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Post-election scene:
A spell of provisionalism
in ruling class politics

The ninth Lok Sabha and the new minority government of the National Front formally reflect the political instability that is relentlessly pestering the semi-colonial semi-feudal order of India. The "hung" parliament is not a mere electoral incident but a clear symptom of the "hung" Indian polity. More than ever before, the ruling class politics is visibly suffering from utter confusion and uncertainty, lacking in credibility with the common people and wallowing in blood and grime.

The problem that the ruling classes tried to dodge in the year 1979 has now again come on their agenda with a vengeance. That is, the problem of forging viable and credible political platforms (at least a single umbrella platform if not the two alternating ones for taking upon the governmental responsibility). To that end, the existing party structures would have to be subjected to a tortuous process of churning and realignment. So, the National Front government at the centre is as durable as a stop-gap arrangement can be in a situation of political flux and impending realignments of ruling class political groups and of their reformist hangers-on.

Being quite aware of this salient feature of the present situation on the parliamentary political front, all the major ruling class political parties or groups, including those in power at present, are keeping their political options open. So, most of their respective political postures and moves at present are of a provisional nature. From this angle, the V.P. government, in its present form, is

not only a minority government prone to instability but a provisional government incapable of making a serious dent on any vital area of governance.

The much-acclaimed "maturity of Indian voters" is a myth. The pro-establishment propagandists are playing a cruel joke with the Indian electorate (60% of the electorate, to be more exact) by depicting its electoral predicament as its electoral maturity. Subjected to an election campaign that ignored the vital issues of people's concern, offered an unsavoury choice between the Congress party led by Rajiv clique and the "duplicate Congress" without the Rajiv clique, ie, the National Front, the Indian voters just passed on to the parliament their own political state of being "hung". The only noticeable common feature of their diverse electoral responses, in the recent elections, is their reduced amenability to the manipulations of those political forces of the ruling classes who happen to be in governmental power and thus immediately associated with outrageous conduct towards the people concerned. The election results indicated, in general, that the major segments of people are in an angry mood due to the increased economic hardships, the uncertainty of their jobs and earnings, the insecurity of their lives, and the utter disregard shown by establishment-politicians to public sentiments; and they could give vent to this anger, against the visible culprits in the form of governing authorities, wherever and in whichever form the ruling class parties in opposition provided them the scope to do so.

So long as the democratic revolutionary alternative does not effectively and concretely present itself and get hold of the Indian people's imagination, the people, as voters, are circumstantially bound to show such "electoral maturity" as staking their

lives or limbs, in electioneering or voting, and getting, in net, the cold comfort of humiliating a Rajiv Gandhi or a N.T.Rama Rao, while their own accursed lot remains unaffected.

In his first televised address to the nation, the new Prime Minister, Shri V.P. Singh, has delivered a speech full of liberal and leftist rhetoric. The sum and substance of his message to the common people can be rendered thus: "My heart beats for the underprivileged and downtrodden masses of India but the national coffers are empty". He has offered his liberalist-emotional support to the suffering people and sought their material co-operation in getting over economic difficulties faced by the new government. So, the demand on the working people to be ready to further tighten their belts is indicated.

As a meaningful omission in V.P.Singh's address to the nation -- wherein he reiterated most of the promises listed in the Janata Dal's election manifesto -- two burning issues of the common people stand out for not getting even a passing mention: the large-scale retrenchment of workers in the name of modernisation and wanton resort to lock-out by the industrialists as a coercive weapon to starve the workers into submission; and the formidable battery of black laws, at the command of the State machinery, meant to smother, by threat or operation, any just struggle of the people or any voice of dissent and protest. This suggests that "labour discipline" and "work-discipline" continue to be the priority concerns of the government.

From another angle, the address betrays a calculated demotion of the issue of high-level corruption which has been, till recently, the king-sized issue of V.P.Singh's campaign. Obviously, the issue of Bofors scandal has out-lived its utility for the

victors once the elections are over. To the disappointment of so many admirers of V.P. Singh -- "the crusader" against corruption -- including some "red" converts to his creed of corruption-eradication, there are unmistakable signs of some sort of cease-fire on the Bofors front. Perhaps it is a part of the process of "national reconciliation"!

Of course, V.P. Singh's address to the nation has underlined certain commitments, such as, (i) constitutional provision for the right to work (ii) constitutional provision for the right to information and (iii) putting a check on price-rise. Even these commitments amount as yet to statements of intention which are not supplemented by a clear statement of the problem and a spelt-out solution or course of action in each case. For instance, any talk about checking the price-rise, without going into the underlying causes -- such as deficit financing, internal debt, external debt, artificial shortages, and speculation etc. -- of this phenomenon, and the ways and means of tackling these factors, cannot be taken seriously. Without striking at the roots of this problem, if some demonstrative measures are taken and even if prices of some consumer items are brought down for the time being, it would be a futile populist exercise to be invariably followed, soon after, by a new spurt in prices. That kind of populist exercise is too well-known a strategem, often employed by newly-established regimes, to take in the people these days.

The communist revolutionary and democratic forces, while rightly treating the fore-mentioned commitments as empty talk, still can make political use of this circumstance. In this concern, they should raise the demands of "checking the price-rise" and the "right to work", making these demands issues of political mobilisation and education of the

masses of people, and confront the new government's commitments on these issues with these mass campaigns so as to quicken the concrete process of its political exposure.

COOPERATE -- BY TIGHTENING YOUR BELT

P.M. V P Singh admitted that the balance of payment situation was causing concern to the government. But he did not give a straight answer when asked if he proposed to seek a fresh credit from the IMF. "With resolution, action and people's cooperation, we can steer clear of the debt trap", the Prime Minister said.

-- Times of India, 16/12/89.

Communist revolutionaries and elections

Soon the elections are going to be over. Whatever be the outcome, the lives of the working people are not going to change. Nor will the ruling classes be able to overcome the political instability which the all-round economic crisis has landed them in. Yet, banking on the people not taking seriously (hence not remembering) the claims and promises that the ruling class parties had made to win the elections, the ruling classes are going to continue, and find new ways to perpetuate, their exploitation and repression. As a part of their overall revolutionary work, the communist revolutionaries will have to systematically and continuously expose the parliamentary deception and treachery of the ruling classes and their parties with concrete facts about the specific promises made, the policies adopted subsequently, and the actual performances. Thus, exposing the fallacy of "parliamentary democracy" and exposing the uselessness -- rather, the obstructiveness -- of the parliament in solving the problems of the people is a continuous process and it can not be limited to the occasion of elections.

Yet this task will be influenced by -- and will also have a bearing upon -- the correctness or incorrectness of the position taken and the corresponding political work undertaken by communist revolutionaries at the time of elections. It is the responsibility of any serious communist revolutionary group to explain (from the angle of their strategy and tactics) the theoretical and political rationale of the position they have taken in relation to the elections. This is

necessary to provide an integral character and cohesion to their political conduct and revolutionary practice and consequently to carry out their tasks correctly and effectively in connection with elections and parliament. The following paras are addressed to this end.

What the communist revolutionaries did or should do at the time of elections, is a question concerning the adoption of appropriate tactics. As any proletarian tactics are not independent of, but are part of and subordinate to, the revolutionary strategy of the proletariat, their political work and perspective should not be independent of and divergent from that strategy.

It is thus important to bear in mind the factors that determine the specific tactics that communist revolutionaries must adopt in elections at a given time. It is even more important to keep in mind the factors that determine the political conduct of whatever specific tactics that communist revolutionaries may adopt on the occasion of elections. For it is the political content that decides the revolutionary utility of any given tactic.

Whatever tactics the communist revolutionaries may adopt in any elections -- whether they be the tactics of participation, or the tactics of active boycott, or the tactics of active political campaign without participating (ie, without contesting or campaigning for voting) -- in all cases the content of their political conduct should be determined, first and foremost, by their standpoint towards the existing parliamentary system. That standpoint is as follows:

Elections in India have been, and are, a means for the ruling classes to forge alignments or realignments of their political representatives in order to capture seats of power in accordance with either the requirements of their internal struggle for power

(among the different sections of ruling classes) or the requirements of the political deception of the people, so as to claim or reclaim credibility among the people for the continuance of the comprador-feudal rule. The predominant feature of elections is that the ruling classes flaunt the parliamentary institutions, and the periodical elections to them, as the "democratic" means to solve the problems of the people. They flaunt them as the reflection and outcome of the exercise by the people of "political liberty" and "free-will". With these parliamentary institutions the ruling classes camouflage the autocratic nature of the present Indian State and use them as instruments of semi-feudal semi-colonial oppression of the Indian masses

For the people of India there is no economic and social basis whatsoever for experiencing or exercising any worthwhile political liberty or democracy through these parliamentary institutions. For them, these institutions can only be the ruling classes' means of deception, diversion and oppression. Unless the Indian people, under the leadership of the proletariat, abolish these parliamentary institutions through the revolutionary overthrow of the present Indian State and in their place establish their own organs of power, ie, the organs of People's Democracy, there can be no political or social salvation for them. Hence all serious communist revolutionaries are duty-bound to lead the Indian people, through consistent and integrated political-organisational and practical leadership, to reject these parliamentary institutions, to overthrow the Indian State, and establish People's Democracy under the leadership of the proletariat. It is this objective of ours that must determine the content of our political conduct, whatever tactics we may adopt at the time of elections.

Whether they adopt the tactics of participation, or they adopt the tactics of active boycott, or the tactics of only the political campaign, in all cases the political campaign should essentially consist of: (a) exposing the uselessness of the present parliamentary institutions as a means of satisfying the demands of the people, (b) explaining the impossibility of achieving political liberty and social emancipation by parliamentary methods, and (c) explaining the necessity of armed struggle in the form of protracted people's war centering around the agrarian revolution and of establishing the organs of people's power, ie, of People's Democracy. Whichever tactics the communist revolutionaries adopt, these crucial aspects should be made obvious to the people, by integrating them with examples and experiences of past as well as present people's struggles and problems, and by concrete exposures of the deception and treachery employed by the ruling classes, their institutions and their political parties. The only difference in this regard between different types of tactics will be in the slogans of action they give and in the pace with which they carry forward or materialise the abovestated revolutionary objective. (The slogans of action have to be in accordance with the level of the revolutionary movement at the given time. They are the principal forms of carrying out the exposure, and of paralysing and replacing the parliamentary institutions of ruling classes' political power.)

The factor of objective conditions

Generally speaking: In conditions of severe setbacks to the revolutionary movement or in conditions of its low ebb or stagnation and when the counter-revolution is temporarily victorious or well-settled, communist revolutionaries may adopt the tactics of

participation in elections and use this as a legal form of struggle, if the subjective factor (the level of development of the organisation of communist revolutionaries) permits. In this case, in conjunction with other forms of struggle, the communist revolutionaries lay stress on preparing the people and gathering forces, through systematic revolutionary propaganda, agitation and organisation, for the next mass revolutionary upsurge.

In another set of conditions, when the reactionary rule is crises-ridden and shaky, and simultaneously the revolutionary movement is in upsurge, communist revolutionaries adopt the tactics of active boycott of elections. In this case, they lay stress on the direct revolutionary mass actions of the people and the setting up of parallel organs of people's revolutionary democratic power.

The above-stated general communist approach to this tactical question has to be integrated with the concrete practice of Indian Revolution. Our country being semi-colonial semi-feudal -- where the social development, the development of the revolutionary movement, and the development of the proletarian party organisation will continue to be uneven for quite some time to come -- communist revolutionaries must prepare themselves to adopt different tactics in different regions. In relation to elections too, in view of the protracted nature of our people's war and depending on the zig-zags and the vicissitudes of the revolutionary movement, they may have to adopt the tactics of participation in some parts of the country and the tactics of active boycott in some other parts, simultaneously.

Furthermore, due to the same factor of unevenness of social and political development, the people's revolutionary operation of overthrowing the reactionary political power and establishing organs of parallel

political power is going to proceed on a local plane, over a long period of time. Accordingly, the tactics of wrecking the reactionary parliamentary institutions -- whether the tactics of politically exposing and paralysing through participation in them or that of politically rejecting and replacing through active boycott of them -- are going to be effective mostly on the local plane rather than the national plane.

Factors of subjective conditions

Proper and purposeful utilisation of either the tactics of participation or the tactics of boycott of elections, both require a certain level of development of the party organisation of the proletariat.

Boycott is a higher form of struggle which is associated with imminent direct revolutionary action of the masses against the State and with setting up of organs of people's political power. For this, the party of the proletariat should have established its leadership over the revolutionary movement and prepared itself, politically and organisationally, to lead the people's armed struggle along with setting up suitable organs of people's power. Without this, the boycott slogan will become meaningless and futile as far as the realisation of its full revolutionary potential is concerned. It will lead to casual and indifferent or even cynical attitudes developing among people towards revolutionary slogans of action.

On the other hand, revolutionary utilisation of participation in elections as a legal form of struggle, requires the emergence of revolutionary democratic elements as a serious political force. It requires the ability of the proletarian party organisation to train and control a cadre-team for this specialised activity (from within the institutions of the enemy camp), to organise

a legal front without liquidating the illegal party structure, and to link and coordinate the activities of its members in these institutions with the direct revolutionary struggles of the people etc. Without this, participation will have no revolutionary use. On the contrary, it will blunt the class consciousness of the people, blur the political demarcation between the party of the proletariat and the reactionary or opportunist parties, and will be handy to the ruling class forces to manipulate the proletarian vanguard and people to suit their interests.

Thus the scope for the revolutionary utilisation of different possible tactics is conditioned or limited by the stage of the development of the party of the proletariat. Successful adoption of various tactics depends, apart from the objective situation, on the level of the party. In its formative stages, or when the party as a driving force is weak, the party's tactics will be "necessarily narrow and without scope". (Stalin)

Communist revolutionary tactics at present

Today there is a striking dichotomy between the objective situation, in which there is unlimited revolutionary potential, and the situation of the party of the proletariat. Today a unified, effective and influential political party of the proletariat is lacking. Communist revolutionaries are only in the formative stage, in the stage of re-organisation of such a party. In most areas, any communist revolutionary organisation is yet to establish its identity both in the field of organisation as well as mass political influence. Consequently, the level of political consciousness and organisation of the people is lagging behind their actual practice of struggle or the objective potential for revolutionary struggle. For the same

reason, the emergence and development of revolutionary democratic elements as a serious political force is delayed. It is because of this circumstance that the present acute political crisis (marked by acute disorder and conflict among the sections of ruling classes, utter discredit and instability of their parliamentary political parties and institutions, near total alienation of the people from these parties and institutions, volatile mood of the people, and the ruling classes' inability to rule by normal means -- resorting to sowing seeds of sectarian discords among people and blatant partisan use of State institutions leading to fissures within them) is not turning into a revolutionary crisis. It is because of this circumstance that a general mood of distrust of leaderships and cynical indifference to political affairs and political developments is prevalent among the people, and that we are facing additional political-organisational difficulties in coping with the demands of the volatile political situation.

But for this circumstance, communist revolutionaries could have, in conditions of great turmoil, adopted the tactics of organising active boycott of elections and called upon the revolutionary forces to carry out the agrarian revolutionary programme, conducted armed struggle, and set up alternative organs of people's power. But for this circumstance, they could have had the option, under adverse political conditions, to utilise the elections as a legal form of struggle in a revolutionary manner to prepare the people and gather forces to advance the revolutionary movement. But so long as this circumstance persists, both the above tactical options are foreclosed for any communist revolutionary group.

At present two deviationist currents are prevalent among some sections of communist

revolutionaries. They are: (A) Resorting to the tactics of active boycott without the scope of direct revolutionary mass-action and setting up of parallel organs of people's revolutionary power. This is an irresponsible left sectarian orientation towards the question of revolutionary tactics.

(B) Resorting to the tactics of participation in elections without the proletarian party, sufficient mass-political influence, and other necessary organisational means. This is an irresponsible right deviation which will inevitably lead politically to tailism and organisationally to liquidationism. This latter deviationist current is predominant now and communist revolutionaries should actively combat it.

At present, the subjective and objective conditions of revolutionary movement in all the states are such that neither the tactics of participation nor the tactics of active boycott are suitable for the proper building and advancement of the revolutionary movement and proletarian party organisation. In the present circumstances, communist revolutionaries should not adopt either of these tactics in the elections to parliament and state assemblies. This is so primarily because of the weakness of the subjective factor, ie, the lacking of a unified, effective and influential political party of the proletariat.

In this circumstance, the communist revolutionaries' primary task is to form the ranks of the proletarian party and to put it firmly on its feet. This they can do by concentrating on building mass revolutionary struggles; by working out our plan of work in such a way that our limited forces and resources get strengthened and gain political recognition and confidence of the people; and by achieving clearcut demarcation from the opportunist political forces, in the process of practising and establishing our line. In

view of this, as long as their present political-organisational situation persists, the only proper tactic that communist revolutionaries should adopt is that of conducting active political campaign in connection with the elections without participating in them (either in the form of contesting or taking part in voting) -- urging the people to rely and concentrate on their own struggle-movement and organisation-building to prepare for direct revolutionary mass action against the ruling classes and their institutions of political power.

In their campaign, the communist revolutionaries should take into account the specific features which get manifest in the ruling class politics and manoeuvres in the given elections. For instance, in the present elections the predominant feature is that the warring factions of the ruling classes and their political representatives, mainly aligned into two main electoral fronts, are more fiercely than ever locked in battle for central governmental power. They are neck-deep in the political intrigue and denigration of each other and in the deception and manipulation of the common people to perpetuate their rule. The ruling classes and their political parties are no more depending on even the methods of parliamentary political hypocrisy but are nakedly banking on flaring up and manipulating sectarian communal divisions among the people and on reactionary slogans of "security and integrity of India", "restoring the sanctity and credibility of various State institutions", etc. Thus they are openly championing the reactionary concerns of the ruling classes and showing clear contempt for the progressive aspirations of the broad masses of Indian people.

The communist revolutionaries' work of propaganda and agitation in connection with the elections, while exposing the uselessness

of parliamentary institutions and parliamentary methods in solving the problems of the people, should aim at exposing and defeating, to the extent feasible, the specific designs of the ruling classes at a given time and projecting the political objectives of the working class movement and the democratic revolutionary movement headed by it.

It should generally consist of: (i) Laying bare the hypocrisy of various populist election platforms of ruling class political parties or groupings in a concrete way, by contrasting their professed programmes and slogans with their actual practice and with the bitter experience of the people regarding their constantly worsening economic conditions and denial of political liberties for changing their unbearable lot through class struggle, all these years. (ii) Pointing out, in a popular idiom, that the root cause of this misery, cultural backwardness and social political oppression lies in the semi-feudal semi-colonial economy and the autocratic State structure based on it, and that without eliminating this root cause there is no hope of any meaningful change for the better in the accursed lot of the people. (iii) Stressing the fact that so long as this autocratic State structure (not responsible to the people, but wholly controlled by the inveterate enemies of the people) remains intact, all talk of political liberties for the people is sheer deception or ignorance promoted by the forces having vested interests in the existing socio-economic system; that to put the country on the road to progress and prosperity of the whole people, the people must have as a pre-requisite real political power in their own hands; and that the people can attain and develop their political power by relying on their organised strength and struggle, and only in fierce contest with the existing political power of their

enemies resting on this autocratic State structure. (iv) Urging the proletariat and other sections of the people to persist in their just and revolutionary struggles expeditiously to build up their respective political mass organisations and united front organisations to be able to raise their struggles to a higher plane and to establish their own rule, ie, People's Democracy to be executed through genuine representative institutions of the people -- the revolutionary organs of people's power. (v) Giving a clear idea to the broad masses of the people about the prominent social-economic and other measures to be taken by the new people's republic that they are fighting for, in the interests of various revolutionary classes and people as a whole -- ie, popularising the salient features of our minimum programme.

While making these general points, the communist revolutionaries should pay particular attention to the specific anti-people policies being adopted by the ruling class parties and to the specific tasks called for by them. For instance, in the present day context, their campaign had to put particular focus on (i) Exposing the nefarious role of ruling class political parties in instigating, perpetuating and utilising communal sectarian divisions among the people; clearly bring out its connection with the electoral needs of these parties and how the security and unity of common people will remain imperilled so long as people do not give a strong rebuff to this dirty tactic of ruling class parties; and (ii) Impressing upon the people, especially the working people, the need, first of all, to forge and strengthen their own reliable political instruments (the proletarian party organisation, the united front organisation, etc) for effectively making use of all possible forms of influencing the course of

political development in their interests.

In carrying out these tactics and political campaign the communist revolutionaries should work out effective practical steps such as:

a) The main channel for, and organisation of, communication with the masses of the people being illegal publication, posters and leaflets should be issued by various units under the name of the organisation with forthright exposition of the political standpoint.

b) Wherever possible suitable comrades should seek to have a direct dialogue with the masses, sympathetic to their organisation or communist revolutionary politics, in unannounced small gatherings.

c) Comrades working among some mass organisations and known for their communist revolutionary views should, without publicly identifying with their group, participate in discussions on the topic among the masses they are familiar with.

d) Comrades working with mass organisations in complete secrecy should seek, within the scope of the declaration or manifesto of the concerned organisation, to explain their political views to the masses under the influence of this organisation in a language adapted to the audience and in general democratic terms.

e) Following the pattern of our general mass work, some burning local and partial issue can be taken as a starting point of the exposition dealing with the political exposure of ruling class policies and parties and the projection of the political objectives of revolutionary democratic movement, and then the link between such partial issues and the pressing political issues can be established. But the main emphasis should remain on the latter.

f) The work done in a manner listed under

(a) and (b) will be fruitful only if communist revolutionaries succeed in supplementing it with the supply, through our channels, of illegal leaflets issued by the communist revolutionary organisation.

Communist revolutionaries should also pay attention to the specific problems they encounter while carrying out their tactics and political campaign in the present circumstances. Some such problems can be tackled in the following manner:

a) Comrades working secretly in some mass organisations under reactionary or opportunist leadership should oppose, in a manner appropriate to the concrete situation, the misuse of the platform of the concerned mass organisation for electioneering. The basis of this opposition should not be made out to be the unacceptable politics of the concerned leadership but the concern for maintaining or acquiring the broadbase of the mass organisation. In any case, comrades must not allow themselves to be dragged into that act of misuse.

b) In areas where, owing to the inadequate explanation of revolutionary standpoint regarding parliamentary institutions and elections to them or the earlier practice of participation in elections, people ask for their advice with regard to voting, comrades should clearly tell them that there is no use voting for this or that party or candidate. They should patiently explain why we cannot advise for voting this or that way so long as conditions are lacking for making the vote serve in any way the interests of the people and their revolutionary movement.

c) In some rare cases, if there is a person in the election contest who has demonstrated his friendly attitude towards the struggling people in the course of their activities over a period of time and who is not identified or aligned with some anti-

people political force, comrades need not bring him specifically under political criticism but the communist revolutionaries' standpoint on elections must in no way be compromised while showing such judicious consideration towards this kind of friendly person.

Comrades working among masses should gather their experience regarding the campaign and the response of the people, sum up the experience, and share the significance of it with other comrades and groups. This will help to develop their understanding about, and ability in, adopting and practising revolutionary tactics that serve their revolutionary strategy concretely and effectively.

15-11-89.

REASSURING CONTINUITY

The World Bank expects a continuity in India's economic policy despite the change in government, a senior official said. "Economic policy does not seem to have played a very important part in the election campaign", said Dan Ritchie, chief of the India country operations department at the Bank. "The rhetoric of the seventies was not trotted out", he noted in an interview. According to him, Prime Minister V.P. Singh was one of the chief designers of the liberalisation policy while he was finance minister in Rajiv Gandhi's government and he would be loathe to change it.

--India Abroad News Service, Dec. 3

Cherish the legacy of the Great October Revolution

Revolution is the festival of the oppressed masses. The month of October has got the distinctive honour of being the occasion when two such grand festivals of the masses occurred. The Great October Revolution, in the year 1917, overtook Czarist Russia and shook the old world by establishing the first successful dictatorship of the proletariat. Thirty-two years later, in October 1949, the great Chinese people's democratic revolution triumphed in establishing the People's Republic of China, and delivered a hammer-blow to the whole imperialist colonial and neo-colonial order in the East.

Thus the month of October has got associated with the irresistible march of the world proletarian revolution, with the revolutionary initiative and striking power of the proletariat. Ever since then, October has been and shall remain, for the communist revolutionaries and the politically conscious workers and oppressed peoples of the world, the month of revolutionary celebration, the occasion for celebrating the great human-emancipatory performance and potential of the proletariat and that of the broad masses of oppressed people led by the proletariat in revolutionary action.

The Great October Revolution was an occurrence of world-historic significance. It signified a radical turn in the movement of world history, in the progressive motion of human social development. It marked the first actual leap of human society, under the leadership of the proletariat, into the process of emancipation from all kinds of exploitation and oppression of man by man. So, as a

political phenomenon, it acted as a beacon, a path-breaker and a mighty booster to the emancipatory struggles of all the socially oppressed classes and nationally oppressed peoples the world over, drawing all these struggles into the ambit of world proletarian revolution.

Along with its tremendous political impact on contemporary history, the Great October Revolution left a profound ideological imprint on the whole historical epoch, the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution. It confirmed the basic tenets of the Marxist-Leninist theory of proletarian revolution and proletarian State (dictatorship of the proletariat) in the revolutionary practice of millions of masses of the working people. And, through this corroboration by social practice, it transformed these scientific theoretical propositions into ideological-political axioms, ideological-political truths, of our age.

In particular, the Great October Revolution presented the most telling practical critique of the ideological-political categories of democracy and nationalism, the ideological talismans that the bourgeoisie desperately clutches at in order to mystify and legitimise its own class domination and exploitation. It demonstrated the extremely limited and formal nature of bourgeois democracy, the exclusivist and chauvinistic nature of bourgeois nationalism, and their historically obsolete character as instruments of human emancipation (under conditions of the world-system of imperialism) by actually counterposing to these such qualitatively new and effective instruments as proletarian democracy and proletarian internationalism.

The Great October Revolution shattered the bourgeois myth that under the bourgeois order all citizens enjoy equal democratic

rights and all nations enjoy equal national rights, by concretely highlighting and solving the vital question of the material conditions necessary for the masses of toiling people to be able really to exercise these rights, and the question of the social objective of exercising these rights. It showed how the exploited and oppressed majority, the toiling people, can have those material conditions only by overthrowing the rule of the exploiter and oppressor minority, the capitalists and the landlords; by smashing the bourgeois State apparatus which is the bulwark of that rule, by breaking the stranglehold of this exploiter minority on the ownership of the social means of production which is the economic foundation of that rule and, instead, establishing their own socialist ownership of these means; by establishing the proletarian system of State, the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is based on the revolutionary alliance of the broad masses of working people of town and countryside led by the proletariat and which has the most democratic possible organs of State power in the form of the all-embracing mass political representative organisations of the working people -- the soviets of workers deputies, soldiers' deputies, and peasants' deputies. It showed how, given those material conditions, the broad masses of working people can really exercise their democratic rights for determining the arrangement of their social labour and life on just and rational lines; for enjoying the full fruits of their social labour; for giving free play to their creative urge and energy in the material and spiritual domains; and for depriving the bourgeoisie of its "democratic" right to restore the old exploitative order, ie, for exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie.

Thus, it sealed the historical fate of bourgeois parliamentarism by counterposing to it the soviet power as a new and higher form of democratic State power that combines the parliamentary elective principle with the immediate and direct democracy of the labouring masses, their direct participation in and constant check over the State administration.

Similarly, it indisputably proved that the proletariat is, indeed, the most staunch opponent of any kind of national privilege, discrimination, persecution and oppression; that the proletariat upholds as a matter of principle every nation's right of self-determination, ie, its right of secession (from any imposed integral frame of a colonial or multinational State) or its right of voluntary union with other nations (on the basis of mutual trust and fraternal collaboration). Further, it proved that, in their striving for national emancipation and progress, the toiling masses of oppressed peoples can dispense with the rusted weapon of bourgeois nationalism that enhances national mistrust, disunity and enmity, and seek fraternal union of the workers and peasants of diverse nations based on the principles of voluntariness and internationalism. Finally, it proved that only under the leadership of the proletariat and as a part of international revolutionary struggle against the world-imperialist system of financial enslavement and colonial domination can the struggle of the oppressed peoples for national liberation and national equality be carried through to its end, enabling them to realise national self-determination whereby they can transcend nation-statehood and acquire international statehood -- the union of soviet socialist republics -- and pursue a common progressive social destiny while retaining their specific national-cultural features.

Although the Great October Revolution, as a political phenomenon, has passed for once into history, its ideological verdict on the historical obsolescence of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois nationalism (the ultimate ideological-political disguises of the exploiters' class-domination) and on the superiority and relevance of proletarian democracy and proletarian internationalism holds good and shall go on resounding throughout the span of the present epoch. The episodic twists and turns of history in its progressive course of development may, for a short while, blur or obscure this ideological verdict; nevertheless, its stamp on modern history is indelible. This ideological legacy of the Great October Revolution is a great source for revitalising the self-confidence and revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, the faith of the proletariat in its tremendous revolutionary strength and inevitable victory.

"The chief endeavour of the bourgeoisie of all countries and of its reformist hangers-on is to kill the working class faith in its own strength, faith in the possibility and inevitability of its victory, and thus to perpetuate capitalist slavery. For the bourgeoisie knows that if capitalism has not yet been overthrown and still continues to exist, it owes this not to its own merits but to the fact that the proletariat still has not enough faith in the possibility of its victory". (Stalin: Report to The Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B). On the Work of the Central Committee). These days that "chief endeavour of the bourgeoisie of all countries and its reformist hangers-on" has acquired an unprecedented vehemence, under conditions of the accentuated general crisis of the world capitalist system. Focussing on the political commotions which the crisis-ridden revisionist-capitalist

countries -- particularly the East-European countries -- are presently experiencing, they are crowing and feverishly gesticulating: "Look, socialism has failed, the soviet system has failed, proletarian internationalism has failed! Communism is dead!!" But, alas! For greeting the "death of communism" they have nothing new to wave except the old tattered flags of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois nationalism: the same old flags which have got crumpled and faded under the dead-weight of their own god -- Finance Capital -- and got quite debunked by the enlightening experience of the Great October Revolution! They are doing all this with a view to sowing doubt and confusion in the minds of workers and the oppressed peoples about the prospects of world proletarian revolution; with a view to discouraging the toiling people from venturing into the "undependable" arena of mastering their own destiny; and with a view to reconciling them to wage-slavery and national dependence. In doing so, the bourgeoisie of all countries and its reformist hangers-on are banking on their capacity for concealing from the common people the essential reality of what is happening in these so-called "socialist" countries.

In their propaganda blitzkrieg, they are concealing the fact, very well known to themselves, that these countries ceased to be under proletarian rule long ago; that the bourgeoisie succeeded in seizing the State-power, through the medium of revisionist renegades to the communist party and socialist revolution, and in restoring the capitalist order in these countries while retaining the garb of socialism; and that the economic and political bankruptcy of these regimes that they are so exultantly advertising denotes, not at all the failure of socialism but that of social-capitalism

(socialism in appearance, capitalism in essence), not at all the failure of the soviet system of dictatorship of the proletariat but that of a peculiar bureaucratic system of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, not at all the failure of proletarian internationalism but that of recrudescent bourgeois nationalism based on bourgeois social relations which undermined the mutual trust and fraternal collaboration of various national groups, and not at all the fiasco of communism. It can be easily seen that their malicious attempt at concealing this fact from the toiling masses has been considerably facilitated by the opportunist practice of those sections of the communist revolutionary movement who unduly dragged their feet on, or defaulted on, the question of exposing the reality of revisionist take-over in the erstwhile socialist countries.

They are concealing the fact that the economic-political crisis, that is bringing the revisionist countries down to their knees, differs only in form and extent rather than its essential nature from the one confronted by the other capitalist countries: It is the aggravated general crisis of world capitalism that is finding its specific expression all over the world in an uneven manner. The bourgeois rulers of the Western imperialist countries (alongwith the Japanese bourgeoisie) can somewhat afford to gloat, at the moment, over the sorry plight of the revisionist regimes because of the fact that the former are relatively well-placed in the hierarchy of the world imperialist system than their East European counterparts. They have access to the shock-absorbing cushion of super-exploitation of the dependent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that mitigates the tremors of the economic crisis and, hence, postpones for some time the impending internal explosions

within these countries. This imperialist privilege is by and large denied to the East European revisionist rulers. That is why, of all the advanced capitalist countries, the East European revisionist countries constitute the foremost arena of economic and political instability that may thus bear the brunt of the impending strokes of proletarian socialist revolutionary movement.

But then, the West European bourgeoisie is only relatively secure from the knock of its historical destiny, for the cushion of neo-colonial super-exploitation is tending to slip out of its hands in the whirlwind of anti-imperialist struggles raging and gathering momentum in the vast expanses of the Third World. That is to say, the protective financial umbrella of the World Bank and the political trappings of bourgeois parliamentary governance can no more bail out the East European bourgeoisie from the fundamental crisis of capitalist economy and social order than they have done in the case of the West European bourgeoisie. This inextricable crisis of world capitalism is driving the toilers of all lands, howsoever stumblingly but inexorably, into the arms of that very communism that has been pronounced "dead" by the wishful bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie of all countries and its reformist hangers-on are obscuring the elementary political truth that State power, of whatever kind, is never changed, nor even seriously affected, by peaceful processions of some hundred thousand persons whose political earnestness and stamina are not tested in any confrontation with even a fraction of the armed might of the State. They are concealing the fact that the current political developments in the East European revisionist countries (where governments are falling like nine-pins apparently under the nose-impact of massive peaceful processions!) do not

involve changes in the existing class rule of the concerned bourgeoisie in each case; that the changes taking place, or being contemplated, in the composition of governments or the form of governments are in accordance with the general class interests and will of their respective ruling bourgeois classes, notwithstanding the reservations or contrary wishes of particular sets of individuals or small sections of the ruling classes; that this policy of readjustment of the polity sprang up from the revisionist rulers' foreboding of violent eruptions of the accumulated resentment of the toiling masses due to mounting economic hardships and bureaucratic oppression, and is an attempt at defusing that resentment and encouraging its absorption by the peaceful bourgeois movement for reforms; that, apart from the just-mentioned basic political consideration, this readjustment policy is dictated by the pressing consideration of seducing Western monopoly capital and, to that end, offering some political concessions, chiefly in the form of politically accommodating the local pro-Western bourgeois elements; and that precisely because it does not clash with, but is compatible with, the general class interests, political power and political perspectives of powers-that-be, because it signifies no gains to the political strength and say of the exploited majority of these peoples, the "democracy wave" is, having unhindered sway in one country of Eastern Europe after the other, and is being smiled upon alike by Gorbochev, Bush, Kohl, the Church, et all.

While they are fully advertising the massive mobilisations for the "democracy" marches in the East-European capitals, they are concealing the fact that mostly the participants belong to various strata of the bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the

working class, and are invariably led by bourgeois academicians, clerks and even the revisionists themselves. They are obscuring the fact that, over the long years of bourgeois-revisionist rule, the working class masses of these countries have been subjected by revisionist rulers to a systematic, persistent, and all-round campaign of ideological disorientation; that the revisionist rulers, through a protracted process of theoretical distortion of Marxism and practical prostitution of socialism, have been able to cause a lot of blunting of the political consciousness of the working masses and a blurring of their political vision; and that if, owing to this ideological-political vulnerability, some sections of the working people are momentarily manipulated to join the chorus of bourgeois parliamentarism, it would be more a reflection of their strong urge to get rid of the existing state of affairs than their fondness of bourgeois parliamentarism.

Lastly, they are concealing, or perhaps themselves ignoring, an important political implication (other than the immediate ones) of the recent developments in East European countries. The exposure of the labouring masses of these countries to bourgeois democracy, the direct experience of which the East-European peoples had fortunately skipped earlier, and to monopoly capital's intensified squeeze on them as an accompaniment of bourgeois democracy, will certainly and quickly make them recoil from bourgeois democracy. Then, these labouring masses, already freed from the political ambiguity that was due to the camouflaged class exploitation and oppression of bourgeois revisionist order, getting aroused and politically enlightened by the transparent and escalating class exploitation and oppression of bourgeois democratic order, and eagerly seeking the way

out of the capitalist wage-slavery, shall invoke, from the deep recesses of their collective memory, the glorious legacy of the Great October Revolution that may get dimmed for a while for some sections of the international proletariat but can never get erased from its historical memory.

The spectre of communism shall go on haunting the bourgeois world. It cannot be laid to rest so long as the international proletariat lives and until the international bourgeoisie is laid to rest.

Long live World Proletarian Revolution!
Long live the spirit of the Great October Revolution!!

DROPPING ALL PRETENCES

In Poland, Communist party bureaucrats heading state enterprises are now converting them into their own private businesses. The National Consolidation Plan, passed in February, allows enterprises to conduct 'experiments' with ownership. Usually this is done by setting up a private business in which the 'Communist' enterprise chief buys shares. When the state enterprise receives an order it declines, but recommends instead the private company in which he owns shares. The private company then leases space, tools, and designers from the state enterprise!

Hungary has passed a Conversion Law, under which the top manager of a state enterprise has the initiative to buy it out. 200 to 300 of the largest state firms are up for grabs at "bargain basement" terms.
--condensed from "Enter comrade capitalist",
Economist (26/8/89)

BIHAR:

Communal lunacy being fought back

NOTE: The crisis-ridden ruling classes of India, as well as their imperialist masters, are relying more and more, on inciting communalism and communal riots with the explicit purpose of dividing the toiling masses and making them fight each other, thus rendering them weak and disunited in, and diverting their attention from, their just revolutionary class struggle against the reactionary ruling classes and their State. Not only this: the ruling classes are also using communalism and communal riots as an excuse to curb, in practice, the trade union/class activities and the existing marginal democratic rights in the name of banning communal activities. At the same time, they are using the same pretext of suppressing communal-terror and so on for the purpose of arming themselves with new draconian powers and black laws. These laws are essentially to be used against restive masses of the toiling people. All this is on the one hand explicitly to perpetuate their reactionary class rule by suppressing the labouring masses and their revolutionary struggles, and on the other to further enhance their exploitation in order to wriggle out of the deep and general crisis they are facing nationally and internationally.

But, at the same time, the revolutionary forces are not watching all this with folded hands. Comprehending its real class content and implications, the revolutionary forces are standing up against this reactionary onslaught of the reactionary rulers, in accordance with the existing capacity and circumstances: they are vehemently exposing

the real class content of the evil designs of the ruling classes in playing with the sentiments of the people; and they are gathering forces, through the medium of specially built anti-communist and anti-riot platforms, for the sake of resisting and repulsing this reactionary onslaught. As a result, they have not only been able to successfully stall its advance, at places, but are also gathering forces and creating a congenial atmosphere for the further advance of their real revolutionary struggles on sectional and class issues.

Here, as we go to press, a small but significant report from Bihar.

-- Editorial Board.

* * *

When the shila puja (brick worship) demonstration was marching from Nathpur Nagar to Bhagalpur (a city of Bihar), the Muslims of Tatarpur tried to stop it on its course. There was an altercation and a stampede. Seven people were injured. Thereafter, the whole of Bhagalpur, as well as several villages of the district -- rather, several districts of Bihar -- were embroiled in the communal riots. In these riots, according to available information, hundreds of people were killed, hundreds of shops looted, and thousands of houses burnt. More than 25,000 people were rendered jobless. In this atmosphere of terror and panic, the prices of rice, pulses and salt etc, are touching the skies.

But the revolutionary forces throughout Bihar were not silent spectators. They, uniting immediately with the masses of the people, stood up firmly against rioting, exposed this conspiracy, and were successful in preventing it at several places. Here are a few examples:

28.10.89: Some brave people of Rasaunk, district Khagaria, formed an anti-riot

organisation and prepared a plan to stop the rioting. According to this plan, a meeting of the Hindu and Muslim masses was called, and the real mystery of the Babri-Masjid and brick-worship was explained to them. Further, they planned to organise communal harmony demonstrations; write anti-riot slogans on walls; issue leaflets and posters, exposing the real content of the riots in broad circles; and so on.

Even in the distant villages, the situation was so tense that even the fair-minded democratic forces were panic-stricken. But a team of brave comrades went propagating the above message throughout the village. The administration did not allow a demonstration. Then the democratic people wrote the following on the walls:

(i) All religious-minded people of India are the children of the same Mother India. That is why, in 1857, they fought unitedly against the Britishers.

(ii) Feeling threatened at the unbreakable unity of the Indians, the Britishers caused disunion in the country twice, in 1923 and in 1945-47, by inciting riots, and ultimately divided the country.

(iii) In 1947 there were 25 crore rupees in the national treasury of India, whereas at present the same India has been burdened with the loan of 85,000 crores of rupees.

(iv) The American bloc and the Russian bloc are inciting riots through the medium of various organisations for the sake of keeping India under their hegemony, enhancing their exploitation and diverting the mass-fury into their favour.

The administration did not allow a demonstration for this purpose. Then all the people went door to door, met the people, and started preparations for the general assembly. But a Janata Dal supporter and ex-head of the village gave a list of some

people and advised them to call the meeting one day later. So the harmony meeting could be held a day later. In this meeting, more than 200 people (both Hindus and Muslims) assembled. About 12 speakers expressed their views. Noticing the positive impact of the meeting on the people assembled there, the CPI(M) supporters and men from other organisations started saying that they were also thinking of calling such a meeting but that they could not make out what to do. The meeting continued till late at night. People from both the communities embraced each other, and resolved to oppose the riots. A 21 member communal harmony committee was also formed. The news of the assembly quickly became public in the village and in the surrounding villages as well. The atmosphere of tension got relaxed and harmony started developing. Nevertheless, some criminal elements (of both religions) opposed this step of course, in an underhand way.

In this assembly the following resolutions were posed on behalf of the anti-riot organisation for the exposure of reality of the riots: (i) The controversy of Babri Masjid and Thakurbari should be resolved locally in Ayodhya through some social gathering or through court. (ii) The controversy should not be allowed to become a national controversy. (iii) No activity should be allowed that may incite riots among Hindus and Muslims. (iv) If any individual acts or speaks in a manner inciting riots, he should be punished by the social panchayat on the merits of the case. (v) Any native or foreign money-bag, whether he be an exporter of capital, a state leader, an industrialist, a landlord, a renowned priest or the head of some monastery or a mullah (Muslim priest), all want to save themselves from the wrath of the masses, to divert the attention of the people, and to make the people fight

among themselves. That is why, they are inciting riots and that is why the Government is also encouraging these riots in practice.

Apart from these, the following slogans were also decided upon to be raised at the demonstration which could not be held:
(i) Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christians -- are all brethren. (ii) Stop the communal riots. (iii) Stop converting religious beliefs into riots.

Then the fund was raised for issuing anti-riot leaflets and a leaflet, with the heading "Riots Swallow Men, But Are Not Solution to Any Problem", was distributed, far and wide, according to the capacity. Generally, the leaflet had a good impact. People from both the communities, Hindus and the Muslims, praised it. But some anarchist elements of Hindus showed great hatred for it. At one place, a feudal even went to the extent of having it torn off the wall and trampled underfoot in his presence. Only then could he feel pacified. But he could do nothing else.

* * *

A similar grand example was set by the brave team of intellectuals of Jamalpur in Mungher district. Even in such grave conditions, these people organised a harmony meeting, in which several intellectuals expressed their views about Babri Masjid and the shila puja (brick worshipping) for Ramjanam Bhumi, exposing their reality. They also organised a "Peace and Harmony Committee, Jamalpur". The committee issued an appeal to the people for attending the harmony assembly on November 3. The appeal warned the masses against the rumour-mongers and appealed to them to foil the nefarious designs of the rumour-mongers. A communal harmony demonstration was also organised. Anti-communalism posters were pasted on the walls. Owing to these steps, there was no

communal riot here, in spite of the prevailing tension.

* * *

Similarly, when the anti-social elements of Godargama planned to massacre the Muslims of Mohinderpur Punarvas in Begusarai district, the Harijan masses of the same Punarvas openly opposed this injustice under the leadership of a comrade, and got prepared to fight unto death for the defence of the Muslims. Hearing of this, the criminal riotist elements got frightened, and the massacre was averted.

* * *

Thus, in accordance with the existing capacity and circumstances, the masses under the leadership of real democratic forces continued to resist communal riots everywhere (a full report of which could not be collected so far).

PUNJAB:

Revolutionary mass line in anti-repression anti-communal struggle

Some period after Operation Blue Star, there was a resurgence in the activities of the Khalistani fascist gangs. The sweep of communal hatred made fresh headway. The police were silent spectators to the atrocities and killings by the Khalistani fascist gangs at many places. Wherever the police acted they let loose the terror of the State on the common people also, without differentiating them from die-hard Khalistani terrorists and their resolute supporters. Thus the common man, already in the clutches of Khalistani fascists, had also to bear the brunt of State terrorism. So far as the political fight against communalism was concerned the situation was all the worse. The Rajiv-Longowal accord, the ostensible political answer of the Rajiv government against Khalistani terrorism, soon exposed its own bankruptcy. On the other hand, those parliamentary opposition parties who claimed to be the opponents of Khalistani terrorism were virtually absent in giving any worthwhile resistance to it.

Such a critical situation, when the terror-stricken people of Punjab were groping in the dark, posed a very serious challenge to the revolutionary groups of Punjab. Khalistani fascist gangs were so intolerant and ferocious that their every opponent was ordered to shut his mouth. To oppose them publicly meant to invite the death sentence on oneself. Unlike ruling class parties, the revolutionary groups neither had the protective umbrella of the State security forces nor like the revisionist parties could they get licenced weapons.

In such a demanding situation our organisation and some other revolutionary groups took a clearcut and resolute stand against Khalistani terrorism and State terrorism. We stepped up the propaganda campaign against them. This once more brought forth the fact that genuine communist revolutionaries cannot be forced to shut their mouths by even as bloody and savage an enemy as the Khalistani terrorists, and that in even the most critical and demanding situations genuine communist revolutionaries cannot afford to go into political hibernation by knowingly taking vague political stands. However, only a propaganda campaign against Khalistani terrorists was not enough to build an effective resistance against them. It was necessary to build a great number of check-points, in the form of revolutionary mass resistance centres, to stem the tide of communal fanaticism and of both kinds of reactionary terrorism. But the weak and divided state of the revolutionary movement was a stumbling block in taking any worthwhile initiative in this direction.

So to pool and organise every bit of resentment and anger of all the positive forces against communalism and reactionary terrorism, the building up of a common platform was the most crying need of the prevailing situation. The "Front against Repression and Communalism", organised by our organisation and some other revolutionary groups, was the answer to this need.

Our organisation had played a most important role in the formulation of the policy of the Front and in planning its structure. A debate was going on at that time about how a common platform should be organised against communalism and reactionary terrorism. As a contribution to this debate our organisation circulated a position paper on the issue. The position paper became the basis of the minimum common programme of the Front which was

approved by all participating groups.

According to this programme, Hindu communalism and Sikh communalism are enemies and equal targets of the Front. Similarly, Khalistani terrorism and State terrorism should be equally hated and opposed. Congress rulers, all groups of Akali Dal, Khalistani terrorists, and Hindu communalists such as Shiv Sena are the criminals who are responsible for Punjab's tragedy. Communist revolutionaries, democratic forces and personalities, and secular-minded people, who agree with the programme of the Front, are to be included in it. The policy does not allow any force to enter the Front that overtly or covertly supports one or the other kind of communalism and one or the other kind of reactionary terrorism.

This policy of taking both the Khalistani terrorism and the State terrorism as equal enemies has a very important implication. The implication is that, for the security of their life and property from Khalistani fascist gangs, people should not rely on the State security forces. This means that, to counter Khalistani terrorism, people cannot limit themselves to political opposition to it. They have to prepare themselves mentally, organisationally and materially to resist it militarily. From the very beginning this policy meant, for the Front, that there should be no reliance on police guards for the security of the functions of the Front. Front leaders should not ask for, but should reject, police guards and licensed weapons for their security -- ie, any privilege which is not provided to the common people by the government.

This policy meant that, along with general mobilisation of the people for revolutionary mass resistance, a special emphasis should be laid on the recruitment of fighting elements of the people into a volunteer force. The

Front formulated this aspect of its policy into a slogan: "Don't have any hopes from the governments; for defence make your own arrangements".

Wherever the Front units have seriously implemented this slogan, have provided concrete guidance to the people, and Front leaders and activists have come forward as a leading core in the self-defence of people's power, there groups of young volunteers have emerged. These volunteers were ever ready to bear any risk in the fight against Khalistani terrorists and have played the vanguard role in the defence of the movement against reactionary terrorism and communalism. At many places, where Khalistani terrorists had banned rallies and demonstrations against them, there the Front units, basing on their volunteer force, defiantly challenged this ban and successfully organised public functions as a part of their fight against Khalistani terrorism. On the other hand, opportunist parties avoided organisations of public functions in spite of the security umbrella of police available to them.

During the so-called social reform campaign of the Khalistani terrorists, the results of the Front's policy of preparing the people for self-defence were especially noteworthy where this policy was consistently and painstakingly implemented. The so-called social reform campaign was a new and bigger fascist attack of Khalistani terrorists on the people. Khalistani gangs announced death sentences for those who violated their commands regarding dress, diet, cultural customs, and so on. During this period, gangs of open and known followers of Khalistani terrorists were disrupting the social life of people. With naked swords in hands, these fascist gangs of "social reformers" were marching in the streets, openly threatening, humiliating and thrashing those (both Hindus and Sikhs) who

violated the dictates of the gangs about certain social and cultural aspects of life

The situation was developing in two directions side by side. On the one hand, some sections of the people were bowing before one order after another issued by the fascist gangs. On the other hand, bitterness and anger against Khalistani terrorism were reaching new heights among more and more sections of the people. This fascist onslaught on the day-to-day lives of common people made the task of mass resistance against Khalistani terrorism more pressing. At the same time it provided the occasion for the most suitable form of mass clashes with the lumpen gangs of Khalistani fanatics, since in this case these gangs (unlike their usual hit-and-run attacks) were wandering, publicly threatening the people, and bullying them with lathis and swords. Under this sway of Khalistani terror, the setting of even a few examples of challenge to the fascist onslaught by the organised mass resistance of people had a special significance. Here are a few such examples:

In an area of our party work, village "A" has been our political focal point for a long time. Our main party activist in the village is a known mass leader of the area. Just before Operation Blue Star (1984) this village had become a battle-ground between the followers of Khalistani terrorists and the village people. Taking advantage of the prevailing Khalistani terror a gang of Sikh fanatics-cum-criminals wanted to usurp the land of a Hindu temple in the village by turning it into a gurudwara (Sikh temple). This attack by religious fanaticism and for land grabbing (under the garb of religious struggle) was successfully repulsed by the village people under the leadership of our party. The struggle required a new pitch when a gang of Sikh fanatics blocked the way of a

demonstration organised in the nearby town by our comrades and challenged the leader of the demonstration to fight with them. The volunteer squad accompanying the demonstration attacked the gang with fire arms and one of the fanatics was injured. As an obvious result of this struggle, our main party activist became a thorn in the side of the Khalistani terrorists and their followers in the area. Within a short period after this incident, the police attacked and searched a large number of gurudwaras throughout Punjab (Operation Blue Star). As part of this operation, the Hindu temple forcibly turned into a gurudwara in village "A" had also come under police attack. A group of Sikh fanatics were arrested and some fire arms were captured.

After Operation Blue Star, when there was a resurgence of Khalistani terrorism, our main comrade was put on the top hit list of

Khalistani terrorists in this area. On the other hand, he became convenor of the Front unit of the area. One threat after another from the terrorists began to reach him. This was the period when the so-called social reform campaign of the Sikh fanatics was in full swing, when almost all sections of the people were liable to be the target of this fascist onslaught, when the State machinery under the Barnala government was fully paralysed before the fascist "social reform" campaign. Khalistani terrorists also announced time and again that no one would be allowed to hold a public rally or demonstration etc against them, that violators would be punished with death. The Front unit of the area accepted this challenge of the terrorists and announced a conference and a demonstration against communalism and reactionary terrorism in general and against the threat to the life of our comrade in particular.

The atmosphere in the town and the area was charged with mixed emotions of anxiety and enthusiasm. People generally feared that any bloody incident might happen on the day of the conference and the demonstration. As part of the preparations, semi-secret mass meetings were organised in some villages of the area and in various parts of the town. About a score of volunteers, armed with conventional weapons and under-cover illegal fire-arms, toured the town for collection of funds and for open canvassing and distribution of hand-bills against the Khalistani terrorists for the express purpose of shattering the prevailing atmosphere of terror.

About 2,000 people participated in the conference and about 1,600 people (including women) marched through the town, mostly armed with conventional weapons and some of course with under-cover fire-arms. Besides at the conference venue, loudspeaker extensions were arranged to other suitable places in the town for a section of the people who supported the Front's fight against Khalistani terrorists but did not dare participate in the conference. This mass defiance and armed march by hundreds of people against the dreaded terrorists had a lightning effect on sections of the people who were becoming targets of the fury of Sikh fanatics. News of this demonstration, along with name of our mass leader of the area, instantly spread to the towns in the nearby areas.

With this development the Sikh fanatics of the area felt their fascist vanity injured. They thought of terrorising the whole of village "A". For this, they organised their area level conference in the village and invited a Punjab level Sikh fanatic leader, Baba Joginder Singh (father of Bhindranwala). On the day of the conference, taking advantage of their massive

presence in the village, a gang of young fanatics began to search the shops in the village and beat up a shopkeeper on the plea that he sold bidies. The village people who were mentally and physically prepared for any such contingency, thrashed this aggressive gang. Hearing news of this incident a large number of participants of the conference reached the place of the incident in an aggressive and retaliatory mood. But seeing the village people well prepared for any eventuality and for paying back in the same coin, the fanatic crowd retreated to the conference venue. This was perhaps the first time in Punjab when the Sikh fanatics had to eat humble pie vis-a-vis people in a period when their writ ran large throughout Punjab. News of this incident thrilled the revolutionary ranks and sections of people opposed to the Sikh fanatics. (Some months later, the Front unit of the area had to defy strenuous police efforts to prevent a meeting of the Front to be addressed by the same comrade in a nearby village. Despite arrests and police terrorising of villagers the programme was successfully held -- again this news became a morale-boosting talking point in the area immediately.)

When this news of the Khalistani fascists' retreat reached town "B", our political centre of another nearby area, followers and supporters of the local Front unit asserted to the Front leadership that they too should organise an armed march to check the so-called "social reform" campaign in the town and the area around it. Within a few days, about 200 volunteers of the Front armed with conventional weapons marched on the roads of the town and warned the Sikh fanatics against any bullying act in the name of social reforms. It was the result of the rousing effect of the Front's militant activities in this town and in the village "A" area that two Hindu

shopkeepers beat a gang of Sikh fanatics who had come to search them and had threatened them. After this the shopkeepers reported this incident to the Front office in the town instead of going to the police. This was the indication of the closeness of the Front leadership with the people of the town. This closeness was earned due to a firm mass approach and daring mass militant activities over a long period of time. Before Operation Blue Star, when two Hindu shopkeepers were shot dead by Khalistani terrorists and the town was terrorised, our comrades had daringly addressed the funeral gathering to motivate the people against terrorists. During the period of Operation Blue Star, when the town was under curfew, our comrades had circulated hand-written propoganda material via rooftops. A free public kitchen was organised in a locality of labourers who were starving due to unemployment created by curfew conditions. After Operation Blue Star, the local Front unit could gather 4,000-5,000 people in cultural programmes. In the organisation of such programmes, various sections of the people such as milkmen, electricians, cooks, rickshawpullers, tenthouse owners and labourers etc, happily and freely contributed their services and wares. The Front unit was capable of summoning scores of volunteers at short notice to provide security cover for its leaders and public functions.

In another town "C", an armed demonstration of more than 1,500 people was organised in the same period. A group of Sikh fanatics bearing naked swords tacitly tried to terrrise and disrupt the demonstration. On one pretext or the other they crossed through the columns of demonstrators. On the other hand, the police tried to ban the demonstration in the name of maintaining law and order. But the Front leaders and participants remained undeterred and repulsed the efforts of

both the State terrorists and the communal terrorists.

"D" is a comparatively big town (sub-division headquarters) which had been a strong-hold of Khalistani terrorists since the beginning of communal turmoil in Punjab. The local Front unit was able to organise a successful political-cum-cultural public function in which 3,000-4,000 people participated (both Hindus and Sikhs) in spite of the threats and warnings of the terrorists.

The most impressive show of strength was a collective demonstration of the Front in which about 8,000 people participated. The participants were not only armed with conventional weapons but also with the hatred and spirit of fight-to-the-finish against Khalistani terrorism and State terrorism.

According to chairman Mao's teachings, when the enemy attacks us, it means we are on the right track. The correctness of political direction of the Front and its successful implementation was corroborated by the fact that, within a short period of its formation, Khalistani terrorists became furious against Front leaders and activists. In most of the cases, leaders of the Front units were put on the hit lists of terrorists and in some cases Front leaders have been seriously pursued and have had to leave their families and professions. A supremo of Sikh fanatics, Baba Joginder Singh, had often spat venom against the Front in his conference. On the other hand, the police have raided the Front's office at some places and arrested its leaders and activists at many places. The charge of inciting civil war, levelled against the Front by an official T.V. commentator, indicated the attitude of the State towards the Front.

Some experiences and problems:

In the beginning, seven revolutionary groups participated in the Front. But in a

short period, three of them parted ways with the Front; after some time, another group left. One of the problems that caused the departure of the groups from the Front concerned mass approach.

The programme of the Front is based on two issues, communalism and reactionary terrorism (and repression), viewed from the close angle. Some groups insisted that the scope of the Front should be widened, ie, it should also take up sectional and class demands of the people. They wanted the Front itself to work with the perspective of developing into a communist revolutionary centre instead of as a mass front against only communalism and reactionary terrorism. On the other hand, we asserted that (i) there is vast scope for organising on a common platform various sections and classes of people who are victims of communal fanaticism and reactionary terrorism, but that (ii) this scope can be fully realised only if we do not impose on others our ideology and political views about issues other than communalism and reactionary terrorism.

Experience has shown that through the Front we could approach and influence those sections of the people, particularly the Hindu trading community, who were difficult to reach through revolutionary democratic mass organisations. In fact, class/sectional mass organisations for the unorganised sections, have very pressing objective need for propaganda and mobilisation against communalism and reactionary terrorism. There were many instances when people, particularly labouring people, demanded that the Front leaders should also organise and lead them to get their demands fulfilled. We asserted that though we should try hard to fulfill the objective need in some other appropriate manner, we should not press the scope of the Front against communalism and repression to

that end.

There was another form in which some groups were trying to narrow the scope of the Front. They insisted that the Front should do joint activities with any political party who is agreed to its minimum common programme. We asserted that the platform of the Front should not be utilised for the projection of the images of the leaders of any political party and its politics. For them the people, who joined the Front only on the issues of communalism and reactionary terrorism will be compelled to identify themselves with the political party with which the Front does joint activities. In fact, there is a left tendency to thus prematurely attach mass organisations as front organisations or through joint activities. This is a form of imposing one's politics upon the people. The groups which left the Front joined a conglomerate with the name Revolutionary Unity Centre which has no clear-cut programme and perspective but is a free-for-all propaganda platform.

Our experience of the Front again proved that, given the correct political direction, sound mass approach (ie, adoption of appropriate methods of reaching the people, suitable forms of propaganda, organisation and struggle), people can match a very powerful enemy. At certain places our activists, starting from scratch, succeeded in mobilising and rousing the people to the level of mass resistance against communal fascist gangs. But there are certain other groups, with wrong political orientation, defective mass approach and incorrect methods of work, whose activists could not advance the work, beyond a propaganda routine. Instead of correcting their approach, line and methods of work, they concluded that people are so terrorised and disappointed that they cannot be mobilised and roused

beyond a certain limit without retaliatory armed actions against Khalistani terrorists by armed squads of revolutionary groups. The debate about relevance of squad actions for the mass movement is again heated up in revolutionary circles of Punjab. We have once again answered this debate on the practical plane, along with the ideological-political struggle, through the successful performance of our Front units at certain places.

We did not expect that all Front units were capable of mobilising and organising the people up to the level of mass resistance. So we perceived two categories of Front units. In some areas we decided to work with the perspective of developing Front units as check points against the Khalistani onslaught where we shall be capable of banning communal fascist atrocities. In such areas not only should the Front units be capable of mobilising and organising the people for mass resistance but we should have a sufficient solid mass base and organisations in various sections -- particularly among the basic masses of the people. In such areas, defensive armed actions may be organised or an element of red terror may be utilised as an activity supplementary to the people's mass resistance -- basing on it and to advance it.

There are other areas where the Front units are liable to remain weak for some time to come due to various subjective and objective factors and where we have not sufficient mass influence and organisation in different sections of the people. In such areas, Front units should avoid activities which might cause a rise in the struggle with Khalistani terrorists to a pitch beyond our capacity. Our activists working in such units should be mentally and emotionally prepared for the eventuality in which we may not be capable of answering the provocative acts of Khalistani terrorists. In such areas, the Front

units should work in a slow and steady manner with the perspective of gathering matching strength over a comparatively long period.

At the time of launching the Front, we also thought that there are certain sections of the people who are opposed to communalism and reactionary terrorism but who do not dare participation in the Front's activities. So we should not press such sections to identify with the Front. Rather, we should help them to organise their separate platforms against communalist and reactionary terrorism, so that every bit of opposition against communalism and reactionary terrorism can be pooled and organised into a mainstream.

A problem which caused the separation of another revolutionary group from the Front was their tendency to soft-pedal towards Sikh communal politics and Khalistani terrorism. According to the minimum common understanding sorted out for the formation of the Front, Sikh communal politics and Khalistani terrorism on the one hand and Congress(I) rulers' and State terrorism on the other hand, both are the enemies and equal targets of the Front. But later on this revolutionary group began to assert its position in the Front that Congress rulers and State terrorism are the main enemies of the people; the Front should mainly fight against them, this while such communalists and Khalistani terrorists are a lesser evil. In fact, this is a particular form of capitulationist tendency towards Khalistani terrorism which is prevalent in a section of the revolutionary camp. The Front cannot afford to allow any such tendency within it, because it has to make the people fight Khalistani terrorism bitterly, daringly, steadfastly.

There is another capitulationist tendency towards State terrorism against which the Front and genuine communist revolutionary groups have to fight. The chief proponent of

this tendency is the Punjab unit of Ramachandran group. On the one hand, this group claims that along with Khalistani terrorism it fights against State terrorism also. But, on the other hand, this group is enjoying the privilege of licensed arms for the security of its leaders. While the need for self-defence, not only of cadres but of the masses, is indeed pressing, it cannot be addressed through the obtaining of arms licences from the State. The arms licensing policy of the Indian State is part and parcel of the ruling classes' control and direction of the means of violence; therefore the right to bear arms is not conceded by the State as a democratic right to be shared by people, but as a privilege granted to those it trusts; and this "right" can also be withdrawn as it wishes. As a matter of principle we reject such privileges not granted to the common people. Moreover, as communist revolutionaries pledged to organise the overthrow of the State through armed struggle, acceptance of arms-licences from the State operates (though not necessarily intended so) as a signal that these weapons will not be trained on the State. This is all the more so if such licences are distributed to persons by virtue of their membership of revolutionary organisations. Therefore for self-defence, we must rely basically on the organised strength of the broad masses of people and on the means available to them, supplemented by the use of illegal fire-arms.

In order to successfully build a mass movement it was urgent and necessary to fight, — on the theoretical plane the wrong tendencies and trends which were raising their head in the revolutionary movement. Significant among such tendencies and trends are: different forms of class collaborations with Sikh section of the ruling classes and softness or support towards Khalistani terrorism;

vanguardist tendencies to counter Khalistani terrorism; different forms of imposition of party policies on the mass organisations, etc.

After enjoying a period of ascendancy, the Front has been passing through a state of unsatisfactory performance. One of the problems is acute shortage of mass activists and mass leaders for the Front. Till now the Front could not build its permanent and independent organisational structure. Most of the activists who comprised its core and leadership also bear the responsibilities of some other mass organisation. Due to continuous pulls from both sides, they cannot continuously play a satisfactory role in the Front. The democratic elements and militants from the unorganised sections of people, who constitute the solid support base, is an unstable force. This force becomes active and passive in accordance with the rise and fall of Khalistani terrorism in their areas. To educate and develop such elements into a stable revolutionary force is a long, time-consuming and arduous task. So, for some time to come the Front organisation and the movement under its leadership will see ebbs and flows.

As the situation stands now, we have many difficult teething problems in reviving and advancing our work on this Front. But, at the same time, we have a good experience behind us, and our Front units have a good name and influence. There is a very fertile objective situation. These positive factors give us sufficient confidence and we are determined to solve all the problems mentioned above.