he may be). So it is important that both men and women of the working class become conscious of this.

This consciousness can be brought in only through class struggle; the best conditions for that are created as women themselves also enter the labour market, and are subjected to super-exploitation (both because their necessary labour is even lower, and because of their even greater social subordination). As this process occurs, they are able to directly trace the expropriation of surplus by the capitalist class. (To a slight extent only, their own social status within the family would improve as they taste elements of economic independence in daily life) Their contradiction with capital would be exposed by their open social labour. However, the sheer experience of social labour will not spontaneously liberate them: this can happen in the course of class struggle alone.

Thus, while recognising the antagonistic nature of the contradiction in the capitalist mode—as between capital and wage labour (whether of man, woman, of child)—we must also recognise the subordinate, secondary, conditioned position of the contradiction between men and women. The latter contradiction is not the less poignant and harsh for being a secondary one. All this means is, that the secondary contradiction cannot be solved without the main one being solved—that the secondary one has conditions created for its own resolution (again through struggle against patriarchy and class struggle) in the course of the struggle to resolve the main contradiction.

We know women are exploited in daily life. Men before Marx and Engels too had written about the exploitation and subordina-

tion of women. But Marx and Engels give us the scientific approach to see exactly how: the surplus value expropriation by the capitalist mode (and Engels outlines the same as well for the earlier modes) extends its tentacles to the labour of women—indeed, in the process exacerbating a daily contradiction between men and women (wife) who are both ground down trying to share the single wage, making the man an instrument of the exploiting class's cultural oppression, thus dividing the exploited and the oppressed. So Marx places things in the order of the strategic resolution.

Already in 1848, the Communist Manifesto strikes at the root of women's enslavement—their yoke of domestic work and child rearing: It gives a slogan for the socialising of domestic work and making child-rearing the responsibility of the future socialist state. In other words it programmes destruction of patriarchy and the family for they imply the subordination of women. It further reveals the material base that is being created and that women can bank on to implement such a programme: unlike classical feudalism, capitalism lays the material foundations itself, first by reducing all relations between labour and capital to those of a cash nexus; secondly, by tearing away from the family its sentimental veil, and reducing the family relation to a mere money relation; and thirdly by bringing in more and more women into the social labour force employed by capital. In this way, by participating in social production, the women face the exploitation of capital directly, the material foundation is thus created for consciousness and struggle against exploitation by bringing the exploiter and the exploited face to face. They do not thereby become liberated any more than the men employed by capital. The key for liberation of women as for men is, and remains, class struggle.

We have to enrich this heritage in concrete situations by our practice, while grasping the basic approach. If the movement has failed, any of us feel, to pay adequate attention to the women's question to date, our task is to set about giving that attention—not to abandon the dialectical materialist class perspective on the

question of women.

If we put the main contradiction and the subordinate one on par, not only do we lessen the chances in practice of bringing the subordinate one onto the path of resolution through proper struggle. We do worse. We equate the worker and the capitalist, both as 'exploiters'. We invest the worker within his meagre wage, his wretched means, with the power to change an equation without the means to do so. In so far as we do this we divert attention from the principal antagonistic exploiter with whom the woman has no common interest. We diffuse part of our striking force against the main enemy and divert its striking capacity onto its ally. Men—working men have to free themselves on the question of their women. But the point is they can do this only when they realise (through class struggle) that they need to free their women and themselves from ruling class, patriarchal, family norms, so that both they and their women can fight the ruling classes and world imperialism directly.

FOOTNOTE: "Very few husbands, not even the proletarians, think of how much they should lighten the burdens and worries of their wives, or relieve them entirely, if they lent a hand in this 'women's work'. But no that would go against the 'privilege and dignity of the husband'. He demands that he have rest and comfort. The domestic life of the woman is a daily sacrifice of self to a thousand insignificant trifles. The ancient rights of her husband, her lord and master, survive unnoticed. Objectively, his slave takes her revenge. Also in a concealed form. Her backwardness and her lack of understanding for her husband's revolutionary ideals act as a drag on his fighting spirit, on his determination to fight. They are like any worms, gnawing and undermining imperceptibly slowly but surely. I know the life of workers and not only from books. Our communist work among the masses of women, and our political work in general, involves considerable educational work among the men. We must root out the old slave-owners's point of view, both in the Party and among the masses. That is one of our political tasks, a task just as urgently necessary as the formation of a staff composed of comrades, men and women, with thorough theoretical and practical training for Party work among working women"

—Lenin, Dialogue with Clara Zetkin.

Revolutionary Understanding V/S Reformist Understanding

—A critical exchange between Maharashtra CCRI
and CPI (M.L.) Jan ■ Shakti

To
The Editor,
"Lok Yudh"

Dear comrade editor,

In the first editorial of the first issue of Lok Yudh, the Marathi organ of CPI (ML)—Janashakti, you have taken up the issue of the 'Dunke' Draft and the effect it would have on Indian agriculture. The issue is important, and the article is timely. However we were surprised to read the following passage at the end of the article.

"The Government is preparing to accept the Dunkel Draft, which would take away the country's freedom of decision (nirnay swatantrya) and sovereignty (saarvabhoumatva). In order to defend India's freedom of decision and its national interest, and in order to fulfill the interest of the ordinary people, an alternative development policy should be evolved.

"What does an alternative development policy mean

"An alternative development policy means a policy which emphasises the sustainable use of natural wealth, the fulfillment of the basic needs of all the people, and the provision of employment to all adults. This will have to be based on modern science and technology. For this purpose, worldwide exchange of research/knowledge must be kept free/open. Immediately we should intervene to ensure that the noose of the patent protection does not tighten and that the 1970 Patent Act remains intact".

(Lok Yodh, no. 1, p. 4)

To understand what is wrong with the above passage, it is necessary to be first clear about what is meant by a revolutionary understanding.

Revolutionary Understanding V/S Reformist Understanding

There is a profound difference between the revolutionary and the reformist/revisionist way of analysing and presenting any issue. The reformist attempts to show how each instance of exploitation/oppression can be removed by a change of policy, i.e. within the given system. Whatever his/her intentions may be, the effect of the reformist's efforts is to give a little further life to people's illusions in the existing system.

The revolutionary also fights for the fulfillment of immediate demands. But, in doing so, the revolutionary at the same time uses each instance of exploitation, oppression, atrocity, etc. as a starting point to show the masses that the roots of these evils lie in the system, the social and political order, and the production relations that form its base; and that, in order to put an end to these evils, it is necessary to uproot the present system, smash existing production relations and replace them with new ones step by step.

Revolutionaries formulate slogans and demands, and carry out struggle, in such a fashion as does not foster illusions that the basic problem will be solved by meeting this immediate demand, or that even these gains will be secure; instead, the struggling masses are made conscious of the fact that it is only their organised strength (the embryonic form of the future people's democracy) that can defend their gains.

How Revolutionaries Should Regard The Dunkel Draft

In analysing the Dunkel Draft, it is therefore not enough to show that it is against the interest of the Indian people; that is being done at any rate by the CPI (M), sections of the intelligentsia, and sections of even the ruling classes.

The revolutionary organisation must show concretely how the Draft is a further attack; that the Government's surrender is a consequence of the fact that it is not independent, but dependent; that the various ruling class parties' opposition to the Draft is not thoroughgoing; that the only real, thoroughgoing

resistance to Dunkel can come from those who are willing to take the immediately difficult consequences of rejecting it, i.e. those who want to change production relations in the economy.

It may not be possible in each article to put all this in an elaborate way; but the perspective from which one presents the issue must be this.

Is India Independent ?

Instead, in your article you have said that the Draft would "take away" India's "sovereignty" and "independence". This suggests, contrary to the understanding of communist revolutionaries, that India has till now possessed sovereignty and independence. You proceed to say that the Draft should be opposed in order to defend the country's freedom of decision (nirnay swatantrya). If indeed the country has sovereignty, independence, freedom of decision etc. then the task of the democratic revolution is already complete. Is this what you mean to say?

A Change Of Policy Or Revolution ?

The Draft can only be thoroughly opposed by an economy which is willing to tread an independent path. And for a backward country such as ours, such an economy can only come into existence through an agrarian revolution, not through any change in existing policies. Yet the contrary understanding is in fact conveyed when the article talks of an "alternative development policy"—without mentioning that such a policy is impossible under the present State and society. The word "policy" itself signifies an alternative *within* the existing system.

Defence Of The Status Quo

It is due to this wrong understanding that you actually call for the defence of the Indian Patent Act of 1970. No doubt the Dunkel Draft would introduce changes into patent laws which are retrograde, and which would constitute a further attack on the Indian people's rights and their living standards. However, by no means should we present the existing state of affairs as something to be defended. It is under the 1970 Act that multinationals have

been operating in India for the last 23 years and making profits.

The correct way to frame the demand is not "Defend the 1970 Patent Act", but "Oppose the Dunkel Draft, which is further attack on the Indian people". (Similarly, we would not raise the slogan "Defend the public sector"—for that would generate illusions about the actual nature of the so-called "Public" sector—but would instead raise the slogan "Oppose privatisation".)

After reading the sentence "An alternative development policy means..... and provision of employment to all adults", one expects that the following sentence will explain how in fact foreign technology is not important for such growth in productivity, that what is crucial is anti-feudal reforms in order that the creative, inventive capabilities of the peasantry of the country be unleashed. Instead, one finds the strange sentence: "This will have to be based on modern science and technology. For this purpose, worldwide exchange of research/knowledge should be open/free".

So, according to the article, our struggle against Dunkel Draft is in order to ensure "free worldwide exchange of research/knowledge"!

All these statements are not being made merely by one or the other mass organisation, but by CPI (ML) Janashakti. And therefore it is necessary to consider them particularly seriously. The above exposition has become long, for it was necessary to show not only how the above stand on Dunkel was wrong, but also how the way of thinking that lay behind it was wrong.

With revolutionary greetings
Centre of Communist Revolutionaries of India
C.C.R.I. (MAHASHTRA).

Lok Yudh's reply

The following is an explanation regarding the comment by the representative of CCRI (Maharashtra) on the editorial published in the first issue of Lok Yudh. It is always good for this type of positive criticism to be made on behalf of one revolutionary organisation regarding the argument/way of presenting/statement (Marathi: "maandni") by another revolutionary organisation.

First of all we admit the fault in the presentation of the article. We are grateful to the CCRI for the fraternal feeling it has shown toward Lok Yudh.

Although we cannot place the full text of the letter before our readers for lack of space, we will try to give explanations regarding the main points of criticism made.

— As a result of the Dunkel Draft India's sovereignty and independence are being lost—the objection to this statement.

CPI (ML) Janashakti's understanding is that India is not truly sovereign and independent. In making the statement that, as a result of the Dunkel Draft, India will lose its sovereignty and independence, the context was the formal independence and sovereignty (of India). Secondly, such a phrasing was used in order to convey more powerfully the growing activeness of the neo-colonial exploitation. However, we accept that among ordinary readers there could arise a misunderstanding about this, and even in political circles there is scope for doubts being created about the Party's understanding as a result of the above phrasing. We are grateful for the above alert criticism.

— The objection to the mention that the 1970 Patent Act be kept intact.

— As a result of raising the demand that the 1970 Patent Act be kept intact the illusion is created that the present patent law is a model one. We discuss the Dunkel proposals on the very basis of opposition to amendments to the Patent Act. But we have to accept our mistake of having presented the opposition to the changes in the form of support to the old laws.

— In regard to our demand for implementing an alternative development policy, you have criticised it, saying that raising such a demand is to expect that, without a revolution, development can occur within the existing framework through policy changes. (The following is a quotation from the Lok Yudh editorial:)"An alternative development policy means a policy which emphasises the sustainable use of natural wealth, the fulfillment of the basic needs of all the people, and the provision of

employment to all adults. This will have to be based on modern science and technology. For this purpose, worldwide exchange of research/knowledge must be kept free/open. Immediately we should intervene to ensure that the noose of the patent protection does not tighten and that the 1970 Patent Act remains intact."

— We have already accepted the mistake in the above paragraph of asking for the retention of the existing Patent Act. However, from this paragraph one cannot get the meaning that the understanding of opposing the feudal order is not included in it. Similarly, the revolutionary party cannot harbour expectations that through simply policy changes there will be development in the present order of things. Naturally, there is no reason to believe that the **Lok Yudh** editorial has any such idea. Today in the social, economic, political and all other fields we organise people on many such demands which the present Government (Marathi : **sarkar**) is incapable of fulfilling. However, it will not do to forget that only in the course of building a movement on these demands that the people lose their faith in the present set-up and we can go forward in the direction of revolution.

An alternative development policy will have to be based on modern science and technology. There is nothing confusing/difficult about this sentence. There is no need to take the word "modern" in this sentence to mean "imperialist". By finishing off feudalism, it will be possible to give scope to the people's creative capacity. In the same way, we should not take worldwide exchange and the developmental capability of the Indian people to be contradictory, but complementary.

Lok Yudh's editorial board welcomes the positive criticisms you have made and hopes that you will continue this effort at a dialogue of ideas.

Lok Yudh no. 3

Organ of the CPI (ML) Janashakti,
Maharashtra state committee.

To
The Editorial Board,
Lok Yudh.

-CCRI's Reply

Dear Comrades,

Having read the third issue of **Lok Yudh** in which a clarification is given regarding our criticisms of the editorial in the first issue, we appreciated that our letter had been taken in a positive spirit. In the vitiated political atmosphere of today, where frequently political-ideological debates have been diverted into trading of personal charges, this attitude on the part of **Lok Yudh** was refreshing.

However, we felt that the clarification was inadequate to answer the main questions we raised.

Our letter to the editor was, in fact, only about two pages long, and hence it would have been better for the reader if you had printed it in full. Instead, you have left out the perspective from which the letter was written, and addressed the points only as individual instances of phrasing/presentation. We had specifically mentioned that our objective was to show how the way of thinking behind these phrases is itself wrong (which leads to wrong practice), and we have outlined the proper approach. If our letter were merely about some slips in phrasing, there would have been little point in writing it.

Regarding the clarifications you have made :

(1) You say that, in talking of "sovereignty and independence", what you were referring to was "formal sovereignty and independence". Secondly, you say that such a phrase was used in order to more powerfully convey the growth of neo-colonial exploitation. But if you are referring to only formal sovereignty and independence, is it not inappropriate to call in the next sentence (as you have done) for "defending" that so-called independence ? Rather than attempt to rally the people to defend a fake independence, our slogans should be : Oppose the Dunkel Draft, oppose this intensification of imperialist plunder, defend the people's interests, defend the national interest, and fight for

true independence.

If you wish to convey the growing acuteness of neo-colonial plunder, the effective way would be to show how even the pretence of formal appearance or semblance of independence and sovereignty is now being dropped—so thoroughgoing is the neo-colonial assault via the Dunkel proposals. No doubt CPI (ML) Janashakti's stated position is that India's independence is only formal. But this position should not itself be formal. Rather, it should be reflected in propaganda—constantly exposing to the masses how this “independence” has no real content, how it is precisely because we lack independence that our country is subject to continuing and growing imperialist loot and intervention.

From reading the central organ of CPI (ML) Janashakti, it becomes apparent that the phrases you have used are not accidental slips, but are part of a wrong approach. For example, while many correct revolutionary formulations are contained in the article⁵ on the Dunkel Draft in the June 1993 issue of **Janashakti**, and the call of the All-India Convention of Peasant Organisations against the Dunkel proposals (printed in the July 1993 issue), there is not a consistent revolutionary perspective. For example, the titles of these pieces (“Attempts at recolonisation” and “Resist attempts at recolonisation”) do not reflect that India already has a semi-colonial status; instead they convey the understanding that India is independent. Similarly, the peasant organisations' call states that “only a mass movement can check the attempts by big powers at recolonising the country through the Dunkel proposals”. On the face of it, this is a call to defend the country's ‘independence’.

There is another reason why it is particularly important to assert the revolutionary understanding on this score. In the agitation against the Dunkel draft, there are strong alien trends, composed of ruling class/revisionist politicians, foreign funded voluntary organisations, etc. These trends, which are at the moment more prominent and established among the people than the revolutionary trend, formulate their opposition to the Dunkel

Draft in precisely such terms; resist recolonisation, defend India's independence and sovereignty, and so on. They never reveal to the people that India is already a semi-colonial country, subject to neo-colonial exploitation; that hence the only way to oppose the Dunkel Draft in a thorough going way is to build up a self-reliant economy, which in turn is only possible through agrarian revolution. Similar is the duplicity of ruling class parties who claim to oppose the IMF-dictated structural adjustment, they attempt to show that the IMF loans can be avoided by various temporary fixes and by boosting exports. Hence we must constantly demarcate from the ruling classes' sponsored ‘opposition’, even as we concentrate our fire on the Government's policies.

(2) The same wrong understanding is reflected in your statement that only in the course of the people building a movement on their demands (“which the present Government, is incapable of fulfilling”) do the people lose their faith in the present set-up and can we go forward in the direction of revolution. There is a crucial link missing here.

The process of the people losing faith in the present set-up is not spontaneous—or it would have long ago occurred on its own, with no need of a revolutionary organisation, as class struggle goes on on its own all the time. While left sectarians refuse to lead the people in struggles on their immediate problems and instead merely issue calls for revolution, revisionists argue that we must lead the people in legal economic struggles until the people on their own lose their faith in legal means and in the present order. **Revolutionaries**, by contrast, while leading the people in their struggles for immediate demands, constantly show to the people concretely how revolution is needed for the solution of their basic problems. Thus they raise the people's consciousness through each battle, in order to win the war itself. This task shapes the way we formulate all demands, slogans and propaganda, and shapes the actual forms of organisations and struggle we adopt. It is precisely this perspective that is lacking

in the editorial we have criticised.

For instance, if we simply raise specific demands.—work for all, proper use of natural resources, fulfillment of all basic needs, etc.—we neither generate illusions in the present set-up, nor help people to shed them. But we certainly generate illusions when we talk of these demands being fulfilled by an alternative development policy, and altogether neglect to mention the revolutionary change which is a precondition. "Policy", as we said earlier, explicitly refers to choices within a given framework. In fact, this is why the phrase is commonly used by all ruling class opposition parties. Revolutionary organisations instead call for an alternative social, economic and political order, which will pursue an alternative path of development.

Therefore we urge you comrades to look at these criticisms not merely as questions of presentation or phrasing, but examine the wrong approach they embody.

CCRI (Maharashtra)

Reports from States

1. Punjab

—A Fighting Honour to Sewwala Martyrs.

2. Punjab

—Struggle for Land And Against Police Repression.

3. Orissa

—Malkangiri Adivasi Sangh Holds Its Second Conference.

4. West Bengal

—Joint Statement By 13 Worker's Organisations On September, 9, Bharat Bandh.

[Editor's Note : Reports No. 1 and 3 were received for the June, 1993 issue of The Comrade (which could not come out) and have become old by now. All the same, we have included them in the present issue assuming that the comrades in other areas may still find them useful. In particular, the report no. one from Punjab retains its significance as a depiction of revolutionary method of work and practice of mass line.]

A Fighting Homage To Seewala Martyrs

—A Special Correspondent.

Two years have elapsed since, when on April 9, 1991, a heavily armed gang of Khalistani terrorists attacked a gathering of the "Front against Repression and Communalism" at village Seewala in Punjab. The communal fascist terrorists, by indiscriminately spraying bullets through Chinese assault rifles, gunned down 18 people and seriously injured more than two dozen people.

The killers responsible for Seewala massacre have themselves been killed. Having suffered even more humiliating political death, they have been pushed into oblivion. Contrary to it, the heroic martyrs of Seewala embraced a noble and glorious death and continue to throb into the hearts of thousands of ever-growing path-bearers of their cause. A first-hand report of 2nd martyrdom day celebration of Seewala martyrs by this correspondent is an ample proof to it.

Two years ago, when this brutal massacre was enacted, the whole Seewala village was engulfed by an intense terror. The pro-Khalistani group in the landed Jatt peasantry was openly threatening and bullying the ordinary peasants and village dalits. Apart from intimidating and terrorising the villagers, it let loose a malicious campaign of misinformation, slander and deliberate lies aimed at tarnishing the image of the "Front" and driving a wedge between the Jatt peasantry and low-caste harijan landless. The "Front" and village dalits were being accused as responsible for the bloody massacre. By inciting upper-caste Jatt chauvinism and class-hatred against the dalits, the Jatt peasantry was being instigated to attack the dalits. Although some attempts were made to counter these Khalistani moves and some initial gains were made, it was quite inadequate to win over the prejudiced Jatt peasantry. Herculean effort was needed ever to extricate the ordinary dalits from the clutches of Khalistani terror and to prepare them for openly and boldly resisting the terror-tactics and bullying

by the pro-Khalistani elements. For certain reasons, it remained unaccomplished.

With the decline of the Khalistani terrorist movement during the past two years, the overall situation in Punjab improved a lot. The Khalistani-terror no longer existed on an earlier scale. But so far as village Seewala was concerned Khalistani terror, more or less, was intact. The reasons are too obvious. As grave and heinous a crime as Seewala massacre, invited no police reprisal. None of the local accomplices of the Khalistani killer gang, its harbourers or known supporters were ever arrested, interrogated or beaten. The local accomplices, of the Khalistani killer gang were freely roaming about threatening the people: "well, we have got the people killed. Do what you can." The Khalistani terrorists continued to be sheltered even after the massacre. An open and known pro-khalistani group, still active in the village, went about intimidating and terrorising the villagers in various ways. None of the villagers dared oppose it. That is why the bulk of peasants preferred to remain aloof or advised not to hold the martyrdom anniversary in the village, when they were approached for their opinion-seeking.

The Prevailing Situation

The respective state-level leading committee of the "Front" and the CCRI—a premier communist revolutionary organisation active in organising and steering the anti-communal and anti-terrorist movement as well as revolutionary movement in the area—are said to have undertaken a comprehensive and concrete analysis of the prevailing situation before deciding about the holding of martyrdom function at Seewala. During the course of his visit to the area, this correspondent had the privilege of discussing at length, with local CCRI organiser, the prevailing situation. A summary of the related aspects is worth reproducing here.

Assessing the present state of Khalistani-movement, it was pointed out: Communal-fascist Khalistani terrorism is on the wane. Though highly debilitated, it is far from having been totally crushed. All objective conditions necessary for its resurgence are still existent. Nonetheless, with the exposure of

Khalistanite misdeeds on an unprecedented scale and consequently its remarkable and almost total political isolation, this variant of terrorism in under acute police pressure and is waging a defensive battle for sheer survival. With the killing of numerous notorious terrorists, with severe curtailment in gang operations, depletion of striking power and disintegration of organisational and operational structure, fresh enrollment has totally stopped and Khalistani terrorists are on the run for their lives. Relating concretely this weakened Khalistani terrorism to the concrete conditions prevailing at Seewala it was observed, seewala is no longer a soft target for a desperate strike. In view of our organised and persistent resistance, determination and show of force as manifested in earlier anti-communal anti-terrorist programmes, we presume the Khalistani terrorists would not dare attack at Seewala. Moreover, fearing retaliatory attacks, the local accomplices of the terrorists can hardly afford to co-operate. Elaborate and tight security arrangements would further dissuade the terrorists from undertaking such an adventure. Even then, if they dare attack at Seewala, they will be repulsed with full might and taught a bitter lesson.

Commenting upon the possible outcome and achievements, the spokesman observed: the situation is very tough and challenging. Yet, it has a huge revolutionary potential providing real possibilities and opportunities for the advancement of anti-communal anti-terrorist democratic struggle as well as agrarian revolutionary movement. If democratic and revolutionary forces exert themselves in a bold and daring way, not only the terrorist elements in the village can be isolated and cornered, and a firm foothold in dalit and landless classes can be established but a breakthrough, if not prior to the programme than after it, in winning over a good section of the small and middle Jatt peasantry to the side of democratic and revolutionary forces can also be made. The positive impact of the programme will certainly give a push to the democratic as well as democratic revolutionary movement, in the area, if not on a greater scale.

Later on, the initiative, activity and enthusiasm displayed by the activists convinced this correspondent that the confidence of the organiser was well-founded.

Basing on concrete assessment and analysis of the situation, a final nod was given to the activists to go in and boldly prepare for the programme. The local activists immediately swung into action and a process of consent taking and making was initiated. The harijan basti of Seewala, where the function was to be organised, became the initial battle-ground. A detailed report collected by this correspondent is summarised and presented here to give a step by step account of the development.

The first task before the local activists was to seek the consent of the villagers in general and the residents of harijan basti in particular for holding the martyrdom conference. As revealed to this correspondent, a secret meeting of 7-8 pro-party mass militants of the harijan basti was held. The party organiser encouraged the mass militants to express themselves freely and frankly. The local mass militants were bitterly critical of the inadequate security arrangement at the earlier gathering which led to the heinous massacre. They felt humiliated. On the other hand, an intense hatred for the Khalistani terrorists and a strong urge to wash away this humiliation were vividly evident. A self-critical appraisal of the earlier inadequate security arrangements and other deficiencies made by the organiser on behalf of the organisation softened them immediately and they listened him intently. The organiser shared with them the concrete assessment of the situation, the challenges and opportunities involved in this situation and the need to hold martyrdom conference at Seewala—right at the place of the massacre itself. He unequivocally assured them that all possible security arrangements will be made this time and to convince them he cited the experience of earlier such programmes at Jaito and Bhagtuana. He further assured them that all possible help will be extended to them for their defence after the programme. The mass militants, themselves longing for the programme, immediately agreed. Rather they

were very enthusiastic. A detailed investigation exercise was undertaken in this very meeting and potential allies and opponents of this programme in the village were listed. A concrete action plan was drawn to win over the maximum support, particularly of the harijan basti. Steps were enumerated to monitor and keep track of the movements of pro-Khalistani elements.

The investigation of the village revealed that Khalistani terror was still widely prevalent on both the landed peasantry as well as landless. A section of the Jatt peasant house holds was under the influence of pro-Khalistani group. Only a tiny section of landed peasantry had lean sympathies with the "Front" or revolutionary forces and even this section was not willing to openly identify with the programme. The rest of the peasant households were indifferent or neutral. As regards the harijans, though they nurtured intense hatred against terrorists, they, too, were not willing to take risk again. However, they had sympathies with the "Front" and revolutionary forces and could be won over with relative ease.

Employing a method of work consisting of achieving partial victories, consolidating position by utilising these partial victories, thus laying the basis for further victories and method of influencing one by the another, a plan of work of initially concentrating on the advanced elements of youth, then winning over the middle layer and finally taking over the backward was devised. This proved very fruitful. In a matter of few days, a major section of youth supported the programme and a number of them started actively working for the programme.

A further investigation revealed that harijan elders were reluctant and unco-operative because they betrayed a lack of confidence in the capacity of the programme-organisers in confronting the terrorists. They had not only heard about but themselves experienced formidable might of the terrorists during Sevewala massacre whereas the contending side had proved itself to be no match for the terrorists in military combat. Moreover, to them the programme seemed to be an impetuous act of a few local harijan

youth which was doomed to be a sure flop.

A two-pronged plan was devised to win over this reluctant yet sympathetic layer. On the one hand, a series of family meetings were contemplated to allay their fears and misgivings and win them over through argumentation and persuasion. On the other hand, security plan was discussed with them in detail. Some weapons were actually displayed in the harijan basti. It clicked.

The form of family meetings was chosen keeping in view the prevailing specific situation. This was suitable for them to express themselves in a free and frank manner. Moreover, more enthusiastic and prepared members of the family could contribute in a more positive way in influencing and preparing the hesitant ones. Moreover, it was a means of establishing closer rapport and promoting mutual confidence. To begin with, those families were chosen for meetings, where for various reasons, it was rather easy to win them over. Their support was cited for further winning over newer families.

In these family-meetings, all members of the family, including children and women, participated. Initially, male members exhibited some reluctance over the participation of women and children, but a little persuasion made them yield. In these meetings, a process of informal discussions was adopted. By dwelling in details on the prevailing situation, the inevitable need to change it, the relative strength, limitations and weaknesses of the two confronting camps of the people vs enemies, it used to be shown, giving concrete examples, how the enemies can be confronted successfully. To allay their fears and misgivings, security plan, state of the weapons and volunteers and the strength of forces supporting their cause all over Punjab were discussed in detail. Their class hatred, and the social humiliation they had to undergo were all sharpened. It was impressed upon them how the success of the programme will help relieve them of the domination and error of the hawkish rich landowners and pro-Khalistani sections, how it will help smoothen the forward motion of their class struggle and give a boost to their unity and organisation,

During these meetings each participant was, there and then, individually assessed and a specific and concrete duty was assigned to him. Whereas male members were given duties directly connected with the preparation and execution of the programme, the women and children were assigned the task of obtaining information about the suspected activities in marked enemy houses, of feeding the external volunteers and act as courier. It inculcated a sense of responsibility and identification with the programme.

The outcome of these family-meetings was beyond expectations. In less than two weeks, the entire harijan basti, barring a few families having ties with pro-Khalistani elements, was enthusiastically supporting the programme. But it was just initial sympathy and support which had to undergo many tests and trials before transforming into an active and lasting support. And the first test came too soon. A self-styled leader of the harijan basti—a known and discredited hireling of the village Sarpanch and pro-Khalistani elements, came in open opposition to the programme. He boasted that he will settle the issue with lathies if the organisers of the programme did not relent. But soon, sensing the aggressive mood of the harijan youth, he changee his tune, "I will lead a deputation to the D.C for stalling the programme charging it with vitiating the atmosphere of the village". A section of the enraged youth was eager to give him a sound thrashing. An overzealous youth pleaded: "allow me and he shall be set right by the evening". The leadership observed restraint and impressed upon the angry youth that that was not the proper way of handling contradictions among the people. A section of the harijan elders reneged under his threats of seeking the intervention of district authorities and began yascillating.

The leadership took immediate steps to counter this move. Those families were immediately approached and set right which were liable to be effected by his propaganda. None, not even his family members, supported him. He was in miserable isolation. Suspecting it to be move of his pro-Khalistani mentors and the

need of instilling confidence in weak-hearted sections of the harijan basti, a 35-strong mass deputation, comprising mostly of the members of martyrs families, was sent for seeking official permission for the programme. With permission for the programme having been granted, the atmosphere again changed for the better. The self-styled leader had to cut a sorry figure and retreated into silence.

Pro-Khalistani Elements Gear Up Opposition

With public announcement of the programme, the pro-Khalistani groups in the landed Jatt peasantry, geared up its forces and took to hectic activity. These elements were worried on many counts. The success of the proposed programme will put an end to their terror and deminance and will lead to curtailment of their nefarious anti-social activities. They feared that they will be publically indicted from the stage as culprits responsible for co-operating in the enactment of ghastly Sevewala massacre. This will put their very lives in danger. So in a desperate bid to prevent the holding of the programme, they unleashed a two-pronged attack. On the one hand, terror tactics were employed to instill terror in the minds of the villagers. A campaign of deliberate lies, veiled threats and rumours was systematically stepped up: "Militants have issued a press statement reiterating their firm resolve to strike at Sevewala conference." Yet another rumour peddled was: Some militants roaming in the area were enquiring when was the programme going to be held. They were quoted as having said that last time only 18 were killed, this time the toll will be in hundreds. Even the police card was tried. The SHO was quoted as having said: "Don't worry, I will round up all the boys before the programme and thrash them up. I will see who dares hold the programme". On the other hand, conscious attempts were made to incite class hatred and caste-chauvinism against the dalits. "The heads of these harijans have turned. Earlier, they got killed 18 people, Now, they are out to get the remaining killed." "Today, they are talking of holding the programme. Tomorrow, they will demand Rs. 70 instead of 40

as daily wage." The landed peasantry was further incited, "A churah (derogatory word for a low caste harijan) with even a stick in hand behaves uppishly. Now they have guns in their hands. They will snatch your lands." A move was initiated to get the permission for the programme rescinded by sending a deputation of the village panchayat to the district authorities but had to be discarded for want of leadership and dithering by the panchayat. Nonetheless, with this one-sided poisonous propaganda, the passions were inflamed and the prejudices of Jatt landed peasantry got further hardened.

With the mass support of the harijans assured, the organisers of the programme planned to concentrate on the Jatt peasantry. Keeping in view the disadvantageous factor of non-existent links in the landed peasantry and lack of effective peasant mass leader, it was planned to issue written propaganda material to counter the rumours and misgivings wilfully spread among the peasants. Secondly, the enemies consciously kept belittling the strength of the democratic revolutionary forces by misinforming the peasants that only a handful of harijan youth of Sevewala and Bhagtuana are making mischief. None else is going to come. The local prejudices and Jatt-chauvinism of the peasants insulated them from paying any heed to what these local activists said or pleaded. To cut into these prejudices, a demonstration of force, drawn from non-harijan sections of the area, was planned. As per envisaged, a contingent of 40-60 upper caste youth of the area, was to be sent among the peasants for postering and pamphleteering.

Unfortunately, the proposed plan failed to materialise. When a group of 15 local harijan youth went for postering, the incited and infuriated elements among the Jatt peasantry misbehaved with them and tore down the posters and pamphlets. The youth kept cool and thus foiled the conspiracy of pro-Khalistani group and class and caste-chauvinist elements of a clash between the Jatt peasant and harijans and thus succeeded in diverting the attention and in sabotaging the programme. Notwithstanding all this, the pamphlet was widely read and discussed in the village.

This incident evoked a sharp reaction in the harijan basti. Two diametrically opposite tendencies came to the fore. On the one hand, a defeatist tendency reared up its head. The aggressive and provocative behaviour of some landowners disheartened a section of the harijans, particularly elderly people among them. They began dithering and advocated the postponement of the programme on the pretext of vehement opposition by the 'entire' village. These elements overestimated the opposition to the programme and ignored or underestimated the positive impact that the success of the programme will make, in softening the landed peasant sections. On the other hand, a section of the angry and impetuous youth grew impatient and advocated to go it alone. "If the Jatt peasantry don't support, let them not, Leave them what they are," they exclaimed. This youthful section belittled the importance of the Jatt peasantry without the broad support of which pro-Khalistani and other die-hard enemy sections can never be isolated and Jatt chauvinism be defeated.

As only less than a week's time was left in the programme, and keeping in view the belligerent mood of some sections, the task of winning over the Jatt peasantry was postponed till after the programme. Now all efforts were to be concentrated on mobilisation of the harijan basti. A strike, if not a full-fledged attack, by the terrorists to disrupt the programme could not be ruled out. So, the tight security plan, which was originally scheduled to come into force two days prior to the programme, was immediately put into operation.

Mobilisation Campaign Picks Up

The entire harijan basti was undergoing quite commotion as hectic and wide-ranging political activity and mobilisation campaign overtook the basti. A chain of family meetings, mass meetings, individual contacts and street marches etc. was on. To realise full mobilisation and wipe out last traces of terror, the women of the basti were drawn in. A group of women activists from the area was called in Sevewala. These enthusiastic women activists covered the entire basti like a hurricane. Each and every

women of the basti was approached and a good number of them were actually drawn in the mobilisation efforts. Not contented, these overzealous activists made forays even into Jatt peasant homes, hotly argued with their women folk and put them on defensive. A good number of girls and women of the basti took keen interest in security matters. By April 2, a day prior to the programme, the mobilisation of the harijan basti was almost complete and unprecedented. The programme, in real sense, became a festival of the masses as far as the harijan basti of Sevewala was concerned.

State-Wide Preparations

The state committee of the CCRI, it was learnt, in an internal letter issued to its ranks to pay homage to Sevewala martyrs, reminded the ranks that these martyrs laid down their lives fighting against the twin menace of reactionary terrorism which fight is an inseparable part of the broad democratic revolutionary movement. A number of these martyrs were communist fighters dedicated to the cause of emancipation of the people of India. It called upon them to pay a fighting homage to these martyrs by inculcating their revolutionary virtues and holding aloft the banner of struggle against enemies of the people. It set the tune for communist revolutionary ranks engaged in mobilisation for the Sevewala conference.

A mass meeting of activists, from different walks of social life, was arranged on March 21 to pay homage to the martyrs of Sevewala massacre and chalk out plans for wider preparations and mobilisation for the April 6 conference. More than 150 activists attended the meeting. Those who addressed the gathering included Sh. Mohinder Singh, father of martyr Jagpal Singh, com. Nachhatar Singh brother of martyr Karam Singh and two other comrades injured in the Sevewala firing. A 10 member preparation committee was elected which organised campaign in labour colonies, organised sections and localities of the city poor. As a result of this campaign more than 300 people from Bathinda city later participated in the programme.

A shaheedi conference was held in Rampura Phul on April 4, to pay homage to the Sevewala heroes and mobilise people for the Sevewala programme. More than 800 people participated. Progressive plays were staged by a drama team of Amritsar Natak Kala Kender. The families of two martyrs of Sevewala massacre belonging to this area were presented with mementoes connected with the Sevewala massacre. The local truck union offered three trucks free of cost for carrying people to Sevewala.

Reports of similar preparations also came from other parts of the state.

Elaborate Security Arrangements

Security was an issue of prime concern for the organisers of the programme and accordingly was accorded a top priority in the overall scheme of the programme. Though, deployment of adequate and proper weapons and of trained volunteers was given an important placing, yet the reliance rested on bringing into play the initiative, innovative skills and energies of the broad masses of people. The security became an actual concern as well as an active undertaking of the people. Gathering information about the moves, motives and movements of the enemies comprised an important part of the security plan. In fact, it was the most crucial aspect of the security network upon which everything else rested. The harijan masses of the basti, particularly women and children, were the backbone of this wing and performed this task with zeal and dedication.

To meet an eventuality, tight security arrangements both defensive as well as combative, were made. A large team of dedicated volunteers manned this defence structure. Apart from nearly two dozen youth of the basti directly associated with the security structure, a large number of basti dwellers played their part as couriers, vigilance keepers, spying on the enemy and getting information about it or in feeding the volunteers etc.

A day prior to the programme, the entire basti and the site of the programme was tightly sealed. Vigilance cum security posts, erected on the roofs of the exterior of the basti with sand

bags since about a week, were extended. Trained volunteers, assisted by locals, manned these defence installations. Barricades were erected in the lanes and by-lanes to regulate the entry and check the intrusion of any suspicious looking and alien elements. These barricades were provided cover by armed volunteers positioned on roof-tops. At night, the streets and neighbourhoods were lit by powerful search-lights. All security posts were connected by a special signal system. Any suspicious man or movement detected at one spot, could immediately be transmitted as a danger signal and the whole security set-up got alerted in no time. A network of couriers raced from one-spot to another exchanging news and information. All posts had its own commanders and an operational zone operating under a unifying higher command.

On the day of the programme, entry was strictly by identity passes issued by the security committee. The volunteers foiled the attempts of plain clothes or uniformed policemen to sneak into the programme. Vehicles were parked in a security zone after thorough checking. The police and paramilitary forces, on their own, laid an external ring.

Commenting on the security arrangements, an elderly man was heard saying, "the terrorists can only come by helicopters". A supporter of the revolutionary movement living abroad commented, "It may be much easier to cross the border of a country than enter the programme".

6th April, the day of martyrdom conference approached. The harijan Dharmshala (Chaupal or a community hall), the site of the gory massacre and now a venue for the conference, freshly white-washed and decorated with red flags, banners and buntings, presented a beautiful look. Huge slogans like "what if 18 were snatched, thousands more are there to take their place", "Rely on your own to protect yourselves, rather than looking upto the governments", "If you want to live, learn to struggle and die"; "Down with Khalistan and state terrorism", "Long live the martyrs of Sevewala" etc. were painted in red on

the boundry walls as well as on the Dharmshala building. The spacious compound of the Dharmshala covered with canopies and carpets spread on the ground, served as an open conference hall. The ground, on all spots where valiant heroes of Sevewala had laid down their lives, was marked by a bed of red sand and red flags. Amidst flower petals, name plates of the martyred caromdes were placed. A community kitchen served cooked and packed sweet rice to the participants. The enthusiastic activists of neighbouring Goniara area not only volunteered to undertake all kitchen duties but also bore all the expenses of the kitchen.

Nearly 50 youth of the harijan basti, on full-day duty, were on their toes performing various duties. Nearly 15 of them had been performing whole-time duties for the past 10 days or so. Nearly 15 children aged between 8 and 15, serving as couriers, were racing to and fro taking and bringing messages. Women of the basti had been regularly feeding nearly 30 activists and volunteers who had come to lend a helping hand in preparations or security. The entire harijan basti, particularly the women and children, brought valuable information of the enemy camp as they visited their houses for daily chores. The basti was in full mobilisation. Moreover, more than 100 youths, as disciplined soldiers, volunteered to take different assignments, missing the conference proceedings.

From the home village of martyrdom Com. Megh Raj Bhagtuana a contingent of 70 men, women and children supporting red flags and escorted by girl volunteers sporting guns reached Sevewala. The women participants of Bhagtuana and Sevewala, numbering more than 150, staged an impressive march, with red flags and guns in hands, through the harijan basti raising sky-renting slogans before entering the pandal. The Khalistani terrorists, by spraying bullets on the people of these two villages at Sevewala, had intended to make these people beg for their lives. Contrary to it, these people in much bigger numbers, were challenging and deriding at Khatistani butchers.

By 12 O'clock, the entire compound was full to the brim with

participants. More than 3000 people had already arrived. A notable feature of the gathering was its class composition. More than two-thirds of the gathering was from amongst the agricultural labourers, industrial labourers, electricity workers and other toiling sections, pointing to the social base of democratic and revolutionary movement. More than 300 women also participated in the programme.

At 12.30, Japal Jassi, the secretary of the stage took the stage for formally starting the proceedings. He requested the family members of martyrs to come onto the stage. They took their places on the stage amidst slogan-raising by the entire participants. Apart from Com. Amolak Singh, state convener of the "Front" as well as of Shaheedi Yadgar Committee organising this conference, Sh. Mohinder Singh, father of martyr Jagpal Singh, Harjinder Singh a state committee member of the "Front". Bibi Suman, a woman activist and a witness to the massacre, a spokesman of the Inqilabi Ekta Kendra, addressed the gathering. A cultural troupe of Napali Ekta Sanaj, Sangcet Mandli Bhadour, folk singers of Chhajli troupe, and many giri singers including the daughter of Shaheed Megh Raj, paid their homage through songs and poems.

Com. Amolak Singh, in his 35 minute—duration well-worded and impressive speech, exhorted the people to rise against the menace of state-terrorism and Khalistani terrorism. He also cautioned the people about the nefarious activities of communal forces bent upon engineering communal riots. With convincing arguments, he exposed the hollowness of the Khalistani misinformation and slander campaign aimed at poisoning the Jatt peasantry against the "Front" and revolutionary forces. The stage-secretary sought the co-operation of the people for raising a befitting memorial in memory of the martyrs.

The atmosphere in the pandal became highly emotional and touching when the clock struck 2.05. It was the time when the killers had launched bloody assault at Seewala. The stage secretary, in an impressive and emotional brief speech, delineated

the significance of martyrdom of Seewala heroes and called upon the audience to observe one-minute silence in memory of slain comrades. A heavy silence prevailed. It seemed as if life had come to a grinding halt. The silence was broken by raising thousands of clinched fists and rent the sky with slogans. Tears rolled down the eyes of many participants. At exact 3 O'Clock, the programme was formally declared over. The participants, in a disciplined way, set on their return journey to home.

As regards participation, discipline, security, enthusiasm as well as speeches, in all respects, the programme was a great success for the participants. They were returning home with unbounded enthusiasm and raised hopes. A comment by a participant represented their views, "Out of innumerable programmes I have attended till today, the programme held at Doraha last year was the most impressive and successful. Now Seewala has excelled and outdone all."

The harijan basti of Seewala was agog with joy. They felt as if they had won a big battle. Their self-respect and self-confidence knew no bounds. They held their heads high in self-esteem.

The most self-assuring and encouraging thing for the revolutionary activists and front workers, engaged in the preparations and mobilisation at Seewala, was their achievement in turning a most unfavourable situation into a revolutionary and favourable situation. It was the result of implementing mass revolutionary line in a very adroit and sagacious manner. Children, elders, men, women, the entire population of the harijan basti was thoroughly stirred. Everybody identified with the programme, participated and contributed his worth in his own way.

A major political achievement of this stirring experience was that for those who closely watched the development at Seewala, it settled the question of mass revolutionary line vs. squad action controversy. The Seewala experience reaffirmed their faith in mass revolutionary line. A supporter of squad actions and follower of "Lal Tara" monthly, was unequivocal in admitting,

"what we have achieved in Seewala, could have never been achieved by a squad action." Another carswile student leader and now a practising lawyer commented: "This experience has affirmed my unshakable confidence in mass revolutionary line and peoples' power. Squad action is too insignificant to be comparable to it." A student group, which volunteered for security duties, summed up their joint experience, "We came to realise the formidable force of mobilised people and mass revolutionary line. This valuable experience has strengthened our conviction in mass line."

The enemy camp, never expecting such an impressive show, was dumb-founded. The ordinary peasants were highly impressed by the number of participants as well as armed volunteers. One of them lamented, "If even one-tenth part of these weapons had been deployed then, the tragedy would have been avoided." The anti-labour rich landowners were shaken to the core fearing the inevitable demand for higher wages by the harijan labour in view of their enhanced unity and organisation.

So far as specific political gains are concerned, a significant head-way was made. The party succeeded in establishing a general support base in the harijan basti. Many a promising youth are drawn on to the track of class-political consciousness. A regular village volunteer force is in the offing.

Part II

The Struggle Goes On

A very brief and sketchy portrayal of the post-programme developments at Seewala is given here.

With the successful completion of the martyrdom programme, wheat-harvesting operations began in full swing. The entire harijan basti got busy in these harvesting operations. Only few volunteers remained for security during day time. Nearly two dozen volunteers, tired from day-long labour, continuously volunteered for security and vigilance duties in three-hour shifts each night. The security guards remained in their posts throughout the night. This security system operates to this day.

The post-programme period can be divided into three phases depending upon the different tasks handled in them.

A. Efforts To Win Over The Jatt Peasantry :

The task of winning over the ordinary Jatt peasants which was left incomplete before the programme, was again taken up. Under the encouraging impact of successful programme, the misled and infuriated ordinary Jatt peasants had mollified to a great extent. And soon there was an opportunity to reduce the mistrust and gap between the two communities. The bhog ceremony of a Seewala martyr was being observed by his family members belonging to the Jatt community on 9th April. They publically invited village people through the village loud-speaker. This opportunity was immediately seized. A contingent of 40 men and women from the harijan basti of Seewala and neighbouring village Bhagtuana attended the Bhog ceremony and offered flowers before the photo of martyr Harpal Sing. The family of martyr behaved very well and was pleased.

A written appeal by the Front was issued to the ordinary Jatt peasants calling upon them not to be misled by mischief-mongers and selfish elements bent upon driving a wedge between the two toiling classes of landed peasants and agricultural labour. The aims and objectives of the Front were projected. The need for a joint struggle against enhanced police repression and other anti-social elements was stressed. This appeal was distributed by front activists and widely discussed with peasant groups. Some peasants supported the appeal. Individual meetings were held with those peasants who had positively responded to the appeal. As peasants were busy with harvesting of wheat, a mass contact campaign was not possible. An attempt was made to mobilise the martyrs' families and sober elements among the Jatt peasantry, but it did not make much head-way.

B. Enhanced Danger :

As contact campaign with the Jatt peasants was on, reports about the movements of suspected terrorists in the village began to pour in. A few such suspected elements were even located. This

posed a grave danger to the security of activists. The campaign was called off. Security was tightened and more weapons and volunteers were inducted.

The Front had exhorted its supporters to contribute one day's labour in donation. Despite heavy odds, the call derived an encouraging response. As many as 35 men and women opted for harvesting in response to Front's labour donation call. Others promised to donate a day's labour some other day. As the harvesting was on, a batch of suspected men was located. Some more suspicious elements were tracked. A grave danger existed as large number of front-supporters were harvesting in the open fields. Armed guards were posted all around the harvesting supporters. The supporters, un baffled, kept singing revolutionary songs and raising slogans. It was a festive harvesting. The day passed off without any incident.

On May 5, many suspicious-looking men were seen hidden in the sunflower fields. A red alert was issued. At night, movement of some suspicious elements near the harijan basti alarmed the volunteers. An attack seemed to be a real possibility. To thwart it, pre-emptory firing was resorted to by the volunteers. After a gap of one hour, firing in the air was again resorted to by the volunteers to thwart any regrouping on the part of suspected elements.

The response of the landed peasantry and harijan landless to the firing was dimetrically opposite. The labouring and landless harijans felt re-assured and ever more confident of repulsing any attack on them by their enemies. They, one and all, including women, hotly argued and asserted their right to use weapons in case of grave danger to their lives and justified the firing on their part. The landed peasantry, on the other hand, grew panicky and took it as a provocation on the part of the harijans. The pro-Khalistani and rich landowner sections were most infuriated and vocal. They felt humiliated and insulted and launched a vehement slander campaign to incite passions. A futile effort to get the weapons confiscated was also taken up and even the police

was approached. The situation became tense and the enemies succeeded in widening the gulf between the two toiling classes again.

C, Attempts at Reconciliation :

As tension prevailed, a democrat lawyer and a supporter of the "Front" from Moga, on his own, came to the village on a peace mission with the explicit objective of easing tension and removing mistrust and misgivings between the ordinary Jatt peasants and labouring harijans while isolating the few culprits. The objective was laudable. He launched one-man satyagraha to put moral pressure on the Jatt peasants to make up with the harijans and refused to eat till the objective was achieved. Though, the front and revolutionary forces differed with him on the method and form of struggle, yet they extended full support to him. During a week-long course of his stay in the village, he was able to garner wide support for his mission. A reconciliatory move was initiated.

A leaflet was published by the "Front" in the form of an open letter explaining and justifying the firing while regretting the inconvenience that the village folk might have experienced after the sudden firing. It was pointed out in the leaflet that suspected terrorists are still being harboured in the village by some families. They pose a grave danger to the security of the village in general and harijan basti in particular. These families, sheltering suspicious elements, are the real culprits for causing tension and mistrust. Unless these families stop sheltering such elements, peace and security of the village will remain in jeopardy.

It was further pointed out in the leaflet that so far, the "Front" has desisted from publically naming such families as it would be misconstrued as co-operation with the police which the "Front" takes as "politically suicidal" and contradictory with its too well-known approach of relying on the people. Yet, if the people so demand, it is ready to divulge the names of such people and details of sheltering such elements in the assembly of people. The "Front" demanded that these indicted families be made to assure the village people that in future they will not shelter or co-operate with suspected elements and if found violating, will be punished

and black-listed by the people. The "Front" will reciprocate by lowering down or even removing all irksome and seemingly provocative defence installations. The "Front" assured the people that it will continue to work for easing tension and building unity, solidarity and mutual co-operation among all the people of the village.

The leaflet proved a bolt from the blue for the enemies. They got panic-stricken. But they vainly tried to assume bold face. Cracks in the enemy camp were coming to the fore. One such family apologised and assured to the panchayat in the presence of the front supporters that it will never harbour or co-operate with the suspected elements.

The reconciliation attempts were on. A conciliation committee came up. On its insistence, the "front" named some of the most aggressive harbourers. Barring one unrepentent person, the others assured the assembly of village people that they will not shelter or co-operate with any suspected elements. They pleaded that if any doubt or misgiving arises, they should be given chance to explain and redress it. They even impressed upon the Front to remain vigilant and ever-prepared including keeping intact the present defense structures.

The situation has eased enormously, yet, the "Front" has miles to go before its cherished objectives are fulfilled. The struggle goes on.

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Struggle For Land And Against Police Repression

—A Correspondent

Balahar Vinjhu is a small village near Goniana town of district Bathinda. There are 18 acres of Govt. land in the village that had always been leased to the agricultural labourers of the village on annual contract. But this time the govt. had decided to sell such lands through open auction. This decision of the govt. generated an intense resentment among the entire Harijan community of the village and they resolved to resist this nefarious

move of the govt. But there was no organisation of the agricultural labourers in the village. So, they approached the leaders of the Pendu Majdoor Union (which is now working in the name of Punjab Khet Majdoor Union) and local leaders of the electricity workers.

Initiation Of The Struggle

With this started a series of meetings, rallies, and demonstrations along with writing of slogans in the village. Funds were raised and a committee was elected for the ensuing struggle. An appeal urging upon the authorities for leasing the concerned land only to the agricultural labourers, was got signed by the whole of harijan community, large sections of the jatt peasantry and by the village panchayat as well. A deputation consisting of 70-80 men and women, under the leadership of the Union, met the district commissioner and handed over this appeal to him.

Though the auction slated for 27th of May was postponed, the Union decided to intensify the struggle so that the authorities may be further pressurised to concede the demand. A leaflet was published and efforts were made for stepping up the mobilisation within the village and for listing the support of agricultural labourers and other justice-loving people in the entire area. And at the peak of this mobilisation campaign, a deputation consisting of 250-300 men, women and children, under the leadership of the Union, met several authorities at the district headquarters including the concerned tehsildar (revenue officer), who got enraged on seeing so huge a number of the deputationists and tried to bully them : "Why have you come in so great numbers ? Why the women and children are brought ? Do you want to threaten us" ? And on noticing no effect of his bullying, he changed his tone : "We are bound by the govt. orders. We will have to do what the govt. wants. Approach the high ups." Deputationists resented his behaviour, held a rally and raised militant slogans at his gate and came back with a resolve to further step up mobilisation.

Initial Victory

On July 8, the tehsildar came to the village for auction, but

could not hold it, sensing the mood of the agricultural labourers and the support to their demand on the part of a large section of the peasantry, under the impact of which even those who have come for bidding also said that the land should be given to the agricultural labourers. So, the tehsildar had to declare that the land will be sold to agricultural labourer on the next date for auction (July 26), if they were prepared to buy it at the lowest official bidding (40 thousands per acre) and pay one fourth of sum on the spot. The agricultural labourers responded to the offer positively and arranged the required money by selling their house hold belongings such as grains, animals and ornaments etc.

Congress Leaders Irked

The congress leaders of the area viewed this decision of the tehsildar as a threat to their social dominance and vote bank in the village, as their local workers among the agricultural labourers were active in the struggle and were getting influenced by the Union, and the leadership of the union was getting established among the agricultural labourers of the area, that posed a potential danger to their base and vote bank among them in the entire area. So, they approached their bosses in the capital and urged upon them to give the land to the labourers through the agency of the congress party, if at all it was to be given to them. The bosses, in turn, pulled up the district authorities, who themselves did not want the militant union of the agricultural labourers to get itself established in the area. The new approach of the rulers and the authorities was quite evident from the attitude of the district commissioner on July 26, when he told the deputation of the agricultural labourers: "Land will be sold only through open auction; We have made no promise, if the tehsildar had made any, I will punish him. Approach the MLAs and Ministers, if you really want land".

New Phase Of Struggle

This changed attitude of the authorities further increased the resentment among the agricultural labourers, who met, in the evening, in a meeting of the entire harijan community under the

leadership of the Union and resolved to fight to the finish for the piece of concerned land. As a result, the whole of community went to the fields and hoisted the flag of the Union there. Arrangements for the protection of the flag were made, while the preparations for a long drawn struggle were stepped up throughout the area. Sensing the possibility of police attack, the mobilisation of women was specially stressed.

After some days, some of the agricultural labourers started, at their own, the Paath (reciting from religious scriptures) there, while some others, instigated by the BSP workers, installed the statue of Balmik in the fields. Tempted by the tempo of the struggle, parliamentary political parties also started interfering for getting their foot-hold among them. At this, the leadership of the union explained to the agricultural labourers as to how such attempts (Paath and statue etc.) can give a handle to opportunist political forces to divide and divert their struggle. The labourers got convinced and resolved not to allow such attempts or parliamentary parties to interfere with their struggle in future.

On the other hand the authorities took to the repressive measures at this stage. In this context, August 4, the day of Bhog (consumation) ceremony of the Paath became point of tension between the leaders of the union and the authorities. While the former have decided to convert this ceremony into a huge public conference and have started energetic preparations for it throughout the area, the latter had decided to foil this attempt and had adopted two pronged strategy—first, by arresting the leaders and activists of the Union to disrupt their preparations for the conference and secondly by not allowing the assembly to be held at any cost.

Consequently, 70-80 men from the CRP were posted at the site of the Paath, while the movement of the police to the fields was increased with the intention to arrest union activists. But the agricultural labourers were equally vigilant. They would rush to the fields in great numbers, whenever the police happened

to be there. It happened thrice in a few days time. One day, the police went to the fields and arrested one of the electricity workers present there. 60-70 women of the labouring community instantly rushed to the fields and gheraoed the police jeep. The police threatened to open fire but the women did not budge. Thus, a clash with the police became imminent, which the leaders of the union present there wanted to avoid at this stage, as they knew that the police, in the given situation in Punjab, have been given so wide powers and a free hand in dealing with situations that they can go to any length in suppressing the people and the fledgling Union was not yet in a position to withstand such a severe blow at this stage. So, they asked the women to let them go and gather at the police station with further mobilisation of the people.

As a result, 250 people assembled at the gate of the police station, gheraoed the P.S. and raised militant slogans demanding the release of the arrested worker. The police was adamant, while the people were equally determined. So, a very serious tension prevailed there for 2 to 3 hours. But, ultimately, the police had to yield before the pressure of the enraged people, and release the worker unconditionally. The incident boosted the morale of the agricultural labourers, who held a victory rally in the village at night.

As a part of its attempts not to allow the Union to hold a public conference at the fields on August 4, the police raided, on August 2, the houses of many activists of the Union and electricity workers and succeeded in arresting five electricity workers. At this, a large number of people went to the concerned police station and demanded their release. But as the workers had been sent to Bathinda, the district headquarters and the authorities assured to release them on the next day, the people gathered there held a demonstration in the town to register their resentment and came back.

On the night of August 3, a day before the date of the

public conference, the authorities rushed 400-500 security men (Police, CRP and homeguards) to the village. The village was totally sealed, all buses and trains leading to the village were searched. So, nobody was allowed to go to the fields. The Police itself arranged for a priest and the consummation ceremony of the paath. The leadership had pre-judged that the authorities won't allow the conference at the fields, so they had made alternative arrangements for holding the gathering in the village itself which they successfully did.

The next day, 225 people, under the leadership of the Union, went to Bathinda, where the arrested electricity workers were kept, and got them released unconditionally by pressurising the district authorities.

Exposure Through Experience

August 13 was the next date for auction. So, the Union started energetic preparations for it and as a final step of these preparations, decided to organise a militant demonstration at the district head-quarters at Bathinda. On the other hand, the local congress leaders stepped up their propaganda, which they had been making from the very beginning of the struggle to save their vote bank among the agricultural labourers, that the govt. was willing to sell land to the labourers but the Union leaders were instigating the labourers against the govt. and thus harming their cause. They started spreading the canard that Gulzar Singh, the congress minister belonging to the area had assured them that the August 13 auction would be cancelled and land distributed among the labourers provided they cancel the demonstration to be held at Bathinda on August 12. The congress leaders were of the firm opinion that the agricultural labourers would not cancel the demonstration, as they have never listened to their 'advice' to desist from rallies and demonstrations 'instigated' by the 'outsiders' on so many occasions. Thus, they will be able to blame the union for 'spoiling' the cause of the labourers. The union leadership saw through the trick and decided to make the labourers see through it through their own experience. They explained to

the workers, what these leaders were upto and asked them to accept their offer. So a public meeting of the labouring community was called, that decided that if Gulzar Singh can ensure the distribution of land to the labourers, they are prepared to cancel the said demonstration. This decision put the cong. leaders in a tight corner, and it was due only to the indefinite strike of the PCS officers in Punjab that the auction was cancelled and the Cong. leaders were temporarily saved from complete exposure.

Struggle Against Police Highhandedness

With the arrest of Tarsen, the most prominent leader of the Balahar Vinjhu struggle, this struggle for land entered the phase of fight against police repression. Tarsen, who had become an eyesore of the police because of his prominent role in the Balahar Vinjhu struggle and specially during the successful attempts at getting the arrested workers released, thrice, under mass pressure, was arrested when he reached the P.S. leading a deputation of the nearby village of Mehma Serza, who were being harassed by the police on the pretext of investigating a murder case.

As the news of Tarsen's arrest reached Balahar Vinjhu, 150-200 people gathered at the gate of the P.S. within an hour or so. The S.H.O. did not come out to face the people, so they held a rally and demonstration in the town. Tarsen was severely beaten by the police and they inflicted deep injuries on his thighs. They pressurised him to leave the area, but he scornfully refused to do so.

Next day, a deputation of agricultural labourers and employees met the district authorities, who asked the S.H.O. to free all men arrested from Mehma Serza and stop repression on Tarsen. The police was prepared to release Tarsen also, but on the condition that no legal or mass action was taken against the police. But this offer was scornfully declined. On August 28, it was known that the concerned D.S.P. has come to the P.S. Women of Balahar Vinjhu rushed to the P.S. and within an hour or so a large gathering assembled there and started sit in

demonstration, which was lifted only at the firm assurance of the D.S.P. that Tarsen will definitely be released on 29th of August. But, nothing happened on that day also.

So, the Union decided to organise a militant demonstration at Bathinda on Septt. 2. The police, in fact, was not prepared to release him, until his injuries were healed. But it was becoming difficult to keep him in custody for much longer. So, they implicated him in a false case and sent him to Bathinda Jail, and on the other hand obtained a false certificate from the civil hospital that he was arrested in an injured state. In this changed condition the Union decided to cancel the August 2 demonstration (to save the labourers from further economic burden) and decided instead to turn the Septt. 11 demonstration (that was to be held on the eve of the first joint convention of the P.M.U and Dehati Majdoor Union after their merger into a single organisation—The Punjab Khet Majdoor Union) into a demonstration against police repression.

The hectic movement of the police in the area before the Septt. 11 demonstration and refusal by the district authorities to grant permission for the joint convention of the labour unions on the same date indicated that police may use force to disrupt the demonstration and the convention. So, the Union had decided to hold both of them secretly.

On August 11, it started raining early in the morning and continued the whole day long. But neither this incessant rain nor the apprehension of police action could dampen the enthusiasm of the demonstrators. 500 of the them (including 70-80 women) assembled at Teachers Home Bathinda in a rally and later held a demonstration despite heavy rain and a knee-deep water on the roads. What is more, all this was done in so secret a manner that the police did not come to know of it, until the demonstration had reached the district courts, where a memorandum against police repression was given to the district grievances officer.

Later in the evening first joint meeting of the PMU and

DMU was secretly held at Balahar Vinjhu, in which 150 delegates and a large number of observers took part. It goes to the credit of the newly organised agricultural labourers of Balahar Vinjhu that they successfully arranged for such a huge gathering at the notice of less than twelve hours.

Though the agricultural labourers of Balahar Vinjhu are yet to get the land they were fighting for. But this struggle had transformed whole of their lives. 3-4 months ago, they were totally unorganised people—as submissive and helpless, as the unorganised people everywhere happen to be. But now they are an organised, conscious and self-respecting people. What a sense of relief and self-pride they have felt in shedding the police terror during this struggle and what worth they have found in organised living finds concentrated expression in the following representative statements of the two among them : “So small a village has kept the police of the whole district on the toes for months, that is not a small achievement !” and “We may or may not get land, but we will never leave the organisation.” !!

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Malkangiri Adivasi Sangh Holds Its Second Conference

In 1977 Malkangiri Adivasi Sangh was born as a result of long-going agitations by the tribals of the area against reservation of vast areas under the Forest Act and against the repression and exploitation by the forest, revenue and police officials. In this process the tribals established many villages in the reserved forest areas and were mass arrested. Thousands of tribals assembled at the police station of Balimela and declared formation of the Sangh and the new leadership sat with the subdivisional officials to negotiate. After this settlement, all the forest cases instituted against the agitating tribals in the process of establishing new villages and clearing new plots of land were dropped and an agreement was reached for no further clearance of forest land. The govt. also promised to survey properly, before declaring any area as reserved forest.

In 1982 February, the 1st conference of this Adivasi Sangh was organised. In between 1977-82, nothing much happened except some group meetings at panchayat level in 1980 and 81 by political functionaries. Though the conference was held in 1982, grass-root level village committees were not there. Nor were the proper democratic functioning which can create a number of activists from within the tribals. Even after the conference, after struggling on some genuine issue like “right of the tribal to defend himself from the man-eating tiger” and return of the bribes to the people collected by revenue officials”, it fell into the trap of election politics in 1985. The whole organisation was steered towards election campaigning and after the election a wide-spread demoralisation paralysed the organisation.

Since 1988 when fresh attempts to build a mass-based democratic tribal organisation was made, people's first reaction was one of scepticism. But later on, through numerous mass meetings at village and panchayat levels and executive meetings at the subdivision level and struggles on land issue at two areas, the people started feeling confident and started participating in the Sangh activities. Its activities were mainly (i) mobilisation of the people into the organisation (ii) collecting data on repression and exploitation by the govt. officials and waging struggle on that issue, (iii) democratic functioning of the organisation as against sporadic or autocratic functioning.

In this process membership mobilisation, campaigning in new belts and consolidating in the old areas, surveys and investigations into various accusations and reports brought by the people against govt. officials and traders and sahuikars, health hazards and other natural calamities like drought, scarcity of drinking water and Baghis were taken up on a continuous basis. Again and again leaflets were brought and charters of demands were prepared, rallies were organised, talks with govt. officials were conducted, workers union of the Balimela project was mobilised to support the tribals in time of need and united rallies were conducted on May Day. Apart from this, to meet the health hazards, medical

training camps were arranged, and for primary political education of tribals, general classes were taken on history, geography and science. All this created a good impact on the overall atmosphere congenial to the expansion and consolidation of the Adivasi Sangh. People now sought the help of the Sangh and wanted it to be formed in their areas.

At this point, the conference was planned. By this time Malkangiri has been declared as district and the old Koraput district was bifurcated into four districts. Now, Malkangiri being the district headquarters with a collector in charge of it, the govt, started taking new policies for this sensitive district. The collector distributed a leaflet proclaiming ten-point development programme touching land, water, irrigation, education, women's and youth, officers' corruption—almost all issues (except of course the forest issue) and called for fighting for bringing a socialistic society!

Immediately the Malkangiri Adivasi Sangh replied this leaflet by analysing all the points and pointing out how futile and hypocritic all this programme is going to be.

This happened on the eve of the conference and our leaflet was reported by leading Oriya papers on front page stories. The collector officially invited us for talks. But we did not rush, waited till the end of the conference, and informed him that only the new executive would go to meet him in the process of submitting our charter of demands to him and have a discussion on it. Subsequently, the conference preparation was in full swing. Teams of Sangh activists went to different areas for conducting village-level and panchayat level meetings. All total there have been five big pockets and five teams were sent to these places. In Koya villages some youths prepared a cultural team for dance and songs, A fraternal team from Srikakulam Girijan Sangham reached four days before the conference to help the Sangh in its mobilisation.

In the meanwhile, our leaflets, conference programmes and handbills were widely distributed. Apart from that, a manifesto of the Sangh, a charter of demands and a constitution was finalised and the latter two were printed. December 17th and 18th were

the conference dates. Rice and donation from different villages started pouring in since 12th. All the important office-bearers of the Sangh were present two days earlier at the conference place to detail out the programmes and oversee the conference preparations. Worker and tribal comrades from Nuvrangpur, Jeypore and Guru Pur of old Koraput district came to work. Gunudhar Murmu, a tribal leader of West Bengal and Nirmala Krishnamurthy, the president of Srikakulam Girijan Sangham came as guest to the conference, apart from Oriya guests like Samrendra Nayak of Balasore, general Secretary Ganatantrik Adhikar Surakhsha Sangathan (GASS), and Dr. F.C. Hota of Rourkela, an organising secretary of GASS.

The conference place was named as "Sathi Purushottam Pali Mandal" after the name of comrade Purushottam Pali. He spent his last years of a long dedicated revolutionary life in organising the Malkangiri Adivasi Sangh. About 1200 delegates participated in the conference from about 400 villages. The two day long conference honoured an old communist worker from Chitrakonda as the inaugurator, discussed and accepted the new draft constitution, elected its new executive body according to that constitution, accepted the draft charter of demand and had a detailed discussion of the manifesto of the Adivasi Sangh and accepted it unanimously. In all this the participation of the tribals were very encouraging. For example, one old man was very agitated when the mention about the role of Kpt. district collector in recruiting labourers for Assam tea garden was made. He immediately started recollecting his memories of the past days when due to land alienation many tribals lost their land to the sahuakar and were compelled to go to Assam tea gardens as Assam Karia. When such people leave their village, their last rites are performed, since very few generally come back and if at all anybody comes back, birth rites are performed for him in a public ceremony. Throughout the discussion many old and young member delegates expressed their experience in corroborating the observation of the manifesto. Similarly there was more discussion on the issue of

the tribal's relation with the refugee Bengali Settlers.

Nirmala Krishnamurthy described the Srikakulam struggle experiences. He exposed the pseudo development schemes of the govt. and asked the people to be aware of it and never to leave the path of struggle. Com. Gunudhar Murmu welcomed the organised attempts of the tribals of Malkangiri to wage struggles and gave many suggestions on the charter of demands. He released the people's song book "Gana Bhagabata" published by the Sangh for this occasion. Samrendra Nayak described the historical experience of the uprising by Santhal and Munda revolutionary leaders like Sibū and Kanu and Birsa Munda. He also related the various positive and negative aspects of the Jharkhand movement and congratulated the tribals for their successful struggles. On 18th December a procession with red flags marched upto Tarlakota 'c' from the conference place and held a public meeting there. Gunudhar Murmu was the main speaker. He spoke about the Naxalbari peasant struggle and its experiences and related them to the Koraput context. He elaborated the manifesto points and asked the people to ward off any illusion about the development schemes of the govt., while utilising all the available opportunities and exposing the govt. on its own words. Com. N. Ahmed concluded the last session by announcing the names of the new executive members and the new struggle issues.

On the 1st day of the conference cultural programmes were held by Srikakulam team as well as the Koya team from Khandiyi padha. Srikakulam team's dance drama "Aluri Sitaramaya Raju" was most attractive. Language was not a barrier since the medium was Telgu and Koya. People's participation in the programme was tremendous. Only with one petromax light people braved the winter cold of Ghat areas till late in the night. The delegates held their delegate badge as a precious property and would wear it long after the conference.

Bharat Bandh Once A Year, Not Sufficient For Opposing The Industrial Policy Required Is, The Sustained Resistance

Friends,

Bharat Bandh On Coming Septt. 9

This bandh has been called for opposing the new economic and industrial policy of the government. This call has been given by the official leftists, trade union organisations of the National Front and many other mass organisations.

Two bandhs on the same demand had already been observed, one on Nov. 26, '91 and the other on June 16, '92. These bandhs should have been followed by sustained opposition, resistance and powerful struggles against the anti-people policies of Narsimha government. Not doing all this and instead repeating the call for Bharat Bandh means that the fight is being turned into a formality. On the other hand, we find that the policy, that was only on the paper in the year of 91, is being implemented directly or indirectly in several cases. Central Trade Unions cannot absolve themselves of their responsibility in this regard. But, despite all this, several demands of the proposed Bandh are the demands of the working class itself, so the working class cannot oppose this Bandh.

But, as the contingent of the Indian working class, we, on behalf of various militant Trade Unions working in West Bengal, want to make two points categorically clear to the working people.

Firstly : the organisers of the Bandh have made a mistake in embellishing the labour policy of the Central Government...by calling it a "new policy". We categorically say that this is not a new policy. The present policy is the continuation of the same industrial policy that was adopted after 1947, with the reliance on imperialism and big bourgeoisie. It is because of the crisis of the ruling class...This policy is more unambiguous and more aggressive as compared to the earlier policy.

Secondly, the people, who had given the call for today's

Bandh, all of them, especially the official leftists of West Bengal, themselves do implement this policy in their respective states, while putting up only verbal and sham opposition to the policy being implemented by the Central Government. It can be clearly seen, by casting a glance on the entire industrial scene in West Bengal, that closed and sick industrial units are writhing with death-pains on account of the lack of the governmental action. Trade union leadership of the official leftists do provide every sort of help, by way of making the working class surrender, for opening up the factories according to the wishes of the factory owners. Official exit policy is in operation on an extensive scale. The workers are being thrown into passivity by averting them from agitation with the scare of the closure of factories. Labour retrenchment has become the order of the day.

Non-residential Indians and multinational corporations and institutions are held, in this state, in high esteem. The institutions run by the state govt. are being handed over to the private owners. The constructive proposals or the agitations of the workers of the closed or sick factories do not get even an iota of help. This government does not take upon itself even the humanistic task of owning the social responsibility of providing subsistence to the workers of the closed and sick factories. Even the owners involved in such serious crimes as the misappropriation of the deposits of provident funds, are got scot free by the leftist leaders of trade unions from the courts of law. They feel no qualms in striking deals with the owners regarding the retrenchment of the workers. That is why the leaders organising the Bandh are totally unbelievable. All of their deeds till date, had been gratifying the owners. We want to tell the entire working class in a categorical manner that these people will never give a real fight against the industrial policy of the central government. This call for the Bandh has been given with the intention of mobilising mass support for strengthening their electoral politics by way of rehabilitating their lost credibility.

In such a situation, all of the working people must understand

that with the taking up of such programmes of some limited fight and such agitations as the observing of Bandhs once in a year, not even a step further can be taken in the direction of the interests of the workers fighting against the new industrial policy that is operative these days.

Thus, in order to attain necessary achievement in respect of industrial policy, a clear understanding of the present situation is a must, and what is more, the working class will have to intensify its sustained agitation by forging its own organisation.

Therefore, we want to stress it again, that they should propagate this view on an extensive scale that nothing can be achieved by remaining entangled into one day Bharat Bandhs. What is required is the sustained struggle in this regard.

Friends,

We have suffered many a blow, have been cheated time and again, and retracing our steps we have reached the position of our back to the wall. Undue fears and ignorance have made us weak. In order to get rid of these, we should have thorough discussion, prepare our charter of demands, and raise our voice through the medium of public meetings, gate meetings, processions, meetings etc in the factories. Working people should emphatically declare that they would confront any onslaught on them with path of struggle.

With militant greetings,

- * Indo-Japan Steel Employees Union.
- * Branagar Jute Mill Majdoor Samittee.
- * Bangal Ingot Supervisor Staff Union,
- * Sidhartha Apparel Workers Union.
- * Promod Steels Majdoor Union.
- * Sangrami Poddar Shramik.
- * Kanoria Jute Mill Sangrami Shramik Union.
- * Shree Hanuman Jute Mill Majdoor Sami tee.
- * Breathweight Workmens Solidarity Committee.
- * Hosiery Working Mens Union.
- * Ashoka Steel Corporation Bachao Committee
- * May Diwas Uddaypan Committee (Chandi tala, Behala)
- * Winston Engineering Workers Skramik Union.

Date . 29.8.93.

Cont.....from page 8

playing their games around secularism and communalism, the democratic and revolutionary forces will do well to think out the concrete problems and steps towards building up the political offensive against Hindu communal-fascism, as a part of combatting the overall economic-political attacks and stepped-up violence by the ruling classes. Since intimidation of common people and attacks on the opponents are salient features of the mode of operation of communal-fascism, the political offensive against it cannot be conceived without the attendant plan for organising people's self-defence on secular lines and democratic basis. The execution of such a plan is going to be quite a tough and complicated job, particularly in the urban areas but shirking it would amount to abandoning revolutionary responsibility and inviting political passivity and irrelevance in the face of overwhelming onslaughts of communal-fascism.

The growing process of degeneration and loss of prestige and credibility of the Indian state is paving the way for the advance of fascistic phenomena including the Hindu communal-fascism; it is doing so still more for the advance of Indian revolution. Let the revolution overtake the advance of fascistic reaction.

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struggle to be the normal state of becoming, for man and society, that is punctuated by moments of relative calmness. That ingrained consciousness of the essential mode of life went into shaping the immensely dynamic approach of Mao to all processes of life and making him a relentless fighter with rare ease of mind; for there was nothing unusual, special or contingent about being in struggle, as to him as swimming is to the fish.

*Now I am swimming across the great Yangtze,
Looking afar to the open sky of Chu,
Let the wind blow and waves beat,
Better far than idly strolling in a courtyard.
Today I am at ease.*

With profound historical insight and rewarding experience of close association with the masses in their life, work and revolutionary upheavals, Mao had immense faith in the fighting will and tenacity, creative capabilities and practical wisdom of the awakened masses. Secure in the certain knowledge that absolute reliance on the masses ensures "Rolling back the enemy as we would a mat", and even if defeat and devastation may have to be encountered, the masses, as the inexhaustible reservoir of social energy, would always be available to fall back upon and recover. Mao transcended all fear and anxiety regarding social-political eventualities, some what might.

These crucial traits of his personality—recognition and embracing of turbulence and struggle as normal way of being, and immense faith in and reliance on the revolutionary potential of the masses—made Mao Tsetung an epitome of revolutionary optimism.

*We can clasp the moon in the Ninth Heaven
And seize turtles deep down in the Five Seas :
We'll return amid triumphant song and laughter.
Nothing is hard in this world
If you dare to scale the heights*

Rejoicing on the occasion of Com. Mao Tsetung's birth anniversary and striving to imbibe his revolutionary optimism and dynamism, we feel elevated by being able to call this revolutionary giant our comrade.

Red Salute to the inspiring personality of Mao Tsetung !
Long live the revolutionary teachings of Mao Tsetung !!

-Editorial Board