

SPRING THUNDER

FOURTH CONFERENCE ISSUE

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ALL INDIA LEAGUE FOR
REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE

SPRING THUNDER

Fourth Conference Issue



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Reply of the Tree

SOUDA

A highly emotional foreigner prostrated and cried ;
O tree, you have given us so many crosses,
But we could not give you a Christ at least.
Hearing the prayer of the unknown,
the tree said be wildered ;
Pardon, every tree in this forest has borne a Christ
Every bullet thrust in their hearts pierced our hearts as
well
The woods overflowed with young Christs the crucified !
No crosses are left now.
Don't you remember January 23,
As the crosses were not available
Meghyam¹ was hanged to an electric transformer at
Hanumakonda² crossroads.
Foreigner, we are drained off
We are ineligible to give crosses to your Christs
Excuse us.
Saying this much
The tree fell down with bullet-injuries.

Translated by N. Venugopal

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1. A young tribal comrade-martyr.
 2. A town adjoining Warangal and a part of it in Andhra.

EDITORIAL

The Task Ahead

The Indian ruling class is moving from one political crisis to another, dragging the country down with it towards certain disaster. The economic scene is one of growing indebtedness to foreign countries, increasing exploitation by multinationals, spiralling prices and rising unemployment. None of the problems facing our people, either political or economic, seems to have a solution without state-violence on a massive scale. Dark forces of reaction are having free-play, inciting the passions of multitudes in the name of caste or religious community over issues like Reservations and the Temple-Masjid controversy.

In the meantime, the country is seething with discontent from end to end. Kashmir and Punjab are bleeding, Assam is a-stir with Bodoland agitation. The Jharkhand Movement is going strong in Bihar together with a strong peasant struggle as in Andhra Pradesh, where the Revolutionary movement is waging a 'war of resistance' against savage repression and armed guerrilla squad actions are multiplying all over the northern Telengana districts upto the boundaries of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The crisis of the ruling class is the opportunity for popular forces successfully to challenge the present set-up.

It is, therefore, imperative that we, as committed cultural activists, renew our resolve to mobilise, unite and organise as many like-minded elements as possible, in order to combat the enemy and to serve the cause of the New Democratic Revolution in the light of Marxism-Leninism—Mao Dze dong Thought.

LONG LIVE REVOLUTION !
LONG LIVE AILRC !

Resume of the 4th AILRC Conference, Trichur Oct. 19-21, 1990

The 4th All India Conference of AILRC began on 19th October 1990 at Trichur 'Thekkinkadu Maivthan'. The conference began with the hoisting of the AILRC flag by K.V.R., the General Secretary of AILRC and the 'Janakeeya Kala Sahithya Vedi' flag by Kovilan, the Chairman of the reception committee, at 'Varghese Nagar'. The presence of relatives and families of martyrs of Kerala was specially noted in the martyrs' commemoration and the different sessions of the programme. The delegates of different states sang the song of Com. Subbarao Panigrahi's 'We are Communists' in different languages during martyrs' commemoration.

In the inaugural session, K.V.R. presided over the meeting (Rajan Hall). Kovilan inaugurated the conference. In his speech, K.V.R. pointed out the recent developments in the USSR, China and East-European countries and how the bourgeoisie is telling the people that communism has failed and there is no scope for communism in the world. But this is not the crisis of communism but of revisionism. We should fight against revisionism as well as imperialists and feudal forces in the country. This is the time for unity of all revolutionaries and those who stand for revolutionary culture.

The messages sent by different organisations like CPI (ML) Red Flag, CPI (ML) Peoples' War and individuals of different states were read in the session. K.V.R. presented the secretary's report, giving a picture of the activities of different organisations

of AILRC. When our country is going back to the dead-past, when the communal forces are coming out, and the different governments of India in one way or other supporting them, the role of cultural activists is great. We should fight for a New Democratic Culture. Though we have our limitations the organisations in Andhra, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Bengal, Delhi etc. are still fighting against the evil trends in the cultural fields.

K.A. Mohan Das, the Convener of the Reception committee delivered the welcome speech and P.K. Venugopal, the Secretary, Janakeeya Kala Sahithya Vedi proposed a vote of thanks.

In the second session, a seminar on 'The impact of Naxalbari on Kerala's culture, literature etc.' was held. Two papers were presented, one by K.A. Mohan Das, and the other by Sachidanandan. A third paper on the role of Naxalbari in the cinema was presented by Kakarala (A.P.).

In his paper Mohan Das emphasised that for Kerala Naxalbari was only a cultural experience, not a social one. It was a secondhand experience to Keralities.

Sachidanandan pointed out, the 70's were a break-through in the cultural field. During the 60's we got a new form in Kerala's Literature though it was bourgeois existentialism. But after Naxalbari and the other social developments in various states a revolutionary culture in its form and content was developed. The orthodox from of culture, which was existing even in the so-called left wing culture was firmly challenged and a new trend in culture developed during 70's and later during the period of Janakeeya Samskarika Vedi.

Kakarala gave a picture of Telugu cinema and its commercialisation and the role of cultural activists to fight against it. Prof. P.J. James presided over the meeting. Dr. Shanmughan Pulleppatta read the welcome speech and vote of thanks was proposed by Vijaykumar.

During the session three books were released : 'The world Socialist Poems' edited by Sachidanandan, 'Bhavishyath Chitrapatam' of Vara Vara Rao in Malayalam and a collection of Telugu short stories 'Nela Talli Kosam' and a Telugu novel 'Vasanta Geetam'.

In the poets' meet, poets of different states of India recited their poems. Sachidanandan presided over the meeting. The

poets who participated were Vara Vara Rao, Raj Kishore, Surender Singh, Rajani, Arun Sanyamat, J.N. Yedi Pratibha, Varun Shankar, T.P. Rajeevan etc. After the session, the cultural programmes of various states were performed.

On the second day the conference started with the General Body meeting of AILRC at 'Mundassery Hall' the delegates, commune. The new executive comprising Com. K.V.R., Vara Vara Rao, Chenchaih, C. Prasad, C.S.R. Prasad, (RWA, Andhra) Gaddar, Sanjeevi (JNM, A.P.) Arun Sanyamat, Khagen Das, Chittaranjan Das (RWAIA, Bengal) Raj Kishore, Ram Vijayakumar Arya, Rambali, B.P. Rakshit (K.S.S. & K.B.S., Bihar) Sanobar Keswor, Sambaji Bhagat, (ANM, Maharashtra) Hari-vansh (P.S.M., U.P.) B. Jayaprakash (JKM, Karnataka) Kanchan Kumar, Dr. W.C. Deb (Delhi unit) Maruthayyan Kathiravan, (PALA, Tamilnadu) Govindaswamy (PAF, T.N.) Asit Kumar (JSM M.P.) M. Vijay (Gujarat, JSNM) Baru Satwarg (KSS, Punjab) Mohandas, P.K. Venugopal (JKSV, Kerala), and Saha (JKN, Bhilai).

The new office bearers are :
 K.V.R. (General Secretary)
 Arun Sanyamat (Jt. Secretary)
 C.S.R. Prasad (Treasurer)

The seminar, 'Uphold cultural revolution in the context of expanding revisionism' was held. Dr. W.C. Deb and M.M. Somasekharan presented papers in the Seminar. The latter pointed out that with the reunification of both Germanys under the patronage of U.S. imperialists the world revisionism has lost even its pale mark of socialism. The Cultural Revolution in China was for power between two antagonistic classes. Through Cultural Revolution Mao has shown the right way to fight revisionism. Thus the great proletarian cultural revolution was not confined only to the cultural field. Today all the revolutionary forces should unite, upholding the lessons of Cultural Revolution in fighting revisionism.

Dr. W.C. Deb in his paper narrated in brief the historical context & significance of Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Com. Aist Kumar (JNM, M.P.) presided over the meeting. Sekhar Athanikkal read the welcome speech and vote of thanks

by Edwin Thomas. After the session, cultural programmes from Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Bihar etc. were staged.

A cultural rally was conducted and led by K.V.R., Kanchan Kumar, Gaddar, M.M. Somasekharan, Sivasankaran, Mohandas, P.K. Venugopal, P.J. James, Vara Vara Rao and Asit Kumar. Twenty thousand people marched in the rally through the streets of Trichur.

K.V.R. presided over the public meeting. Vara Vara Rao, M.M. Somasekharan and Raj Kishore, delivered speeches, after K.A. Mohandas welcomed the gathering which was about thirty five thousand strong. P.K. Venugopal proposed a vote of thanks. Cultural programmes from various states were performed after the public meeting till 2 A.M.

The conference was highly successful, marking an important mile-stone in the onward march of the A.I.L.R.C.

PROTEST AGAINST COMMUNALIST VANDALISM

We view with great concern and wrath the setting ablaze on 22-10-1990 evening of the workshed created for the AILRC 4th conference at Trichur, held from the 19th to 21 October, 1990 by some anti-social elements, prompted by the religious fundamentalist forces, which became exasperated by the grand success of the conference, which highlighted the message of the fight against religious fundamentalism and communalism as well as revisionism.

Signed by Gaddar (A.P.), Asit Kumar (M.P.), Dr. W.C. Deb (Delhi) and K.A. Mohan Das and P.K. Venugopal, all Executive members of the AILRC.

[EXCERPTS]



Inaugural Address

KOVILAN

In elementary classes I was never all good at geography. Chakkunni Master called me to show Banares in the map of India, spread on the black board. I stood there embarrassed, my vision faded, my eyes fogged.

‘You bump-head.’

I was burning all along. The sandy fingers had squeezed hard my skin and flesh.

‘If you don’t study well Kunhikkavamma will cry on your shoulder.’

Those days, there were no jeeps or trucks. No roads in villages either. They had only sandy pathways, chequered, ridged or ravined.

The Kavvu was the shoulder rod made of split bamboo, almost to meters long, shaped and polished. For children it was shorter in size namely Kunhi Kavvu. Carrying loads on both ends of the Kavvu porters strenuously trekked the uneven village paths.

If I don't study well, I would have to be a porter. That was the curse.

'Kunhikkavamma will cry on your shoulders'.

Kanpur, Allahabad, Patona.....

I don't remember any of the places that I could rightly point out in the map as wanted by Chakkunni Master. The curse of the teacher was bound to materialise I was destined more than enough to bear the Kavvu on my shoulders.

And 'Kunhikkavamma' continue to cry on my shoulders...

In India there had never occurred any industrial revolution similar to that of Europe, capable of demolishing the traditional social structure, sociologists have already observed. In a way, the Vedic life contexts of sowing, reaping consuming and again sowing still exist here.

The geography of India—the peculiarities of its vast terrain—has deeply influenced India's literature. It could be remembered that the 'Bharatha Varsha' which formed part of the 'Jambu dweepa' was far more wide stretched than the present geographic unit, identified or known as India.

Conceivably, Ramayana and Mahabharatha must be the produces of the plains. Family feuds, border disputes, vendettas, campaigns—all these characterise the plain landers. May be, the Upanishads were written in the Himalayas, realised in the Himalayan valleys. When the mountains scale high the desire (*Kama*) is lost, Darkness (*Tamas*) is dissolved. May be, for making them capable of surviving the freezing chillness and other adversities, the worms and insects which I saw in the Himalayas, were eight or ten times larger in size than those in the plains. Romantic babbling becomes insignificant there; human minds grow as large as mountains. In India, only in the Himalayas one can expect greater minds that probe into the subtle essence of the universe.

When Indian literature reaches the period of Kalidasa there had already developed urban civilization in India. Basically Indian mind is not urban in character. Though a city man himself, Kalidasa in his spirit ever yearned for the village life. It is this nostalgia for the ruralness that turned Kalidasa's poetry eternal in appeal.

The known origin of the Indian literature is traced back to the Rig Veda. It is sad that this "most ancient literary utterance

of humanity" is still inaccessible to the common people. The attempts to fix the commencement of India's cultural history at specific point in time will lead us to nowhere, I am afraid. It is true, the ideas like Aryan occupation and Aryan-Dravidian conflicts are intoxicating. It is gathered that nowhere in Vedic verses, compiled over ages, appears the term 'Aryan'. Nor does any suggestion to wandering clans in search of grazing fields for cattle, to campaigns or to invasions exist in Rig Veda. (I don't claim that I have gone through every verse of it). The Vedic men were settlers in vast expanses of the plains. Farmers they were. It could be speculated that Vedic society was rich and that they enjoyed well their work and leisure. Indubitably, a poor and restive society could not have indulged in Yagna rites at all. Cows and horses were their domestic animals. They yoked for ploughing cows even. There were events of plunder in which cow herds were looted by Dasyus or Asuras. There had also been bloody battles among different clans.

History has introduced to us the cruel characters who indulged in human persecution. They had on this earth races like the Asthek who pierced alive the chest of the war captives and offered the throbbing hearts in worship to the Sun God. We have also heard of Greeks who enjoyed the death-play of slaves thrown to provoke lions. The track record of Vedic community too was not that poor in this aspect. MEDHA is their own contribution. Ajamedha, Aswamedha, Naramedha. Recall Shunassefa. His father sold the son out of sheer poverty. It was in the Yagnasala, to be tied to the sacrificial stake, that ended up at last after so many barter-deals. The fatal moment was fast approaching, the knife would slash at his neck at any time. He pitifully bellowed. Foam and froth flowed out of his mouth. He lay howling and groaning like a dog—We get the wailings of Shunassefa too in the Vedic hymns.

We can only conclude that the feelings of benevolence and magnanimity were alien to the Vedic community. This justifies the significance and the historical necessity of Buddha. And with Buddha we too know that there were millions of people in India, blacked out by the Vedic literature for ages. With the growth of Jaina and Buddha culture this obscured people and their dialects also became alive. Buddhism might have failed in

India conventionally. But we know that its presence in Indian atmosphere is vital still. As far as Malayalam is concerned this observation is more than justified. The poetry of Ashan, who triggered off the renaissance in Malayalam literature was deeply rooted in Buddhist Philosophy. Sociologists have opined that the legacy of Buddhist culture and the Philosophy of Sri Narayana have served stimulant to Keralites in absorbing the communist ideas later. I think that the idol of Theerthankara, I happened to see in the foreyard of Ashan memorial in Kayikkara, too points to the same fact. (It is gathered that the idol was redeemed from a nearby pond while it was cleared off silt). It may be presumed that Jaina-Buddha culture had taken roots in Kayikkara too centuries back and that Ashan bore in his cells the active genes of this tradition.

Buddha was the first known revolutionary in India's cultural history. The ochre dress and the austerity nearing asceticism have always influenced the Indian mind. It is not the method of attaining Sanyasa through political activity, but that of reaching the realm of political activity through Sanayasa that triumphed in India. Perhaps this is applicable to the whole of Asia. Buddha and recently Gandhi in India, Mao in China and Ho Chi Min in Indo-China were all peoples' leaders as well as great masters. Let these masters of wisdom who concretely shaped humanity be hailed as Rishis. □

Messages of Greetings

1. Hold The Flag of Revolutionary Culture Aloft !

The Central Organising Committee of CPI (ML) People's War greets the 4th AILRC conference and wishes it all success. It conveys revolutionary greetings to the AILRC, which is holding aloft the flag of anti-imperialist, anti-feudal and New Democratic Revolutionary cultural movement.

The task of arousing revolutionary fervour and preparing our people for the New Democratic Revolution by means of the cultural movement can properly be discharged only when the character of the present age is rightly understood. Nations want independence, nationalities want liberation and people want revolution.

We believe that your previous efforts in developing revolutionary consciousness and arousing the zeal for struggle against oppression and exploitation have been fruitful. We hope that your conference takes correct decisions in regard to your future practice. But your responsibility will not be over just by taking such decisions. To implement them effectively, there is a need of a number of revolutionary cultural activists who grasp those decisions before implementing them in the spheres of art and literature, taking this as their special responsibility. Only then can the AILRC become a really powerful revolutionary cultural organisation in the course of the New Democratic Revolution.

Imperialism has been in the throes of the third phase of its general crisis and this situation should be best exploited. You should transform yourselves into cultural revolutionary soldiers in order to make our people conscious and to organise them in

this revolution. You should always bear in mind the importance of the teachings of the great teachers of Marxism. "A cultural army is necessary in order to keep the soldiers united to defeat the enemy". You can follow the principle of "serving the people" only by trying to implement that teaching. Writers will become fit to be called 'cultural soldiers' only when they take up the responsibility of strongly opposing anything that is against people's interests and there should be no compromise whatever in this regard. •

The twin-streams of Agrarian Revolutionary struggles and nationality struggles as part of the New Democratic Revolution are swelling day by day in our country now. The panic-stricken ruling classes are branding these just struggles of the people as 'terrorism', 'secessionism', 'extremism' and 'violence'. Revolutionary writers and artists should expose this malicious propaganda and lay bare the sinister tricks of the ruling classes by means of various cultural forms and provide solidarity for these struggles. It is only the literature produced by writers who have become part of people's struggles that is reaching to masses of readers today and making them "practice-oriented". Only then can a writer get the necessary material in order to strengthen the revolutionary potentialities of the people. In contrast, the writings of those who write as if they were mere spectators without being an integral part of the struggle are not only stale but are also rejected by the people. It is therefore evident how huge the writers' responsibility is to reflect 'socialist reality' and to make their writings revolutionary thought-provoking.

It is apt to recollect Com. Mao's utterance : "To be of real value to the proletariat and soldiers, men of letters and artists should jump into actual struggles, so that their feelings and emotions are transformed accordingly".

The ruling classes have been indulging in fascist repression against the revolutionary cultural movement too, all over the country and particularly in Andhra Pradesh. Speech, word and song are all virtually banned by foisting false 'conspiracy' cases, by arrests, by proscriptions and imprisonment of writers and artists under the provisions of TADA. Revolutionary writers should withstand all this and expose and break these

conspiracies of the ruling classes with unwavering revolutionary zeal.

Dear Revolutionary Cultural Soldiers !

Unite all the cultural organisations, artists and intellectuals with the aim of fulfilling revolutionary cultural tasks, in opposition to feudal and colonial culture and build a strong cultural movement. Only then the three-fold responsibility of developing the new democratic revolutionary consciousness of the people, improving revolutionary art and cultural forms so as to be accessible to the people and creating scores of revolutionaries can successfully be discharged, and the establishment of new democratic culture by demolishing feudal and colonial culture will be guaranteed. Make the cultural movement a strong tool in the hands of the people to achieve revolution ! Create thousands of revolutionaries ! Hold aloft the new democratic cultural banner ! March forward as a cultural army in order to mobilise people to achieve revolutionary culture ! Turn the dreams of our beloved martyrs into a reality and build up a new India !

15-10-90

With revolutionary greetings,
CPI (ML) PEOPLE'S WAR
CENTRAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE

2. Unite Revolutionary Cultural Forces !

The CPI (ML) Red Flag extends its red salute to the comrades who have assembled here for the 4th conference of the AILRC and wishes it a great success. This conference is significant in the context of unprecedented burgeoning religious fundamentalism and communalism due to the Ram Janmabhoomi—Babri Masjid controversy, culminating in a series of massacres throughout the country. In the name of anti-reservation agitation upper caste Hindu fundamentalists and feudal elements have blatantly unleashed their fury over the masses resulting in an anti-people cultural atmosphere all over the country.

Our organisation has a revolutionary tradition of fighting against these reactionary cultural trends being propped up by feudal and imperialist forces. On this occasion we extend our red salute to the revolutionaries who had laid their lives for the cause of a revolutionary democratic culture. We also firmly

believe that this conference of the AILRC will be a great step towards the process of unity among revolutionary forces.

General Secretary,
CPI (ML) RED FLAG

Fight Reaction and Revisionism !

Days ahead are full of revolutionary potentialities. The ruling class parties are more or less exposed ; their crisis is fast getting accentuated. One can feel that a storm is approaching.

It is my fervent hope that the Fourth Conference will carry forward the work of the League and find ways of bringing within its fold most, if not all, writers, artists and other cultural workers who are ready to fight various trends of reaction and revisionism.

—SUNITI KUMAR GHOSH
CALCUTTA

Guard the Ideology !

I would like to request you to guard the ideology of our organisation and to continue the fight against religious fundamentalism and communalism through our cultural movement. It is high time for us to realise the significance of the Chinese Cultural Revolution and that should be the guide to action. There is need for upholding the spirit of Naxalbari and the Cultural Revolution.

COM. S.M. MADDIN
KARNATAK STATE PEASANTS & LABOURERS
ASSOCIATION, HAMMIGI

Fight Right Reaction Unitedly !

I hope this conference will address itself towards building the broadest cultural and political unity between all left and democratic forces, who are opposed to the growing rightist, communalist and upper caste sections of our society. The writing is on the wall. If we fail to unite now, no one will forgive us. This is surely the time to bury our differences in the

attempt to popularise secular and progressive values in the country.

—ANAND PATWARDHAN
BOMBAY

Fight Communalism

All the writers and intellectuals should give top priority to the fight against communalism and fundamentalism [which] are posing greatest threats to our country today. No efforts should be spared to meet this challenge. Your conference will certainly be a significant event in this direction.

—ASGHAR ALI ENGINEER
BOMBAY

Keep up Naxalbari Spirit !

Let the AILRC [get] imbued with the spirit of Naxalbari ; lead a tough battle against communalism and religious fundamentalism and illuminate the path of International communist movement in general and the Indian Communist movement in particular.

—NARAYAN
ORISSA PROGRESSIVE WRITERS,
ARTISTS & INTELLECTUALS ASSOCIATION

Expose Sham Secularism !

The conference is being held at such a juncture when the rise of fanaticism is threatening to engulf the country with the covert and overt support of various bourgeois parties and thus denying the aspirations of millions for a secular, democratic and socialist India. Hope, this time, the conference will successfully expose the bankruptcy of these so-called secular parties and uphold the banner of pro-people revolutionary culture.

—SAROJ KUMAR DAS
TANARADA, ORISSA



Secretary's Address

Comrades and friends,

Revolutionary greetings to you all.

The All-India League for Revolutionary Culture is meeting in its 4th biennial conference here at Trichur, thanks to the willing cooperation of the Janakeeya Kala Sahitya Vedi of Kerala. The foundation conference was held in New Delhi, eight years back in 1983 and the second and the third conferences took place in Sindri, Bihar and in Calcutta respectively. In between these conferences we were conducting seminars, one on caste and class at Madras in 1987 and another on communalism and fundamentalism at Bombay in 1989.

The League is a loose federation of 16 revolutionary cultural organisations functioning in 12 states of the country, ranging from Kerala in the south to Punjab in the north and from Gujarat in the west to Assam in the east. The oldest of them is the Revolutionary Writers' Association of Andhra Pradesh which was set up in 1970 in the wake of the Srikakulam revolutionary struggle, while the youngest is the Janakeeya Kala-Sahitya Vedi of Kerala which has just now been formed on the ruins of the earlier Janakeeya Samskarika Vedi. The Purvanchal Samskritik Manch of U.P. and the Jana Kala Manch, Bhilai, M.P. are the latest members of the League. The Revolutionary writers', Artists' and Intellectuals' Association of West Bengal, the Aavhaan Natya Manch of Maharashtra, the People's Cultural Forum and the Revolutionary Cultural Movement of Tamilnadu, the People's Literary and Arts' Association

of the same State, the Jana Kala Mandali of Karnataka, the Krantikari Samskritik Sangh and Krantikari Buddhijeevi Sangh of Bihar, the Krantikari Sahit Sabha of Punjab, the Jan Sangharsha Natya Manch of Gujarat, the Jan Zui of Assam and the Delhi unit of the AILRC—these are our other constituents. This, I suppose, is no mean achievement on our part, although there is a lot more to be done by way of extending our activities wider and wider to cover the entire length and breadth of our country. I am confident of this in this decade itself, while at the same time consolidating our present base and deepening it further in order to reach out to our people as the revolutionary task of utmost importance.

Comrades and friends,

As revolutionary cultural activists, we take just pride in our world-outlook, which we have defined in so many words as Marxism-Leninism-Mao Dze-dong Thought. The impact of the great proletarian cultural Revolution was strong upon us when we had started this League and it continues to be so, inspite of the set-back it has suffered in the country of its birth. It is therefore, necessary that we take a brief look at what is going on at home and abroad, in order to sharpen our political consciousness.

Led by the U.S., the imperialist camp today finds itself in disarray as a logical outcome of the general crisis of capitalism. The U.S. dollar is not the same as it was and it is being challenged by the Japanese yen even in the U.S. itself, whose domestic economy is being successfully swamped by the resurgent economy of Japan in recent years. However, the imperialists have all along been frantically seeking to retain or repair their hegemony, as was evident in the Falklands dispute between U.K. and Argentina and in the U.S. intervention in Panama and Nicaragua. Despite the apparent success in disarmament, the imperialist camp still has sufficient destructive potential left to threaten the world with a nuclear war.

The most significant development of our times is the total disappearance of the Socialist camp, what with the usurpation of Revisionism in both the USSR and the people's Republic of

China. The socialist foundations of the Soviet economy, that had been laid by Lenin and Stalin, have successfully been undermined by Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Kosygin and now Gorbachev with his Glasnost and Perestroika. Even collective farms are now being privatised. A market-economy is being openly introduced, based on the bourgeois law of value, with profit as the sole motive. Bureaucratism of a modern variety has been the curse of government and administration in the USSR since a long time and consequently, its economy has been beset with a chronic short-supply of essential consumer products, which naturally gives rise to black-marketeering on a colossal scale. Unable to implement genuine socialist reforms to repair the accumulated damage, Gorbachev has shamelessly embarked upon the capitalist path of development, thereby subverting Marxism-Leninism in practice. This has led to a chain-reaction and we find its former East European satellites revelling in revisionism today, discarding even the Red Flag together with the proud word 'communist' from their new political jargon. Little surprise, therefore, if the USSR is now facing a threat of dissolution, with the Baltic Republics opting for independence with chronic ethnic unrest in Armenia and Georgia and with mounting Pan-Islamism in the Central Asian Republics. Social imperialism deserves all this and more.

No better is the record of the People's Republic of China. The retreat from the Cultural Revolution on the capitalist road has led it ultimately to Deng's Four Modernizations. The cancerous growth of the evil of bureaucracy, both in the communist party and in the government, coupled with the breakdown of the economy, resulted in widespread dissatisfaction and it was this mood that was reflected by millions of students and we all know, to our sorrow, what befell their demonstration in the Tien En Mein Square. It is true that these students were misled into demanding bourgeois democracy in spite of their genuine grievances against the regime. Deng's professions apart, we know for certain that China has chosen to bury Mao, and together with him, Marx, in spite of its professions to the contrary.

Now the question is : Has Marxism failed ? Our answer is : the practitioners of Marxism in the USSR, Eastern Europe and

China have failed Marx. The gleeful bourgeoisie want us to believe that this is the crisis of communism. But we say 'No, this is only the crisis of Revisionism. The fundamental insights and formulations of Marxism are as valid as ever and communism as the large and bold dream of mankind, is invincible. The triumph of Revisionism elsewhere should make us all the more determined to uphold Marxism here in our country.

Looking at the national scene, we find the ruling class plunged in crisis after crisis, resulting in political instability at the centre.

The ramshackle minority government of the National Front has been stumbling all along. It is unable to solve any major problem facing the country, either political or economic. The country is neck-deep in foreign debt, owed to the World Bank or to the International Monetary Fund, not to speak of private debt to imperialist countries. The economic policies of this government have opened doors to the Multinational corporations which have found faithful junior partners in the Indian monopoly houses, making them even more dependent upon the imperialist bourgeoisie. Prices have gone totally out of hand and unemployment has been scaling newer heights. Pent-up emotions are being released in acts of growing disorder and violence. Neither Rajiv Gandhi nor Viswnath Pratap Singh has been able to cry a halt to the agony of Punjab which has been bleeding every hour over the last few years. The shameful record of the successive governments in Kashmir with a permanent military occupation ever since its accession, rigged elections, and subversion of the constitutionally-guaranteed special status, has resulted in the present wave of militancy among the state's frustrated youth. The Bodoland agitation in Assam and the Jharkhand movement in Bihar have not died down. The Nagas are still carrying on their armed struggle in the north-east. The country is, therefore, restive from one end to another. It is unhappy. It is fighting back. Objectively speaking, this is a revolutionary situation.

Communalism and Fundamentalism are having a field day, as it were. Led by the BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal, RSS, ABVP and Shiv Sena, Hindu communalism has been aggressively on the offensive and some of the bloodiest communal disturbances

have been witnessed in recent years in Gujarat, U.P., Bihar and Karnataka and now in Kerala. Making an issue of quite an unimportant thing like a temple for the mythical Rama in Ayodhya on the same site where a Babri Masjid has stood for four hundred years, these ugly forces have been whipping up emotions and passions of multitudes, which might lead to a horrible communal conflagration over large parts of the country in the very near future. The Government, with its shallow secularism, has been seing fit to accommodate and appease communal and fundamentalist forces, whether of the Hindu or the Muslim variety, as in the aftermath of the Shah Bano case.

Casteism has been thriving as ever in our public life, as is evident from the literally burning controversy over the Mandal Commission Report. The Government as well as the opposition are motivated to take conflicting stands on reservations, only having an eye to their electoral prospects. The anti-reservationist agitation is conducted mostly by upper-caste students, some of whose forms of action show utter contempt for the traditional professions of lower-castes, like sweeping, boot-polishing, etc. It only shows the confrontation of two cultures, one of the toiling people and the other, of their social superiors. The real question is one of colossal unemployment, but not of 27% reservations to backward classes or castes in central government jobs and in public sector undertakings. Reservations must be there as long as castes are unequal in socio-economic and political power. Any talk of inserting the 'Right to Work' in fundamental rights is going to be empty talk as long as the problem of 18 million-strong army of the unemployed stares the rising generations of our youth hard in the face.

Any survey of the national scene will not be complete without a reference to the growing strength of the real alternative to the existing set-up, viz; the revolutionary movement. Though it is true that no revolutionary party has yet emerged as a country-wide phenomenon, several M.L. Parties who are upholding the basics of Naxalbari have been operating in different states and it is only in the course of their ongoing struggle against the Indian state that such a party will finally emerge. In the meantime these struggles must go on as they are

going on. The revolutionary movement is, on that account, disjointed and varying from state to state. It is stronger in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar than elsewhere. In fact, in these two states, and more especially in A.P., it has reached the dimensions of a war of resistance against state repression and white Terror. This has, therefore, led to the rise and growth of a strong civil liberties' movement which focusses public attention on the growing incidence of the unlawful activities of the state apparatus, directed against not only political activists but also helpless citizens such as women and other weaker sections of the people.

Comrades and friends,

Let us not forget for a moment that we are committed revolutionaries operating in the sphere of culture. We had set to ourselves the task of creating, propagating and promoting New Democratic culture as best as we can, so that a profound change is brought about in the people's ways of feeling, thinking and doing. We can achieve this only if we successfully remove from the people's minds the cultural burden of centuries which is keeping them bound helplessly to traditionalism and conservatism. We have, therefore, to wage a relentless struggle against the reactionary cultural tendencies, bequeathed by feudalism and also against the decadent and dehumanizing tendencies of the bourgeois culture of the West, which have been infiltrating into the country ever since our colonial days. These twin evils are quite strong and powerful even in the present day.

We have to feel ashamed, as a nation, that our social values are still shaped by the dead hand of religion. Do we not see how the Hindu Dharmacharyas and Islamic Imams, Mahants and Maulavis have been fostering fundamentalism and vitiating secular life, feeding communal prejudices and passions, and stoking the fires of mutual enmity and hatred? They have gone to the extent of sanctioning and sanctifying a socio-economic fossil like caste. Not even the recent industrialism has been able to undermine caste and, on the contrary, it has found a safe berth for caste, which only illustrates how our bastard capitalism has readily compromised with feudalism.

There is, however, no clear demarcation between caste and class as separate categories in our socio-economic life, while in actual fact they are intertwined. Our brand of democracy has politicised caste as it has done with religion. One of foremost tasks is, therefore, to combat these evils of casteism and communalism in social as well as cultural spheres.

Quickly on the heels of the Hindu communalist tirade against the T.V. serial, TAMAS, we all saw how very successfully religious poison was injected into the minds of millions of spectators by means of the Puranic serials of RAMAYANA and MAHABHARATA. The outcry of the Shiv Sena against the tele-screening of 'The Sword of Tipu Sultan' also shows that Hindu Communalism cannot stomach even fictionalised history, while, on the other hand, it is all too eager to swallow RAMAYANA and 'Mahabharata' as though they were history, but no mere imaginary Puranas.

All this only shows that traditionalism is deep-seated in the masses and we can't just wish it away. It gets manifested as neo-classicism and it upholds elitist trends in arts like music and dance, trends which are far above the heads and hearts of the people. Orthodoxy goes together with this veneration of tradition and even the slightest deviation from the time-honoured norms and rules by way of experiments are severely frowned upon by Pandits and Ustads. A fight against these feudal values in our culture is a must for us. Art should go to the people and not the other way round.

Decadent bourgeois culture of dying imperialism has been making steady headway in our country, as a complement to the domination of the imperialist economy over ours. It was already there as a legacy of the colonialism but then it played a somewhat regenerative role in the second half of the 19th century, by giving an impetus to the so-called Renaissance and religious reform. But soon its reactionary character came into the open and nowadays we see it in its true colours, unlike the earlier generations who were limited in their outlook by false consciousness. What is it that this outlandish culture presents today? Number one, Disco and Brake Dance. Number two, Pop Music, Number three, Pulp literature. Our youth is headlessly drawn to this stuff, unmindful of its own plight in the

actual scheme of things. The brand of Bombay 'fillums' has become the all-India trade-mark of movies, marked by purposelessness, beautifications of petty things of life and glorification of violence, a la Amitabh Bacchan. 'New Wave' pictures of Mrinal Sen, Gautam Ghosh and Shyam Benegal are already a thing of the past, submerged as they were in the filthy flood of the commercial cinema. Things have come to such a pass now that Mrinal sen disclaims political loyalties any longer, saying that politics and art do not mix well. And you have films debunking communists and presenting a distorted picture of the so-called Naxalites. This deliberate attempt to move away from political themes is a pointer to the growing apathy towards the most determining aspect of the nation's life. Abstract art serves a similar purpose. What art should do is only to highlight the most significant aspects of life as it is actually lived by the people and, by so doing, to artistically suggest how to change it for the better. Art is meaningless if it is not for progress. The artist should merge his little self in the larger and far nobler life of the people.

On the contrary, we see the artist's personality breaking up into tiny fragments whatwith the impact of modern life on his psyche. He is getting increasingly alienated from the people in a world of increasing bourgeois values. He is getting seized by the Existential 'Angst', eventhough in India there is no real need for borrowing this philosophy from the west where it might be more relevant. The result is the growing distance between the artist and the people at large. And it is we who must bridge this gulf by means of a genuinely popular literature and art. We don't deny the subjective element in all art nor do we belittle the part played by feeling and emotion in the creation of art. But that is not argument in favour of subjectivism, which, if it is allowed to run riot, is bound to lead to romanticism, pure and simple. We don't envisage a situation in which the artist looks himself up in an ivory tower, bound helplessly to the small concerns of his little self, blind and deaf to the scene and sounds of the living world with its larger pre-occupations and more meaningful pursuits. Divorced from society, art defeats the very purpose to serve which it came into existence in the collective life of mankind. It condemns itself to unproductive isolation and to pleasurable self-delusion.

On no account should we allow art to degenerate for art, in our eyes, is a mighty weapon in the transformation and elevation of 'Man's Estate' or the human condition.

Ours is no light burden and no easy task. We have not only to build up an alternative, a people-oriented culture but to effect a profound change in the social set-up by means of revolutionary culture. Realism is our philosophical approach in the matter of depicting social life in art and literature. We know that realism is at a discount in our times but we also know that we have a long realistic tradition to guide us and lead us on. Above everything else, we have the people's own life to study and to draw artistic material from. As Mao said in his Yen-an Talks, the life of the people is a veritable mine for artists, but the ore should be refined and processed firms. It is in people's culture where our roots should lie if we want to make art a mighty instrument of social transformation.

Comrades and friends,

We are perfectly aware of our own limitations in the sphere of culture. As yet, we are raw and callow as artists. Belonging to the power rungs of society, we have been condemned by centuries of our history to be either illiterate or semi-literate. Our intellectual and artistic faculties were not allowed to blossom. This has been the cruel fate of all people who had suffered age-long social and cultural suppression. But this should not stand in our way to develop ourselves. As Lenin said, we must learn even from bourgeois artists how to improve our artistic talents and techniques. We must master both the content and form of art for we can't hope to convey our message to the people by means of imperfect art. It is an uphill task for us. But let us not get disheartened. Remember how the foolish old man in the story removed mountains from his path. Let us persist in our endeavour and success will certainly be ours.

LONG LIVE REVOLUTION !

LONG LIVE THE AILRC !

Trichur
19-10-1990

—K.V.R.
Gen. Secretary



Organisational Report of the AILRC Trichur Conference October, 1990

Dear Comrades,

It is gratifying to note that in terms of geography our league is indeed an all-India body, extending from Punjab to Kerala and from Gujarat to Assam. But we should admit to ourselves that appearances do not convey a real picture. The strength of a loosely-federal body like our league lies in the strength of its constituents, which are, however, unequal in age, experience and organisational strength. Some of them like Jan Zui of Assam are yet fledgelings, taking shelter under the wings of some other organisations, while some more like Janakeeya Kala-Sahitya Vedi of Kerala have just been formed or are getting formed still. Not all of our constituents are of state-wide dimensions where they have been working, while one or two are almost confined to a city or two, as in the case of Jana Saugharsh Natya Manch of Gujarat. The Revolutionary Cultural Movement of Tamilnadu had once been strong and active but is now almost in ruins, waiting to be rebuilt. Even the People's Art

Forum of the same state is not as active as it used to be. It is painful to point out such shortcomings and I do it only in order to appeal to them all to strive their best to overcome their failings, so that they compete with their fellow-organisations in terms of fruitful activity for the advancement of revolutionary cultural work. It is our earnest hope that the AILRC will soon become a strong chain of strong links.

It is not a gloomy picture all the way and there are many bright patches, which help us to be quite optimistic about our prospects. After the Calcutta conference in October, 1988, the AILRC conducted a seminar on the question of communalism and fundamentalism in Bombay, in April, 1990 and, it was a moderate success. Sometime earlier, our league organised a one day seminar on caste in Visakhapatnam A.P. in collaboration with the Visakhapatnam unit of RWA. The Delhi unit of the AILRC conducted a convention against revisionism in September, 1990. The assistance and cooperation of Aahvan Natya Manch and the Revolutionary writer's Association in the organisation of these seminars and participation by organisations like the KBS and KSS of Bihar are matters to be noted, because they indicate a trend towards greater solidarity in the work of our league. Similarly, the Aahvan Natya Manch, Revolutionary writers' Association and the KBS and KSS and the Delhi unit took part in the AILRC tour of Punjab in July 1990. The conference of Krantikari Sahit Sabha of Punjab was attended by a representative of RWA. This is a good sign because we are slowly learning to become members of each other, transcending organisational and geographical barriers.

The Jana Natya Mandali of Andhra has signally contributed to the growth of the revolutionary movement by participating in mammoth rallies, rousing the enthusiasm of vast multitudes and raising the level of their consciousness by means of its great cultural programmes. Moreover it successfully undertook cultural tours of other states after the surfacing of Gaddar to open life in February, 1990. It encountered a series of the acts of harassment from the police of several states like Tamilnadu and Karnataka and the culmination of this cultural fascism was seen in BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, whose police prohibited its cultural performances in a number of places including Bhilai and Bastar and virtually extradicted them from M.P.

Our constituent associations are generally of two kinds, the first being predominantly writers' organisations like the RWA of A.P. and RWAIA of West Bengal and the second, predominantly of sing, dance and street-play like JNM of A.P. and ANM of Maharashtra. The second species, more than the first, has greater scope for leaving a direct as well as a powerful impact on the spectators-cum-listeners by virtue of the visual forms they present to the public. Other have to convey the message of their art-forms by means of the written word, which reaches only literate circles among the people. It is time efforts are being made by ANM, and KBS and KSS of Bihar to recruit writers to their ranks with varying degrees of success. It is not out of place to point out the experience of PALA of Tamilnadu in this context, from which others might draw a useful lesson in the matter of reaching out to the masses even by means of the written word. They have been going to the factories and work-places to propagate their literature. It behoves us all to bridge the gap, if we indeed can, between the oral and written forms of art, if we are to serve the cause of the Revolution better.

By their very nature, organisations of writers and artistes cannot be mass-organisations, one of the main reasons being their restricted membership. But revolutionary cultural organisations fall into a separate category and they are certainly expected to at least supplement the work of mass-organisations. I must say that, in this regard, the work of our constituent associations is creditable, though much more can be done. It is not my intention now to go into the details of the work of each association. Suffice it to make an attempt at a general review. Besides commemorative meetings for Bhagat Singh by KSS and RBS of Bihar and ANM of Maharashtra, Martyr-poets Paddyha and Pash and Sant Ram Udasi were remembered in meetings conducted by KSS of Punjab. The Santhal hero, Birsa Munda was remembered by KSS and KBS. A seminar on casteism, and communalism and fundamentalism was also organised by it, while the JSM of M.P. conducted a seminar on New Education policy. The JKM, Karnataka, held a week-long work-shop on dance, drama, songs and culture and organised video-shows of JNM performances in 18 districts. RWA of A.P. has regular

been conducting workshops for writers and artistes and besides, like the KSS and KBS of Bihar its, members too have taken part in building up a women's organisation. Like the PALA of Tamilnadu, RWA also took part in a campaign against obscenity in collaboration with like-minded groups. The ANM campaigned against the Narmada Dam project in Gujarat while RWA took part in the campaign against the Atomic Power Plant Project near Nagarjuna Sagar in A.P. The RWAlA and ANM conducted a virulent propaganda against the Bhopal sell-out. Of special interest is the founding of a school in the forest-area of Gaya district in Bihar by KSS and KBS. Their support of the Jarkhand movement is remarkable in that it has helped in forging links with the tribals, just as the association of the ANM with Bhil tribals may be, in cultural matters only, has been fruitful. Lock-outs were protested by ANM, while price-rise, fee-rise and donations to educational institutions were protested by PALA. Poll-boycott campaigns were conducted by a number of our constituents. The Delhi unit of the League brought out a pamphlet against anti-reservation campaign, long before it became the burning issue of the day. PALA should be congratulated for having taken up a popular issue like government sponsored cheap liquor as well as illicit liquor, affecting millions of its consumers. The problems created by the spate of lock-outs become the subject-matter of a street-play by ANM. Developments in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe did not escape our attention, as evidenced by the activities of our Delhi unit, the JSM of M.P., RWA of A.P., and PALA of Tamilnadu. The RWA celebrated the 20th year of its life by holding a mammoth conference at Hyderabad. The Secunderabad conspiracy case, which had been instituted in 1974 against six members of the RWA among them was quashed by the court, thus giving a public slap in the face of the Government. 'Lal Bano, Ghulami Chodo, Bolo Vandematram' a poem against Hindu communalism, was translated into Hindi by the RWA in collaboration with the Delhi unit. The Janakeeya Kala-Sahitya Vedi of Kerala attended the Bombay seminar on communalism even before joining the A I L R C as a member. I think this summary review will do. What needs to be stressed, as it has been stressed time and again, is only this : these multifarious activities should

not go unnoticed and unreported. They should at least be communicated to each other by means of the General Secretary who if the League's finances permit, may be authorised to bring out at least a quarterly news-bulletin on behalf of the A I L R C or such news might be published by the journals of the constituents.

This brings us to the next point in my review, viz., our periodicals. As you are aware, the League's attempts to bring out its official organ, by name 'SPRING THUNDER' have met with repeated failure. It is due, not only to poor finances, but also to a number of valid reasons. We must blame ourselves if so many cultural organisations were unable to provide at least tolerably good material for its prospective readers. The problem is essentially one of translation of literature from regional languages into English and Hindi. We don't evidently have efficient translators, coming to periodicals of different associations, we cannot make mention of more than three or four : ARUNA TARA of RWA, supplemented by SRIJANA, both monthlies, PUTHIYA KALACHARAM (New Culture) of PALA, which is a quarterly and LAL KIRAN of KBS, Bihar. PAF's SENDARAKAI has not been coming out regularly as it used to. The ANM was reportedly making efforts to bring out NIRMAN and I don't know what became of it. Com. Kanchan Kumar's AMUKH having ceased publication for quite some time, our Delhi unit set themselves to publish another periodical, by name ANCH. The greatest problem is, of course, circulation. PUTHIYA KALACHARAM alone stands out with a total circulation of about 8,000 copies while even ARUNA TARA can only bring out copies of 1,200 at the most. PALA'S example may serve us all because, as already stated, they are going to factories and workshops to sell their periodical.

This being the state we are in, I urge upon you all to devise ways and means of strengthening the league financially, so as to fashion out a strong cultural forum, which is really worth its big name—All-India League for Revolutionary Culture.

TRICHUR
21-10-1990

K.V.R.
General Secretary

The Five Questions Facing Us

I. Why have we been unable to take our message to the masses ?

As revolutionary cultural workers, we have to operate through a variety of cultural forms. All of them cannot be clubbed together for the reason that oral forms like song and visual forms like dance, ballet and play must be treated separately. These have a much more direct appeal and leave a much more immediate impact on the masses of spectators. It is only in respect to written literature that the question is relevant.

True, the literature that we have been producing is meant for the masses. But our prospective readers are limited mainly to the middle classes, since large sections of the people are not literate enough to read and appreciate it. He should keep the following in mind :

(1) He should select a group of good listeners and keep himself in close and constant touch with them. He should read out his story or essay or poem to them and take their responses seriously, in order that they gain a really popular character. This process helps him to mould himself into a people's own writer by improving upon the form and the content of his literary output.

(2) Writers of fiction should study life at close quarters and in depth, in order to depict it realistically. Needless to say that they should involve themselves in revolutionary politics which helps them not only to keep abreast of the ever-changing currents in people's lives, but also to gain a dialectical outlook of life. They should take up 'Go To Villages' campaign in right earnest and, where this is not possible, they should

at least establish a living contact with the life in the towns where they live or at least in their neighbourhoods. This goes a long way in making them people's writers, by enabling them to understand the complexities in the life of the people, to capture the people's idiom and turn of speech and, above all, to get 'declassed'.

(3) The problems faced by the people should be presented to the people in artistic form. Our literature should be clear and intelligible. It should not be above people's heads and, therefore, it should shun all elitist trends.

(4) It is necessary that our literature should employ the living language of the people. But care should be taken lest it become mere slang.

(5) Writers should take a more direct part in people's movements.

(6) It should be their endeavour to see that the people throw up writers from among themselves.

(7) The oral literature of the people is a veritable gold-mine for writers, especially of songs, and it should be studied diligently with an eye on its infinite variety of forms.

(8) Every unit should study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Dzedong Thought.

(9) In one word, our literature should be made really mass-oriented in form and in content.

II. Why have not 'declassed' yet ?

In our context, 'declassé' does not consist merely in changing the stuff and style of our clothing and other external aspects of our daily life. Not that these things are wholly inconsequential or unimportant. What is absolutely essential, however, is a change in one's very way of thinking. It is a long and continuous process for individuals to transcend, and to give up, their earlier ways, in order to become one with the common people in word and deed. Proletarian ideology should be the touch-stone of all that we think, say and do. It should permeate our entire being and this is a conscious endeavour. We may hope to achieve it by a direct participation in people's movements. To overcome self is the biggest hurdle. This can be done if, for instance, one cultivated the habit of parting with a part, however, small, of his income as a levy to the organisation

in which he is active. Each and every member of an organisation should participate in its day-to-day activities with a sense of belonging. One should seek to merge his little self in the larger and the nobler self of a collective. We should try to take part in people's life. Petty-bourgeois deviations in an organisation can be combated better by cultivating proletarian class-consciousness by members, while efforts should be made to draw cultural activists from the peasants and workers in greater numbers into the organisation, so that they tend to form strong core therein.

III. In practice, why are we not adopting a correct united front approach in our activity ?

United front is essentially a political concept, although united front tactics were successfully applied even in the cultural sphere by the world communist movement in the past. As cultural workers, however, we can only think of joint action on specific issues. We cannot and should not unite, nor can we have any joint-action, with the principal enemy, against whom we are all ranged. For example, we can have no truck whatever with Hindu communalist forces in our struggle against various manifestations of communalism. We should be extra-coutious against joint-actions with them even on certain specific issues, lest they gain a democratic image. We should also be careful about joint-actions with the so-called voluntary organisations which are funded by imperialist agencies like the C.I.A. In any case, the principles of united front will have to be applied to concrete situations and specific issues. We must always keep in mind the basic principle of unity-struggle-unity. Never should the struggle aspect be lost right of. In other words, unprincipled unity should be avoided. At the sametime, we should give due weight to the views of even those, who do not agree with us on all things, while working together with them. If we feel that their views and practice are not really in the interest of the people, we should state our own views boldly. In other words, joint-action should not be allowed to degenerate into compromise on fundamentals in order to appease or to win over all and sundry. When we undertake joint-action with others, we should compete in actual work, instead of haggling over smaller things such as the number of speakers. That is to say we should impose certain restrictions and restraints upon

ourselves in order to see that our real purpose is better achieved.

IV. Why are the various units of the AILRC not able to coordinate with each other ?

Eight years after the formation of the AILRC and our coming together, it is painful that not enough coherision has yet been achieved among our constituents. This has been standing in the way of common action. The following might be helpful in overcoming this situation :

(i) The leading cadre of our units should try to learn one or two languages other than their mother tongue, to enable them to communicate with other with greater ease.

(ii) All-India workshop should be conducted on various forms of art and literature.

(iii) Literature of revolutionary struggles in the regional language of a unit should be introduced to other languages in the periodicals, run by these units.

(iv) The activities of one unit should be communicated to other units for publication in their respective periodicals.

(v) Fraternal tours by cultural troupes of one state-unit should be promoted in other states.

(vi) Members of the constituent units, residing in districts bordering on other states where our units exists, should participate in the latter's activities.

V. The fifth question pertains to the social values of our members. In a way it is a code of conduct, though it is not possible to have a list of do's and don'ts. But certain common lapses may be highlighted, in order to suggest positive features by implication :

(1) Bossim : towards members of one's family, towards fellow-members in an organisation, and towards people in general.

(2) Anarchy : in financial matters, in running one's own affairs and in organisational matters.

(3) Sexual anarchy : not displaying a proper attitude towards women.

(4) Indifference and apathy in organisational matters.

(5) Habits for which there is no social acceptance and approval.

These negative traits can best be corrected by criticism and self-criticism. Honesty and sincerity should mark the behaviour of a member when he seeks to correct himself. Each member should observe the conduct and the attitude of another and report it to his organisation. But this should not degenerate into espionage and counter-espionage as in the case of 'Big Brother is watching you'. The motive of each member should be only corrective and, as such, it should be characterised by human sympathy and consideration.

A revolutionary cultural organisation, worth its salt, should be more attentive in the matter of social values of its members. As champions and advocates of a new society and a new culture, we are naturally expected to fight against the evils in the present set-up. We should also strive our utmost to set a good example for others. The following may be considered favourably :

(1) Rituals and ceremonials pertaining to religion should be avoided.

(2) All feudal manifestations in the family must be combated and other members of the family should be won over to our own ways.

(3) Bigamy, illicit sex and dowry should be avoided.

(4) Members should not be drunkards, spendthrifts or gamblers. They should not take to usury.

(5) They should disown caste-surnames and give up caste or religious externals, at last for a beginning.

The posing of these five questions and a proper response to it on our own part will hopefully be the beginning of a long process of making our League healthier, stronger and more effective as a worthy instrument in the cause of revolution.

K.V.R.

Gen. Secretary, AILRC

Human Sacrifice

PRAVEEN

Thalandi Ramadu was sitting anxiously in Priest Masu's house. He was unable to decide what to do after the Priest's advice. Masu decreed that the blood of a 'two legged animal' should be spilled to make Ramadu's wife healthy. Human sacrifice was a part of their tradition. Though it was not strange, the practice was stopped of late. In his childhood, his ancestors used to slit open the throats in order to save themselves from any harm. Even he himself had tasted blood along with his brother. But it has become out of fashion now. But this time his wife was bleeding profusely for the last 30 days. All the medicines—quack and government—were used in vain. So again Ramadu had to revert to the old practice. It was a bit terrifying but yet, he had to do it for the sake of his wife. Forced by conscience, he stepped out of Masu's house.

Ramadu crossed the borders of his village. There were big slabs in memory of his ancestors. There were small heaps of stones over the burial ground in front of the slabs. A furlong beyond the burial ground there was an arch and then there was a vast expanse of fields.

Fields occupied the whole horizon upto the Banday river. All the fields in view were of the 'Gottes'. All the fields have 'Khethuls' amidst them. Form of the khethul depends upon the financial positions of respective farmers. Small peasants keep a watch over their fields from small khethuls like 'nests', while landlords reside in the khethuls of an estate size in the season. Ramadu also belongs to this category. Even the paddy mounds

resemble the khethuls. While the paddy mounds of the big peasants look like a temple tower, that of the small peasants look like the shrine of a village deity. Though the crop gets lost due to seasonal vagaries or pests, there was only one remedy against every thing. Rivers of blood flowed in the soil in the hope of good harvest. Ramadu thought that his brother knows more than himself about sacrifices. With these thoughts he crossed the fields and stepped into the river.

Jonnawai Chandraiah met on the way. "Ram Ram Patel".

"Oh, Ram Ram".

"Why, going out at this hour?" Chandraiah knows the nature of Thalandi Gottes of Kursuballi and hence the suspicion.

"On a small work; Uncle. Is everybody okay in the village?" Ramadu replied in interrogative with a relationship.

"Every thing is alright. But then, what is there that you don't know? I am going to Mandra"—Chandraiah left the scene in haste.

Ramadu climbed up the other bank of the Banday and saw Gouraiah spilling beams. Behind him the sun was going down taking leave till tomorrow. Jonnawai is only a few paces away. Ramadu entered the village without hesitation.

Jonnawai is a Koya village. Houses do not number more than 20. Majority of the families earn their livelihood from day to day. No house has a tiled roof. All the 20 huts are only thatched huts. Even the food of coarse flour was not available due to the famine over the last two years. People were going to wage labour and living off cheap jowar. Ramadu observed everything while walking through the huts. Muthanna's daughter was sitting under a tamarind tree out side Muthanna's hut. Ramadu glanced at the girl within no time, he closed Pochavva's mouth and lifted her bodily and started running back.

".....A girl has been brought" Ramadu told his wife.

"Who is that? Why did you bring her?" Ramadu's wife could not understand what was happening and enquired in a feeble voice.

"Whoever she is, why do you ask that, dear? Your disease won't be cured unless we perform human sacrifice, said the priest. I brought this child". Ramadu's reply was curt.

There was a brief silence.

“No. Even if I die, that child should not be sacrificed” said the wife sternly, though she understood the mood of Ramadu.

“Your disease was not cured even after all our efforts. What to do then? The priest said that it won’t be cured by any remedy short of this. What should we do?” Ramadu tried to persuade her.

“I’ll die if it is to happen. But, I won’t allow you to touch the child”. She obstructed Ramadu from taking a knife and did not allow him to move. Endless discussion followed.

At last, Ramadu had to take the girl away to leave her on the banks of Banday.

It was pitch dark night. Time was past 10. Pochavva could not find out where she was. She doesn’t know what it means to be afraid. Though she could not understand what was being discussed between Ramadu and his wife, she comprehended Ramadu taking out knife and his wife obstructing him. After walking some distance in the wet sand she understood that the way takes her to her village.

The whole village of Jonnawai was in turmoil. There was a lot of hue and cry in Pochavva’s house. Soothings of the neighbours and scoldings were going on. All the men from the village went to Kurumballi on hearing that the Gotte man had come to the village in the evening. Though they enquired far and wide they could not know the where-abouts of Pochavva. They returned disappointed. All of them were carrying big sticks. Pochavva and the men returned to the village almost at the same time. The whole situation changed with their arrival.

Mother’s heart leapt up with joy. Neighbours sighed with relief. Mother thought that some deity has protected her child. Father’s heart felt that the calf has escaped from the clutches of a tiger.

Within a short time the news spread to the surrounding villages. Everybody seemed discussing the news. Some people were praising the tact of the child while others were attributing it to father’s luck. “Only a mother can understand the pain of child’s seperation”. Ramadu’s wife was appreciated by some, while all were furious against Ramadu. As the educated and employees called Ramadu as savage, the youth questioned

whether the murderer was a man. Elders thought that there was no change in ideas with the passage of time and women started fearing that "the danger seemed extinct since the entry of 'Annalu'¹. "We thought that the human sacrifices to Danteswari were a thing of the past. But again the problem started".

People started assembling as fast as the news spread. All roads lead to Kurumbelli. People started coming from long distances. As the numbers swelled, the courage of the Adivasi Shot-Majdoor Sanghatana² grew. Hitherto there was a fear that the Gotte people are united and belligerent if any one of them was attacked. Suddenly the situation changed so that people started to assemble as if challenging the Gotte village. The people were making all kinds of comments. Their ideas knew no bounds. Dasuru of the Sangham wondered whether they could control so many people. Old Wagaiah was afraid of the consequences. Bhusari was trying to convince others with his arguments saying "come what may, this should put an end to the evil practice".

Ramadu was hauled up by some body. Blows started raining on him. People started abusing and punching him for the misdeed. As the situation was growing tense, Bhusari, Dasuru and Wagaiah reached the place. "No, No, don't kill me. I am innocent", Ramadu was crying. "Yes, Yes, which sinner admits his guilt so easily" was the people's reply. "Hang him upside down to a tree. Then only he will tell what happened. He is not the type to tell the truth on mere cajoling"—said Bhusari.

.....within seconds the preparations were started. Earlier Buchchadu of Damarancha was hanged in the same way as he worked as an informer to the police. Ramadu's position became like that of Buchchadu.

Ramadu was repeating only one word for every blow, "I don't know".

"That son of a bitch who reported to the police was also stubborn like this. Whatever we do they won't tell. What do

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1. ANNALU (Elder Brothers) refers to M.L. Revolutionary activists moving in squads.
 2. Adivasi Rytu-Coolie Sangham in Telugu.

they think they will lose if they confess their fault? Will they lose their character or will they lose their life?" said the old Wagaiah and continued cajoling, in a soft voice, "Why don't you speak out? you'll die with these beatings, you bastard".

"Comrades, stop", addressed Dasuri who could not take a decision on his own, "It's not now that we have to see his end. We'll consult our Party and then settle him".

It was like a sudden brake to the people's enthusiasm. It was like showing a red light to a racing motorcycle. Lips stopped moving. Raised hands halted in mid-air. Raised legs came down. All weapons fell down to earth.

Some thought the word acted like a drug, while others thought the nuisance should not be allowed to repeat again. Almost all thought that the issue will be settled by them only.

All the people of Jonnawai, Kurumballi, Kodisapalli, Mandra, Damaranchapeta, Naigundam, Middumadugu walked all the way to the place of judgement. There were about 500 people. They all came early so as not to miss the proceedings. Ramadu of Kurumbelli was on one side, and on the other side there were the people of Jonnawai along with their 'brothers'. All the people were watching with bated breath. Ramadu was all tensed up. His heart started beating faster. He was sure his time had come. The people of Jonnawai were brimming with confidence in their 'brothers'. The masters of the village of the older days felt that whatever the consequences, they won't be blamed. People like Bhusari felt, "Now we will show you what we are". The Commander was the first to speak. "Ah, yes; Dada, tell us what we should do. We know about the Panchayati. We've heard it. So far you've done a good job. Tell us what we should do and it'll be over".

"He is the one who can kill a child for his self interest. Never leave such persons. He's a menace forever to the nearby villages" a voice roared. The words struck like arrows in Ramadu's heart.

"What do we gain by killing, brother? If we mutilate one of his arms and when he walks in public, that'll be a daily death for him", Narayya expressed his opinion.

Ramadu became hopeful. Bhusari was quick to retort, "what a judgement! Thanks, you didn't suggest any thing else,

He has to be executed". Ramadu's heart sank. He was dead for sure.

"Yes, Yes, he must be beheaded," some people were saying. Some others were stressing that only his arm should be chopped off.

Again the Commander addressed the people, "Comrades, stop ; You have two opinions amongst yourselves. Some people want a life for a life. Some others want to give him a life-long punishment by amputating his arm. Think again and tell us which we should choose".

Pochavva's father and the whole village of Jonnawai kept listening to the opinions expressed by others.

There was no sign of coming to a consensus. Every body argued. Everybody felt that their own argument was right. The Commander who felt that such heated discussions should not be prolonged, addressed the villagers again :

"Dada, we have listened to your opinions. If it is life or an arm, we are ready. But one condition. We should know how many of you from both the sides of the dispute will be with us. The Party does not approve our action if none of you is with us". Saying this, the Commander turned to the members of his Dalam with a look that said, "Isn't this our opinion ?"

Just as Ramadu's heart almost failed when he came to know that he was as good as dead, the tempers of the people cooled down all of a sudden and no one talked.

Each one was looking into the other's face. Those people, who had previously argued for implementing their decisions, were now standing with lowered heads.

Bhusari looked as if he was saying "what can you do after you cool down ? Whatever you should have done, you should have done that day itself".

The Commander asked Pochavva's father, Muthanna, "what do you say?" Muthanna replied "Do whatever you like. I have my child back. That's more than enough for me".

"Why should we bother if the girl's father is himself not interested ?" the people were thinking.

The Commander addressed the people again, "Comrades, we knew this would happen. We know why you are hesitating. You are frightened of repercussions if the news leaks out in

case you deal the punishment along with us. And there's another reason. So far you had never mercilessly beheaded a man or amputated his arm. Now listen to what our Party thinks about human sacrifices :

“There are so many superstitions among people. Especially in time of crisis man's belief in such things increases. Both god and ghost were born from man's ignorance. They have not only kept back man in this ignorance, they also aid capitalist sections of the society. As long as man doesn't understand a problem and its causes, he will follow his own way of understanding. Today the Brahmins and the Vaisyas worship in Tirupati¹ spending crores of rupees. Every Saturday they express their devotion with a cocoanut. For them, seeing blood amounts to murder. The Sudras sacrifice a goat or a cock. They sacrifice it and feel happy that they have satisfied their Sudra gods. The adivasis are much more backward. They are still bound to primitive traditions. Following such traditions, they perform human sacrifices. All these have emerged from ignorance. But then, ignorance is whose fault ? If Ramadu, like the Brahmins and Vaisyas, knew that human sacrifice was a savage act, would he have stooped to it ? Never.

“The Government is to blame entirely. Ramadu's wife has been bleeding profusely for a month. There was practically no opportunity for him to get her a proper medical check-up. In these conditions, he had no choice except listening to the priest Masu. How can we blame him for that ? In these days when man is voyaging to the Moon, doctors present offerings to an idol of god right before the patient in operation theatres. Then, what is wrong if there is blood in front of the statue of Danteswari here ?

“This Government says that it will provide us with roads. That it will bring us power. That it'll give you machines. But why doesn't it make efforts to drive away such ignorance ?”

The people were listening attentively. The Commander continued, “That's not all, comrades ; we do not support human sacrifices. And it's not our proposition either to leave Ramadu unpunished. But the Party says it's wrong to desire

1. TIRUPATI—the richest shrine in India, with Venkateswara as Presiding deity.

the blood of an uncivilised, innocent Gotte man who had done something out of sheer ignorance. This is a very delicate issue. It is wrong if we think in our fury that we can change the situation in a moment.

“This does not mean I am supporting Ramadu’s actions. His acts should be condemned. We feel that Ramadu should be taken to other villages to be paraded so that the action won’t be repeated”.

Just as the Commander stopped speaking, Jagan, a member of the Dalam, hung a placard in Ramadu’s neck. On the placard was written : ‘Human sacrifices are wrong’.

Ramadu was in front of the procession. The villagers followed.

Bhusari who hoped that he could see Ramadu’s execution was left disappointed. But the people were very impressed by the new punishment. “How can any one commit this crime again”, they thought with relief.

Translated by Venugopal

[EXTRACTS]

The Art of the 70's : A Balance Sheet

K. SACHIDANANDAN

Kerala's artistic and literary revolution of the 70's had social-historical as well as literary historical reasons. Chief of them were (1) the Marxist-Leninist cultural movement in Kerala, like its political counterpart, was a product of the middle classes trying to redefine themselves. They were deeply hurt by the 'decay' of the Indian communist movement both in terms of quality and efficiency and were anxious to retrieve the lost radicalism of the movement. (In this hurry they ignored the distinction between the communism of the feudal days and that of the period of bourgeois-democracy. The enemy now was disguised, almost invisible). (2) The slogans of the new democratic revolution in its early phase satisfied the middle class nostalgia for the Telengana phase of the Indian Communist movement. The courage and idealism of revolutionaries fascinated writers and intellectuals even when they did not agree entirely with the new theory of revolution based on the Chinese model. It gave the promise of a new left and opened the way from contemporary cultural despair to revolutionary hope. The intellectuals brought up in the existentialist tradition found in it a rebirth and the youth an opportunity to live an age of excitement they had missed. (3). The hope of a New left was also prompted by various movements other than the Naxalite movement: like the Dalit movement of Maharashtra, the Bandaya Movement of Karnataka the Digambara Movement of Andhra Pradesh, the Hungry generation of West Bengal and the feminist movement

that was slowly coming up in various parts of India. (4) The 'high modernism' of the 60's had lost its avant-garde force and its power of resistance; many of its spokesmen had plainly entered the culture-market. A new avant-garde was a need of literary history. (5) This new radicalisation could not depend on the old models of 'progressive literature'. The need for new models led to the discovery of the socialist tradition in global modernism. The Latin American and African writers and artists, besides the revolutionary artists and writers of Europe provided the energy needed for new experiments. The artists and writers of the New Left in Kerala were already modern in their sensibility and had been unhappy with the conservative forms employed by mainstream progressivism. On the whole, the 70's were almost 'futurist' in their orientation, the artists of the period tried to provoke the critical orthodoxy and lay the foundations of a new aesthetics of combat.

The themes of the new art and literature fell into seven main categories: (1) A critique of the existing national and international left with its growing individualist, revisionist and bureaucratic tendencies. (2) A search for expressing the ideology and experience of class struggle through allegory, myth, symbol and parable. (3) An expression of their inner conflict of the middle class with its alienation, radicalism, sense of guilt or self-ridicule. (4) An attempt to experience time as reflected in the smaller world of the home and of friends. (5) An analysis and criticism of the upper class institutions and mentalities. (6) A presentation of the ferment undergone by the exploited classes of workers, peasants and tribals. (7) A sympathetic criticism of the weaknesses of the New Democratic Movement itself or a painful observation of its gradual fragmentation and retreat. The bourgeois media recognised the challenge posed by the new avant-garde. At the same time they also found in it a new cultural commodity for hot sales. Their main strategy was one of containment. The Naxalite revolutionary soon became a stock character, 'the angry young man'-in commercial films and plays. The new literary style travelled all the way from posters and little magazines to the editorials and features of commercial journals. The symbols like 'the wind', 'the sun' and the 'flood' soon lost their initial energy and turned into clichés. The fragmentation

of the political movement and the party attempts to turn the People's Cultural Forum* into a mere propaganda wing that ended up in the winding up of the forum forced writers either to retreat into regressive positions or to go forward with new enquiries. The 80's have on the one hand led to a reinforcement of conservative sensibility and political or metaphysical world views while on the other, it has also brought in a new sense of realism and a positive consciousness of popular traditions.

The major contribution of the art of the 70's was that it politicised modern sensibility and gave it a new sense of direction. The poems of Kadammanitta Ramakrishnan, K.G. Shankarapillai and Attoor Revivarma, the short stories of M. Sukumaran and Pattatuvara Karunakaran, plays like Baby's 'Nadugeddika' and the adaptation of Brecht's 'Mother' and 'Spartacus' and the films of Raveendran and John Abraham together announced the birth of a new revolutionary sensibility. At the same time, the art of the period suffered from three major weaknesses. (1) It was to a great extent wishful. It created the illusion that revolution was just at our doorsteps. This led to complacency and a lack of analysis. (2) It ignored the specific social reality of Kerala as also its specific traditions of art. Kerala society is relatively modern as it has been influenced by various subaltern reform movements, the communist movement as also by radical economic reforms like the abolition of landlordism. It has also an artistic and literary tradition of its own. Revolutionary culture cannot be abstract: it is region-specific. The literature of the 70's lacked this consciousness of identity which is essential to decolonisation. (3) Its idea of commitment was often narrow and sectarian. Commitment was defined as the mechanical loyalty to a party or a group. Categories of political economy were blindly applied to art and artists. The aesthetic implications of Marx's analysis of Balzac or Lenin's reading of Tolstoy were sidetracked. The fact that art can rise above the artist's individual beliefs and class ideology, was overlooked. The discussions of aesthetics in the decade also were mostly idealistic. They did not reflect the great advances made by materialist aesthetic

*Janakeeya Samskarika Vedi.

especially in the works of Althusser, Pierre Macherey, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin and Terry Eagleton.

It was Terry Eagleton who said that in addition to seizing political power, a socialist revolution should secure cultural hegemony over its opponents. "Its conquests must stretch beyond the visible areas of parliaments, law courts and industrial production to the more elusive textures of human subjectivity, everyday habits and values, assumptions and affections, practices and perceptions. Only in this way would a revolution produce not just a new society, but a new human subject equipped to inhabit it. A revolution which can transform modes of production but not types of speech, social relations but not styles of architecture, remains radically incomplete". The once-socialist countries are today groping for a way between Stalinism which is the ideology of cultural sectarianism and centralisation of power and capitalism the ideology of self centredness, oppression and individualism. We in India have to learn mostly negative lessons from them. One of the major reasons behind the strengthening of reaction in those countries is the mechanical way of viewing culture and unimportant appendix of economy. Mao had dreamt of a mode of development that does not plunder nature excessively, that believes in the complete decentralisation of power and the consumerist lust. These ideals remain desirable despite his practical blunders. Ho Chi Minh too had a similar vision of a new socialist society based on a new ethics. Today a truly leftist approach should strengthen the struggles against the concentration of power and unequal relationships in every area of social practice. Art and literature should aid this struggle for people's political and cultural power. □

[EXTRACTS]

Resonance of Distant Thunder

The Cultural impact of Naxalbari in Kerala

K.A. MOHAN DAS

Naxalbari and Kerala

Kerala couldn't make out a Naxalbari, Mushahari, Lakhimpur Kheri, Debra—Gopiballabhpur, Shreekakulam, Bhojpur, Birbhum or Dharmapuri. It has not been able to develop class struggle based on an economic programme in any area and establish base areas. The movement in Kerala could gather support of the oppressed and spread its social base only in areas like Wynad where the class relations were rather different from the mainland. The liberation call of the peasants sounded from Naxalbari was heard by a different social class in Kerala. Naxalbari movement, manifested itself here as the political-cultural practice of the middle class which ultimately determines the character of the Kerala society. The revolutionary programme of the poor-landless peasants of taking arms against the oppressive landlords in the villages, developing guerilla warfare, establishing base areas, building up revolutionary people's army and liberating India was not feasible to be put in practice in Kerala in the context of its specific socio-economic and political conditions. And, hence while almost all political practices of the M.L. movement have turned out great defeats, the cultural revolution, created, contributed much in redetermining the social psyche of Kerala. In another sense it was culturally rather than politically that Naxalbari influenced

Keralites and manifested itself. Since the leadership of the political-cultural movements related to Naxalbari was in the hands of the middle class here it was its historical mission that inevitably controlled the fate of the movement. On the positive side this class emotionally responded to the stimuli of the society, rallied with the working class in its struggles and even came to its leadership at times while on the negative side it showed political backwardness, incessant doubts and vacillations on the ideological, political questions, fear of organisational forms and inconsistency of positions. In a state like Kerala where a neo-colonial economy allows the hegemony of neither the working class nor the bourgeoisie the middle class naturally comes to leadership. By the immediate response to any social movement and its assimilation and by reproducing it through its own ideological media this class dilutes the process of polarisation of classes, an essential pre-requisite to any social revolution. It is always capable of creating the ideological illusions of making omelettes without breaking the eggs. It tries to display the half-baked revolution and half-baked culture in place of the total transformatory process and thus to prolong its materialisation.

Socio-cultural milieu in sixties

By the end of the sixties feudalism had ceased to exist as an agricultural production relation in Kerala. Though the slogan of land to tillers' was in practice turned into land to tenants and the number of landless peasants and agricultural labourers inflated in huge proportions. Reformatory legal measures helped to spread a complacency among people as to a social revolution. On the other side a new class of rich peasants with upward mobility was stemming up on account of these reforms. The high rate of fragmentation of land, the change to the cultivation of cash crops from paddy and the consequent dwindling in food production, the debacle of traditional as well as cottage industries, absence of industrialisation, the slow pace of urbanisation the lack of considerable difference in the spatial distribution, between towns and villages, the growth of trade in consumer goods in rural areas, the unprecedented growth of the third sector, the inability of the various production sectors to absorb the large work force of

educated and unskilled unemployed—the socio-economic picture of Kerala in the later half of the sixties gives such a strange picture as compared to other states of India. It was at this time that large scale exodus of youth from Kerala to the Gulf countries started.

The Communist parties after their split of 1964 came to power with the support of some of the same reactionary parties and communal forces which led the notorious 'liberation struggle' against the 1st communist ministry in Kerala which was hailed as historic as the first ever event in the world of a communist party ascending to power through ballot. The major communist party viz. CPM had shifted its interest from the agricultural working class which gave its mass base in the fifties to the middle class. It had already successfully practised the idea of winning elections without depending exclusively on any economic class, but by using the mathematical possibility of the united front politics. It was justified with the argument that the Marxist party had already turned out to be a mass party. It was also evident that the middle income bureaucrats, through the NGO union, were providing an appropriate social base to the party. Even though a small section within the party and without who still upheld class politics and its values was sore over the new character of the party, its changed class basis fully supported the new parliamentary strategy.

The cultural hegemony of the communist movement in Kerala's social life which rightly claimed the legacy of former social revolutions led by Sreenarayana movement et al was ebbing out by the beginning of sixties. The notorious 'Liberation struggle' waged by the unholy alliance between the religious fundamentalism and global anti-communist forces unmasked the 'enlightened people' and pulled the state backward by a century. It was when politics in the state was communalised for the first time. It opened the flood gates to numerous new reactionary ideologies.

A plethora of writers and thinkers who were once the co-travellers or even members of communist movement and, who actively participated in the progressive writers movements came out as the swords of anti-Communist propaganda. They celebrated with elation the betrayal of revolution by the father-land of

communism during this period and the restoration of capitalism there. The publications like SAMEEKSHA (Ed. M. Govindan) and ANWESHANAM (Ed. T.V. Kunhikrishnan) gave intellectual leadership to this mission and exposed the minds of Keralites to many a strain of strange and modern ideas. On the one hand they renewed the aesthetic concepts of Malayalies and on the other, they stemmed out even the smallest buds of inquisitiveness from them by stuffing them with sham anti-materialistic and metaphysical thoughts. Anti-human ideas suggesting that life is ultimately absurd, that all struggles are exercises in futility, that the philosophy of the liberation of the working class is obsolete and that to be an intellectual means to be an anti-communist penetrated the minds of the younger generation, having some flair for reading. They were led to believe, consciously or unconsciously, that they were experiencing the alienation and inhumanness of the western post-industrial societies in the atmosphere of Kerala where never had appeared the chimneys of industrialisation at least for namesake and where still existed the idyllic tenderness of rustic life. Kerala's cultural atmosphere was beginning to teem with concrete poetry, absurd theatre, abstract art, 'anti-novels' and above all a philosophic mood, deluded existentialism. In the background a disbelief in the theory and practice of class politics was deliberately being built up. The communist 'comrade' was beginning to be depicted as a comic character in Malayalam writing. The 'Saga of Khassak', a novel by O.V. Vijayan had already startled Malayalam literature with its enigmatic beauty and the philosophic riddles that it threw at the face of the readers. The revisionist aesthetic system with its obsolete mechanical thoughts could not thwart the sophisticated method of spreading of ideas emitted by imperialist intellectualism.

When a highly-backward productive system (as also the creative system) is getting linked to the neo-colonial market economy it opens the flood gates of not only consumerism but also imperialistic ideologies. The defenceless, semiliterate, middle class minds of Kerala could be turned into a good market for the new, strange and confusing imperialistic ideas which cut them off from the basic awareness of the material realities around them. This naturally ensured the undisturbed

continuance of a neo-colonial exploitative system. The cultural field of Kerala during the sixties served this mission without reservation. 'The global context that witnessed the emergence of hippy cult, the youth quakes especially in the campuses, the Spring revolution of Paris, the Cultural Revolution in China, the "provocative irrationalism", eulogised in the western art and literature—all these together influenced the younger generation of the middle class anarchically in the absence of a guiding class oriented, political value-system.

Post Naxalbari era

It was into this confused conditions, in which the realities of social life stood delinked with the world of ideas, that the 'Spring Thunder' of Naxalbari struck. It was in Nov. '68 that Kerala made its own version of the agrarian struggles erupted in Naxalbari in May 67, through the actions in Tellichery and Pulpalli. These actions were a frontal attack directed against the oppressive state machinery by a group of revolutionaries, unlike the resistance-attack struggles of poor and landless peasants against the feudal landlords of Naxalbari, Sreekakulam or Bhojpur later. It is a pointer to the later history of the movement in Kerala which shows that until after it chose to switch over to open political activities in 1977 it could not win over politically the basic oppressed classes to its fold.

Naxalbari, however, embraced Kerala on another plane. The middle class mind which had already started to decay itself in the juice of already decayed illusionary ideas of modernity got a deep shock which highly politicised it in the later days. The thought that Naxalbari could bring back the purity of the political values that the revisionist left parties in India abandoned, by waging an uncompromising war against the latter, attracted the section of the society to the movement. They hoped that the movement could be regaining the cultural hegemony of the left it once enjoyed in Kerala. In a way, Naxalbari, apart from a contemporary political reality, turned to them a symbol of fulfilment, of numerous individual and collective wishes and dreams of society. They believed that they too were participating in a great transformation process, though vicariously. They elicited revolutionary heroes from the obscurity around them that the secrecy of the movement contributed.

This only means that even though the trial of 'modernity' and its philosophical premises lingered until the first half of the seventies there began to appear on the cultural scene creations, determined by the iconoclastic political values, qualitatively different and thematically responsible. Artists were compelled to choose between two paths in their creative life. They brought themselves to find out that the alienation and anguish that had been haunting them and that gave bread for their creations had a specific material and social source which made them renew their concepts of values. In a way they were wise to see that the continuation of their creative existence demanded such a radical change. The creative life of Sachidanandan provides a classical example to this transformation. He wrote 'Asanna marana chinthakal'—(Thoughts on the eve of death) and "Atmageetha"—(musings on self) and edited 'Jwala' (flame) and was hailed as the 'enfant terrible' of modernism. He subjected himself to a rebirth and made his art historical. Those who declined to subject themselves to such a choice met with the fate of Dinosaurs and were banished from history. Remember K.P. Nirmalkumar who tried to make his medium its message itself and to create fiction by the jumbling of alphabets in a word. Methil Radhakrishnan found literature as a conglomeration of strange and bewildering vocabulary etc.

This does not mean that these writers and artists who subjected themselves to such a transformation recognised the politics of Naxalbari. Most of them were unable to jettison their subjective, idealistic and metaphysical approaches to life and art. But they brought themselves to heed the wailing of the earth that cries to them. It is only because of this experience that the permanent modernists like M. Govindan and Ayyappa Panikker are referred to in such a contexts.

Though N.V. Krishna warrier wrote his poem 'Naxalbari' in late '67 itself, it was only a poetic theme for him. N.V. who had the wonderful faculty for immediate response to any contemporary event in a humanistic position, found Naxalbari as a social tragedy, only describing it as the monster of hunger (Remember the poem of Dhoomil by the same title). 'Agneyam' a novel written by Valsala, made the revolutionary movement in Wynad its background but it proved that the novelist had no political grasp that could justify her attempt. It was in

'Bengal' and other poems of K.G. Sankar Pillai that the historicity of Naxalbari found expression in politically conscious poetic idiom for the first time in Malayalam. And it was through his poems that Malayalam poetry gained political authenticity.

In fiction Pattathuvila Karunakaran and M. Sukumaran had made extremist politics the content of their art with wonderful ease. Karunakaran through the monologues of an upper class intellectual, who sympathised with the revolutionary movement, tried to observe it with some kind of artistic detachment. Sukumaran depicted the specific contexts within the ideologies through allegoric expressions mostly. They stand as inimitable models in Malayalam short story.

After 1975 there sprang up in Kerala revolutionary cultural activists and writers who had gone through the first-hand experience of emergency oppression. The popularity and receptability that the movement gained after 77 helped it to grow class struggles in the cultural field. Many a writer like Civic Chandran, P. Udayabhanu, U.P. Jayaraj, P.K. Nanu, Balachandran Chullikkad and Madhu Master came out of prison with renewed revolutionary commitment. 'The prison poems' (Ed. Civic Chandran) was well received by the public, not because of its poetic quality but because of its political significance.

The formation of the Peoples Cultural Forum (PCF) and its activities to spread a peoples revolutionary culture in Kerala were events of high political importance. It reminded one of the cultural revolution in Bengal during 1970-71 and its iconoclastic movement. For the first time in Kerala it started a street-play movement. It put to practice the concept of a peoples theatre through its productions 'Mother' 'Padayani' 'Natugaddika' 'Spartacus' etc. and smashed the academic, elitist and mechanical theatre style of the school of Drama and the reactionary and ritualistic school of the native theatre movement' (Thanathu Nataka Vedi). People received with elation the public trials against the corruptors, organised by the PCE and its struggles against gambling (Com. Ramesan was hacked to death by the goons of gambler barons in Cannanore district). Its organ 'Pre-rana' lived longer than its predecessors 'Prasakthi' 'Yenan' and 'Samasya'. Publications connected with revolutionary movement

tried to develop ideological polemics on culture, aesthetics and revolutionary philosophy and practice vitally and deeply. Its fight against revisionism and its culture contributed much to the revolutionary cultural history of Kerala.

It was in the void created by the death of PCF that the apolitical little groups that harness all the anarchic and reactionary ideologies sprang up. The restoration of capitalism in old socialist countries and the loss of hegemony of the left culture have made the middle class skeptic towards the M.L. philosophy. Apoliticism, numerous reactionary schools of thought and various shades of religious fundamentalism have begun to take round with a new respectability among the middle class ranks who once sailed with the revolutionary movement. When we examine the impact of Naxalbari we have to find honestly those sectors of culture where this movement kept its hegemony earlier and lost the same later. We have to recognize the negative impact of the movement when we go through a novel like 'PRAKRITI NIYAMAM' transmitting a hopelessly cynical and reactionary message, authored by C.R. Parameswaran, whose exposure to the movement in Kerala gives the work a testimonial authenticity. Works of fiction based on the experiences of the movement are yet to be written in Malayalam. Those which appeared with such a claim are written exclusively from a revisionist position depicting armed struggle as a fallacy and deviation (Eg. 'Mumbe Parakkunna Pakshikal' by C. Radhakrishnan, Koottam Thetti Mayunnavar by M.K. Gangadharan etc.) □

[EXTRACTS]

The Cultural Revolution in the Context of Expanding Revisionism

M.M. SOMASEKHARAN

“Revisionism is an international phenomenon”, said Lenin. Contemporary developments have truly justified the import of this statement by Lenin. Revisionism that began to dominate during the mid-fifties tried to capture the leadership of the international Communist Movement and engulfed most of the communist parties whether in power or not. Contemporary events which accomplished the discarding of socialism and communism even in name in several East European Countries, the absorption of East Germany by West Germany, the decision taken by Russia to proceed to privatise industries within five hundred days, all these have eliminated even the little skepticism regarding the supposed existence of any difference between revisionism and imperialism.

Cultural Revolution Propels Class struggle forward

As explained in the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) dated August 8, 1966 the immediate goals of Cultural Revolution were struggling against and eliminating those who were continuing in the capitalist path and remaining in positions of authority ; criticising and rejecting the ideology of reactionary ‘bourgeois academic authorities, of bourgeoisie and all exploiting classes ; and transforming all superstructural forms like education, literature, art

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etc, which are not conforming to socialist economic base, so as to speed up the consolidation and development of socialist system. It had the background of struggles waged from the second half of fifties under the leadership of Mao against the Krushchovite revisionism at international level and domestically of the struggles initiated against Peng Teh-huai and Liu Shaochi for socialist education and for Great Leap Forward including the building up of Communes. Moreover, as stated by Chou Enlai in his report to the 10th Congress of CPC in 1973 and explained by him to William Hinton during a conversation, Cultural Revolution as indicated by its name was not a revolution limited to the cultural field but extending to the socialist transformation of production relations. In the relation between productive forces and production relations Cultural Revolution stressed the development of productive forces based on the socialist transformation of the production relations. It was led by the socialist roaders against the capitalist roaders who were opening the doors to capitalist production relations based on the unilateral development of productive forces. Those who were advancing the Cultural Revolution correctly theorised that proletarian dictatorship is not the end of class struggle ; it is a continuation of class struggle and its development by other means. It correctly pointed out that the central issue concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) was that of the dictatorship of the proletariat and that central question was whether to continue with proletarian dictatorship or give way to bourgeois dictatorship.

The greatness of the Cultural Revolution lies in its stress on the critical relevance of continuing the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat and in putting forward the basic form of class struggle during the period of socialist transformation. This is what makes GPCR a significant turning-point in history. In this era of imperialism and proletarian revolution it attacked the various forms of Krushchovite revisionism and raised the red banner of revolution. It dragged out revisionism from all its hideouts. It spread class struggle to all fields like political economy, history philosophy, social sciences, aesthetics, art and literature, science and technology etc. GPCR tried to act according to the teachings of Mao. It lashed out against

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the numerous faces of revisionism manifested in the form of the 'theory of productive forces', dependence on everything foreign, economic incentives, bureaucracy and technocracy. In short, like Paris Commune which stormed the Heaven it hit out against everything of the old world. Not only within China, every where, in all the parties dominated by Krushchovian revisionism, it raised the banner of revolt.

G P C R : The need for an objective evaluation

There were numerous attempts to evaluate the setback suffered by GPCR in the later years centering on the merits and demerits of individuals who were prominently linked to it. Some of these attempts state Lin Piao as the real leader of GPCR, Lin Piao's removal is the reason for the triumph of revisionism, Chou Enlai as the rightist, and that the capitalist roaders become victorious using Chou as a cover.

Such attempts to evaluate the victory or failure of a great revolution based on the role of certain individuals in it or as the success or failure of some tactical moves are anti-Marxist. Such subjective evaluations manifesting petty bourgeois mentalities only strengthen revisionism instead of uprooting it. On the contrary, GPCR can become an asset to the history of the proletarian revolution only by objectively evaluating the theoretical aspects of the political, economical and philosophical positions put forward by it, their class basis, and the correct and incorrect trends underlying them.

Most of the articles and documents prepared from the side of the Cultural Revolution show that during its entire period left sectarianism continued as a strong trend. Even the report to the 9th Party Congress, considered as a successful culmination of the first stage of GPCR, clearly reveals this weakness. The "left" influence in the evaluation of the present era (as the era of *total collapse of world imperialism and all round victory of proletarian revolution* in the place of the era of *imperialism and proletarian revolution*) in the report to the 9th Congress was capable of creating dangerous consequences to the world revolutionary movement. Even after the anti-Lin Piao struggle we can observe subjective and sectarian approaches in the fields of philosophy and art and literature including the failure to differentiate

specificities of class struggle in various fields. The failure which happened many times in taking a historical approach towards the contributions of bourgeois art and literature and the theory of 'Three positives' are all examples of this. They had their influence in many of the decisions and activities during the period of Cultural Revolution.

The powerful left sectarian tendencies among the leaders of the GPCR had played a role in strengthening bourgeois pragmatism among many on the other side. "Whether the cat is black or white, it should catch the mice, "Theory of Three Worlds", etc. put forward by Deng and Co. are good examples for this. Left sectarianism and right opportunism interact and they grow up one strengthening the other. Ultimately both have bourgeois content. The role played by left sectarian mistakes in giving strength to the rightist poisonous wind which lashed out and came on top utilising the centrist line of Hua as a cover in the beginning should have to be correctly evaluated.

Class struggle is the central question

How to uphold the banner of GPCR against the poisonous wind of revisionism and capitalist path which is trying to sweep away the great contributions of the revolutionary movement is the most important task facing the communist revolutionaries today. To uphold Cultural Revolution for namesake means to continue as revolutionary for namesake. Cultural Revolution, not only in its external and general sense but also to its precise and concrete level, argued for firm class positions and stood for them. Not only to the spheres of politics and economic development but also to that of philosophy, art and literature and to all fields of scientific knowledge it took the sharp sword of class struggle. Today any revolutionary struggle can advance only by assimilating the lessons of class struggle initiated by GPCR, making them stronger by rectifying the mistakes and by developing them. While GPCR put class struggle and dictatorship of the proletariat as the central point of politics, in the sphere of political economy it stressed the transformation of production relations. In the sphere of philosophy it rejected bourgeois pragmatism, empiricism and various forms of idealism and upheld other Marxist dialectical materialist positions.

It made clear following the teachings of Lenin that dialectic is not a magic to link together subjectively contradictory things, aspects or phenomena, but a science which is studying about the different aspects of the same principle which divides one into two and are inter-related. Cultural Revolution brought forward the importance of revolutionary theory and ideological struggle which were made to degenerate in the world proletarian movement by Krushchov and Co. It made clear the critical importance of theoretically arming the Party and the people politically and ideologically instead of influencing broad masses through bourgeois pragmatism. It rejected the ideas of material incentives and bourgeois luxury. It tried to firmly establish everywhere the hegemony of proletarian ideology. It tore the masks of everything which pretended till then as above class. No doubt GPCR gave the world proletariat the sword of class struggle which is in no way compromising, relentless and omnipresent.

Without understanding these great contributions of GPCR many so-called studies are brought out about it in scholastic bourgeois academic style even by those who claim themselves to be Marxist-Leninists, depicting it as a structural experiment for decentralisation of power, as a national scientific experiment conducted in the spheres of medical sciences and of other natural sciences, as an investigation into the immense possibilities of democracy, as a revolution in the superstructure so far neglected by Marxism, and as many such things. Like the proverbial three blind men who went to "see" an elephant, these are following the bourgeois methodology of mountainising the parts and neglecting the comprehensiveness.

Stress on the class content

Today the dangerous influence of bourgeois approach is very widespread even among some Marxist-Leninist sections in evaluating the new policies of Gorbachov, in evaluating the developments in China including the student revolt, in evaluating the developments in Eastern Europe, and in general in evaluating the numerous present forms of revisionism. A considerable section among the Marxist-Leninist groups is infatuated with bourgeois democratic dreams. In the present day world when on the one hand maintaining extreme petty bourgeois

approaches, sectarianism, splittism and individualism, and on the other hand dreaming about 'broadest democracy' is becoming a fashion, clarity on the class content of Cultural Revolution is of extreme importance.

Inside the former socialist countries and all over the world recently maximum attack is concentrated on dictatorship of the proletariat, class struggle and on the leadership of the proletariat. The 'glasnost-perestroika' of Russia, the bourgeois wind of Eastern Europe and such other forces desire that the above mentioned basic concepts should be banished from human history itself. Krushchov had started it much earlier. Brezhnev talked about state of the whole people and class collaboration. Ceasescu who was killed while engaged in an attempt to protect his bourgeois dictatorship, and Deng who massacred thousands of students in Tienanmen, and such others belong to the progeny of Krushchov.

The most important message put forward by GPCR is the need for analysing everything comprehensively and concretely, and to distinguish the class interests and class content inherent within their external makeup, directly or indirectly. It is this Marxist class approach which is being lost sight of while eulogising the democratic utterances attributed to the Chinese student revolt, while praising the heroism of Ceasescu and while magnifying the questions of democracy and nationality in the evaluation of the changes taking place in Russia and Eastern Europe, instead of seeing the dictatorship of the proletariat as the central question. Often our petty-bourgeois 'innocent souls' forget totally that it is in the name of democracy that Krushchov, Hua Kuafeng, Deng Tsiaoping, Gorbachov, Walesa, the new rulers of Eastern Europe and their like' implemented their out and out anti-people policies.

Cultural Revolution : A Guide to the Revolutions

Almost all the Marxist—Leninist parties and organisations formed during the late sixties and later did not consciously try to rectify the wrong influences contained in the Lin piaoist approach which had exerted considerable influence in the initial stage of GPCR, and in many of the resolutions of CPC at that time, including the report to the 9th Congress of CPC. In the

back ground of many of the draw backs of the Marxist-Leninist movement at that time in the realm of proletarian internationalism, including the reluctance of building up of any sort of unity among the Marxist-Leninist forces at international level, the communists everywhere had to be satisfied to a large extent with whatever information they got from bourgeois media about GPCR and its theoretical approach. As a result communist forces all over the world were considerably influenced by many bourgeois concepts about justice, revolts and pure life. Many of the slogans which were put forward during GPCR were, as a result, not understood in a proper Marxist—Leninist sense. During the many developments that took place at the time of GPCR a proper plan to take its central questions everywhere in their real sense was not properly implemented. To a large extent the Cultural Revolution was also propagated at that time at an international level along with the Spring Revolt of France, Guevarism and many other New Left ideas as an alternative to the 'Soviet model'. As a result, many distorted concepts about the determining role of youth and students, abstract concepts about people etc, got strengthened. All these prepared the way for neglecting or belittling the importance of proletarian leadership and about the role of the organised working class. Along with the absence of a Marxist-Leninist outlook on the importance of the organised working class movement, Guevarist concepts about guerilla activities were also strengthened.

This erroneous understanding led to neglecting the great teachings of Mao like "Unite for the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat", "Consolidate the unity of the people all over the country under the leadership of the proletariat for winning victory" "Practice Marxism and not revisionism", "Unite and don't split", "Be open and above board", "Don't intrigue and conspire." Today when we are upholding the relevance of GPCR against all revisionist onslaughts, the first and foremost thing we have to examine is whether we are upholding a firm class stand in all our activities. It is this great lesson of GPCR which is going to lead the world forward. □

[EXTRACTS]

The GPCR in Historical Perspective

W.C. DEB

Compared to the Revisionism of the leaders of 2nd Communist International, combated by Plekhanov and Lenin, modern Revisionism that appeared at 20th Congress of CPSU led by Khrushchev had been far more pernicious and devastating in its effects. The 12 Parties' Declaration (1957), the 81 Parties' Statement (1960) and the Proposal of CPC (1963) proclaimed that 'Revisionism in the main danger to the international communist movement at present'. The CC of CPC declared (Proposal): "Together with all ML's, the Chinese communists will continue to wage an uncompromising struggle against modern revisionism in order to *defend the purity of M-L* and the principled stand of the Declaration and Statement". Liu Shaochi and Teng Hsiaoping were party to that statement.

With regard to GPCR, Mao said. "*The struggle against capitalist roaders is the principal task, but not the object. The object is to solve the problem of world outlook and to eradicate revisionism.*" He reached the conclusion that if the CP is led by wrong people, it, in the process of exercise of monopoly of political power, may be transformed into a fascist party. According to him, loyalty to the Revolution and the Masses must take precedence over loyalty to the Party organisation.

The GPCR initiated and led by Mao represents his greatest contribution to M-L in the context of Socialist Construction. The Peoples' War against revisionism was based on the principle

of supervision of the leadership of Communist Party by the revolutionary masses, not belonging to the Party organisation. However, he repudiated the idea that masses under the guidance of correct ideology (revolutionary political line) could carry out the CR without the leadership of CP ; and it was for this reason that there occurred the 'retreat' from extended democracy i.e. from the 'Shanghai Peoples' Commune' to 'Revolutionary Committees' and ultimately to the restoration of the Party Committees. Communist Party's Vanguard status and position of decisive leadership organisation was reasserted.

At the 9th Congress of CPC (April, 1969) it was declared : "We have won great victory. But the defeated class will still struggle. These people are still around and this class still persists. Therefore, we cannot speak of final victory. Not even for decades. We must not lose vigilance". He already had pointed out the futility of mere overthrowing the top Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road. He said : "If world outlook is not reformed, then although 2000 capitalist roaders are removed in the current CR, 4000 others may reappear next time". On April 28, 1969 he said, "Our foundation has not been consolidated. According to my own observation, I would say that, not in all factories, nor in an overwhelming majority of factories, but in quite a large majority of cases, the leadership is in the hands of true Marxists, nor yet in the hands of the masses of workers".

During the CR, the victory of Mao's Proletarian Revolutionary Line was so complete that at the 9th Congress, Lin Piao could say : "Whoever opposes Mao's thought, at any time, or under any circumstances, will be condemned and punished by the whole Party and the whole country". Edgar Snow went to the extent of saying : "*Mao's Thought had by 1970 permeated the whole nation.*" The GPCR in regard to medical education and health care system has been best described by Ruth and Victor Sidel : "...the medical schools are now run by Revolutionary Committees that decide on the size of classes and select students from candidates put forward by the factories or communes. The selection is based on ideological commitment and physical fitness as well as academic ability.....about one quarter of 3 year term is spent out of the class room in practical training of one kind or another. Most

of the new doctors returned to the factories or Communes that first chose them as candidates for medical training.”

However, as early as 1967, Mao himself expressed his disappointment in regard to the formation of a united group of revolutionary successors. “It was desired to bring up some successors among the intellectuals but now it seems a hopeless task. As I see it, the intellectuals, including the young intellectuals still receiving education in schools, still have a basically bourgeois outlook whether they are in the Party or outside it.” Domination of these intellectuals including the members of the Central Committee, with the bourgeois world outlook was curtailed and to a great extent eliminated during the CR, but they became hostile to the CR and following the death of Mao and a military coup liquidating the four leaders loyal to ‘Proletarian Revolutionary line’ of Mao, capitalist roaders came back to power.

After the betrayal of Lin Piao, the ‘superspy’ of Soviet revisionism and other top leaders of PLA, Maoists had to enter into agreements with civilian leaders of CC who were far from sympathetic to CR and Mao’s line and it is they who suppressed the Maoists after Mao’s death. The Veterans of Long March fame, so long venerated by the Party cadres and the people, being exposed as right opportunists or revisionists had a very hostile reaction to CR, particularly because of being maltreated by the young Red Guard rebels.

During the second half of the CR, the exceptional role of PLA soldiers and its chief Lin Piao led to withering of mass movement and an increase in the influence of PLA leaders in Party organisation as well as in the State Council. The role accorded to PLA in choosing the representatives of revolutionary masses in the ‘Revolutionary Committees’ implied abandonment of the orientation which had been adopted at the beginning of CR. The domination of PLA had been so much that at the 9th Congress, out of 25 PB members, 14 were PLA generals and Lin Piao had to be declared as the successor to Chairman Mao! Following the conclusion of GPCR in 1969, by the end of 1971, of the 5 top leaders there remained only 2—Mao and Chou, the former a patient of Parkinsonism and the latter, of cancer; and the revolutionary leading cadres, maligned as ‘Gang of Four’,

were quite unequal to the task of carrying out socialist construction without the support of civilian Party cadres, many of whom were already criticised as capitalist roaders during CR.

The success of GPCR in the field of production is testified by the following facts : The total irrigated agricultural area of China increased from 35 million hectares in 1964 to about 55 million hectares in 1977. Between 1970 and 1975, the production of cereals increased by 47 million tons or more than 19%. Joan Robinson observed : "In any case, for the time being at least, Chinese economic policy appears to work more successfully than any other planned economy, let alone in the so-called developing countries in the toils of the world market."

Historical Perspective

The difference between Mao and Liu Shaochi in regard to Socialist construction began soon after the seizure of power in 1949. In July, 1951, Liu maligned Mao's line of mutual aid and cooperation in agricultural production as erroneous, dangerous and utopian. The question of struggle between two lines originated as early as 1953. In 1955, Mao pointed out : "The almost ubiquitous Right opportunists inside the Party who hinder the masses of poor and lower middle peasants from taking the road of cooperation act in concert with forces of capitalism in our country." The Lushan Conference of August, 1959 was of crucial significance ; at this meeting there had been open criticism of Mao's political line by Peng Teh-huai who bitterly opposed 'Great-Leap Forward' and 'People's Commune'. In addition to opposing Mao, he did more. In May, 1959, at Tirana, Khrushchev was shown his memorandum before presenting it to his colleagues at home. Khrushchev in addition to encouraging Peng to oppose Mao, attempted to weaken Mao's position by unilaterally cancelling the Pact for 'New Technology and National Defence'. Peking Municipality Party Committee headed by Peng Chen published 67 articles criticising Mao by implication or historical analysis. In 1962, the CC under the direction of Liu had adopted the line of 'Three Privates and One Guarantee' to counter the effects of Mao's 'Three Red Banner Campaigns'. Liu established special schools for the children of high officials, while providing artists, actors, writers, and other people of special skills with extra pay and better

housing, Rank, prestige consciousness and careerism began to rise. The Minister of Culture reduced the amount of political studies and manual labour in schools. Mao was particularly concerned with unhealthy state of affairs in the Educational system. Chou Yang sponsored a 'Forum on Confucius'. To fight against these bourgeois trends, Mao initiated 'Socialist Education Movement' in Shanghai in 1962. Officials and urban intellectuals were sent to the countryside to learn from the masses. During 1963 and 1964 contradictory orders were issued all in the name of the Central Committee. By the end of 1964, difference between Mao and Liu became very sharp and acute. During 1965, PLA news paper and Party newspaper were disseminating opposing political lines. According to Edgar Snow, Liu wanted to send a Chinese delegation to the 23rd CPSU Congress to reactivate Sino-Soviet alliance. The war in Vietnam posed a threat to Mao's plan to launch campaign for the overthrow of capitalist roaders by CR. □

O Ram, Why This...?

VARA VARA RAO

HA, Ram !
Heard that you are a god
And omni-present
But then why this
Row over your birth place ?

Heard that Raghupati, Raghava, Rajaram,
Easwar, Allah—are all your names
But then, you live only in mandir,
Not in masjid ?

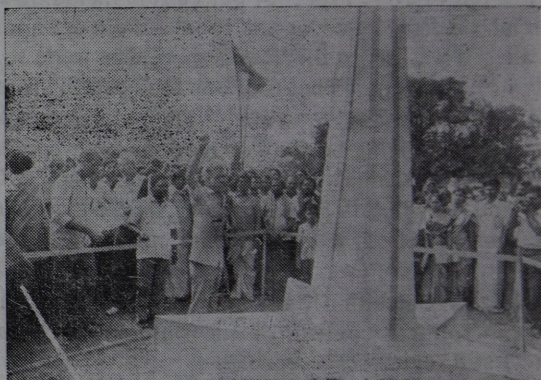
As Buddhist monasteries and Jain mandirs
were turned into Hindu temples,
What if mandirs became masjids ?
Every place—field and forest, school and street—
Is being turned into
A temple, a tower and a place of worship...
Why then this aggression ?

Heard that a stone rose to life with your touch
Whether it was true or not
Today it is certain that
The shila is snatching away lives
With the touch of your name alone,

Bhadradi¹ Ram,
 You have settled yourself in scheduled areas
 After eating Sabari's² fruits.

We don't need
 The sanctity of religions
 That cleanses Ganga with human blood
 We are simple minded folks
 Leave us alone to live peacefully
 With our own love and affection.

Translated by N. Venugopal



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1. BHADRADRI—a hill in the Khāmmam district of Andhra Pradesh has a Temple built for Ram by a saint-poet Ramadas in the 17th century.
 2. SABARI—a tribal woman, probably of the Savara tribe, who is said to have offered fruits to Ram while he was wandering in search of Sita.

Impact of Naxalbari on Cinema

KAKARALA

Spring Thunder pealed in Naxalbari way back in 1967. Its impact was felt in every aspect of our culture including cinema. Commercial cinema failed at first to take the event as a movement at all. It was left to the 'Realistic' cinema to do so, either positively or negatively. That too took four or five years.

Ritwik Ghatak's 'Jukti Takko Gappo' recognised the enormous sacrifices lying behind this movement, even while criticising the slogan "China's chairman is our chairman". Ghatak suggested that Revolution in our country should emerge out of the consciousness of our own people and in tune with the peculiarities of our own country.

Mrinal Sen's 'Calcutta 71' was another such film. It limited at the socio-political context of the outbreak of Naxalbari struggle. I still remember a scene...

...The court is sitting. A case is being heard. The counsel for defence is speaking about an accused. Suddenly the supply of electricity is cut and the ceiling fans cease moving. Everyone including the Hon'ble Judge feels suffocated and there is restlessness in everyone's movements. Soon electricity is restored and fans begin working and everyone is again breathing in ease. The counsel for defence brings this fact to the notice of the Hon'ble court saying, 'we all felt quite suffocated when there was no electricity for a very short while, and please imagine what the people, oppressed for ages will do under inhuman conditions'.

The next film that came to my notice was 'Naxalites' of K.A. Abbas, to whom the movement was sheer anarchy and its

supporters were anarchists, pure and simple. Pattabhi's Kannada film, 'Chanda Maruta' was no better. Both presented a totally negative picture of the epoch-making movement.

K. Balachandar's Tamil film, 'Tanneer, Tanneer' took the scarcity of drinking water for its theme and showed how the social order in the village was disintegrating, with dispossessed people migrating to towns and cities for a living. In this process, certain youngmen are influenced by the 'Naxalite' movement. But Balachandar is what he is, a clever director-producer who trims his films to the prevailing wind in order to make profits and, therefore, it is not surprising if he equates this movement with lawlessness and disorder.

Commercial cinema failed, however, to concern itself with the Revolutionary movement as a fit subject for almost two decades after the event itself. In the meantime the mantle of Naxalbari fell on the shoulders of Srikakulam and then, it was taken up by northern Telengana. Naturally, therefore, the Telugu commercial cinema began taking interest in the matter, if only to divert the consciousness of people's struggles by caricaturing the movement, all the while pretending to glorify it. 'Ma Bhoomi,' of Gautam Ghosh was a realistic portrayal of the Telengana armed struggle.

But unfortunately it provided inspiration to a spate of Telugu commercial films which tried to make capital out of pseudo-revolutionary themes, as for e.g. Madala Ranga Rao's 'Erra Mallelu' [Red Jasmines]. By the way, Ranga Rao, the hero-cum-producer, is a supporter of the CPI. He succeeded only in making crude films. But T. Krishna, who had been associated with Ranga Rao, developed his own individuality to the extent of directing less crude films with revolt and revolution as his themes, eventhough he pointed his finger only at injustice and oppression at an individual level, without however questioning and indicting the State and society that are the real culprits in the matter of social wrongs. This gave the cue to bigger commercial film-makers such as Suresh and Usha Kiran movies.

Narayana Murty's 'Artharatri Swatantram' (freedom at Midnight) and 'Adavi Diviteelu' (Torches of the forest) stand as examples of the manner in which Telugu commercial cinema

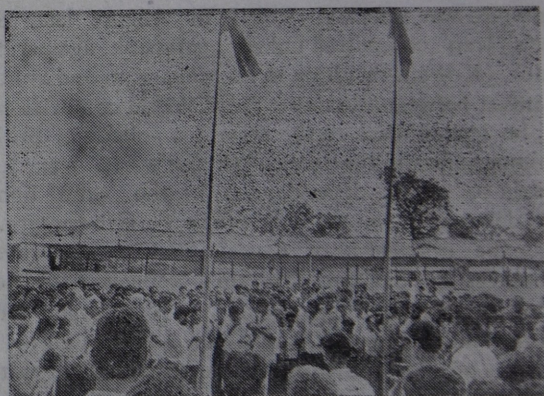
has been seeking to sidetrack the 'Naxalite' movement even while pretending to picturise it. Narayana Murthy is obviously in a fix. May be he is sincere in his own way, but he is bound to the apron-strings of capital. Moreover, he does not seem to have a correct understanding of his themes and he tends to give undue prominence to a 'hero' without taking the people as the motive-force and mainstay of the movement. Take his two pictures. Their common point is that the police officers, who are out to suppress the movement, are shown in the end as joining it as partisans. This flies right in the face of reality as it is not even a remote possibility. It might be the director's wish. But history is not made according to one's wishes.

Telugu commercial cinema right now in the 90's is seen in a new 'avataar'. Fake encounters became quite too numerous in N.T.R.'s regime and it is being repeated by M. Chenna Reddy, who had been forced by circumstances to hold out promises of democratic rights at the commencement of his regime. This brief respite saw hundreds of thousands of people participating in mammoth gatherings in connection with the 20th anniversary of the foundation of Revolutionary Writers' Association and the 18th anniversary of Jana Natya Mandali. This phenomenon has motivated the clever capitalists of filmdom who have chosen to make best of both the worlds by means of taking up the themes of Encounters to their own financial advantage. One such venture has been launched by Ushakiran Movies, starting it as 'Encounter'; the film's name was later on changed to 'People's Encounter'. Obviously it seeks to displease neither the government nor the revolutionary movement. Revolutionaries say that the movement is meant for the people while the government claims that it is suppressing the movement also in the people's interest. 'People's Encounter' maintains on behalf of the 'people' that they are being caught between two stools and getting crushed in the process. The film seeks to present the government as Hitlerite and in the same breath the movement is presented as Terrorism. And this is supposed to be, 'non-partisan ship' par Excellence !

What I say by way of conclusion is this: a large segment of the middle class seems to have responded favourably to J. Vengal Rao's cruel suppression of the Srikakulam struggle. Take for instance, an editorial in a Telugu Daily with the

caption of 'Narakasura Vadha' when Com. Vempatapu Satyam, the leader of the movement, had been gunned down. But the movement has marched forward in these twenty years, defying repression and fake encounters. In the present context, at least 50% of the vacillating middle class are responding favourably to the movement, while the other 50% are still pro-government in their attitudes, as reflected by monopoly newspapers. It is exactly this attitude that is sought to be expressed by films like 'People's Encounter'. When the people's movement proceeds for another twenty years, a revolutionary climate will have permeated cultural life and then the 'other' voice of this section of the middle class will no longer be heard. That will be the hour for the realistic cinema to portray the changing life authentically and critically. Until then our task lies in analysing the commercial films and exposing their deliberate attempts to portray the revolutionary movement in false colours.

Translation from Telugu



Resolutions Passed at the 4th Conference of AILRC Trichur (Kerala) 19-21, October, 1990

1. Long Live Com. Jagneswar Das !

The AILRC mourns the demise of Com. Jagneswar Das, the chief founder of the Jan zui of Assam, a constituent of the AILRC. Com. Das's death on 7-9-1990 is an irreparable loss to our cause and to the revolutionary movement in the country.

2. Iraqi Aggression and U.S. Intervention

The world was shocked when, in August last, Saddam Hussain's Iraq committed naked aggression against its small neighbour, Kuwait, resulting in its occupation and annexation. The conflict between these two Third World countries can ultimately be traced back to the nefarious policies of British and French imperialists in the years after the world war I, when they sought to create dependencies in the Arab homeland, recently delivered from the yoke of the Turkish Empire. It is, however, the oil-wealth of Kuwait that was now coveted by Iraq, whatever be Saddam Hussain's appeals to history to justify his brazen-faced aggression. It is essentially a conflict between the ruling classes of Iraq which is buttressed by Social Imperialism of the USSR on the one hand and Kuwait which is being championed by the U.S. The people of the two states have no real stakes in this conflict. The AILRC condemns the Iraqi aggression unequivocally.

At the same time, the AILRC denounces the unilateral intervention by U.S. Imperialism and its West European allies

in the Gulf conflict, acting independently of the U.N. policy of sanctions against Iraq. They have concentrated their war-ships and war-planes in the Persian Gulf, threatening war unless Iraq vacated its aggression. They are enforcing a naval and air blockade against Iraq, causing untold hardship to its people by withholding essential supplies. This situation is showing signs of escalating into a war of much wider dimensions, threatening the entire Middle-East. Imperialist intervention and involvement in this, as in all other local conflicts of the Third World countries, proves that World Peace cannot be established as long as imperialism exists in any shape in the wide world.

The AILRC also expresses its concern for the plight of millions of foreign nationals, including Indians, in Iraq and Kuwait, who have lost their everything and were reduced to penury and misery as a result of Iraqi aggression and the U.S. war-threat.

3. Support the Right to Self Determination of Kashmiri people !

Kashmiris have been fighting against the powers that be for a long time. Be it an autocratic ruler like Raja Hari Singh or the rulers of 'independent' India like Nehru, Indira, Rajiv and V.P. Singh, almost all the rulers have trampled upon the 'Kashmiriat' and subjected the Kashmiris to untold suffering. After surreptitiously annexing Kashmir to India, the Delhi throne never respected its own premises like Article 370, let alone finding solutions to the genuine grievances of Kashmiris. In the last four decades the Congress has been successfully destroying even the parliamentary opposition parties in the region. All the parliamentary institutions were misused and a vacuum was created in the arena of political debate.

Naturally the people looked up to the fundamentalists and chose extra-parliamentary options to solve their problems. In the process secular channels also have emerged to lead the struggle. The people's movement has been spreading on and off during all these forty years. The Kashmiri struggle has once again caught the attention of the other India, since mid-1989. Governor Jagmohan's barbaric military rule has alienated Kashmiris ever more from India and confirmed their apprehensions about the Indian rulers. At this juncture, AILRC feels

that it is the duty of every citizen of this country to support the just cause of Kashmiris and demand the Indian government to at least honour their own constitutional safeguards regarding Kashmir. As AILRC feels that the struggle of nationalities form part of the ongoing New Democratic Revolution of India, it strongly supports the just struggle of Kashmiris and condemns the brutal repression let loose against the masses of Kashmir on the pretext of the protection and promotion of national integrity

4. Support Reservations as an Inalienable Right of the Downtrodden !

The whole of India is witnessing a violent agitation and a heated debate over government's decision to implement one of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. Upper caste prejudices are being fomented in the name of 'merit' and 'efficiency'. The age-old discrimination on caste-lines is being supported through covert and overt 'forms of protest', insulting the artisan and downtrodden castes. In the welter of passions whipped up by the press, the real issues of reservation policy are being shrouded. In fact, the present policy of reservation is a progressive dereservation of status and opportunity from the upper castes in favour of the oppressed. At the same time, as the dividing line between caste and class is very thin in our society, the present situation is demonstrating the underlying aspects of a class struggle. In the given social system, AILRC believes that the rationale of the reservation policy should be based on population and reservation should be extended to women and minorities.

AILRC urges the people to understand the real import of the anti-reservation agitation and fight against the upper caste prejudices, let loose by the agitation and the media. AILRC demands that the policy of reservation is to be continued as long as society is divided on caste lines. Though AILRC believes that the real solution for the problems of the oppressed lies in the victory of the New Democratic Revolution, it demands that the recommendations of Mandal Commission should be implemented to enable the downtrodden to assert their rights. AILRC records its grief over the deaths of youngsters in the name of self-immolation, but it also believes that the act is nothing but a 'satee' in another form. AILRC urges the

masses to take all these aspects into consideration and form a correct understanding of the issue.

5. Resist the machinations of Hindu Communalism and spread secular consciousness among the masses.

Though there are no incontrovertible proofs to proclaim the site of Babri Masjid as the birth place of Rama, Hindu communalists are trying to whip up communal passions to gain electoral victories. So far they have been successful in fomenting communal disturbances at 55 places both before and after the parliamentary elections, almost at every place visited by Advani's Ram Rath or the local Ram Jyoti Yatras. It cannot be established that the Babri Masjid was built on the ruins of Ram Janma Bhoomi temple, if only one wishes to go by historical and archaeological evidence. The colonial sources only point out that the demolition did take place.

With scant regard for history and archaeology, fascist indifference to the lives of people and reluctance to any peacefully negotiated settlement, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bharatiya Janta Party are trying to cash on the false consciousness of religious beliefs among the people. The controversy is one of the reasons behind the increased strength of BJP in the parliament. Even now the issue is being kept alive with an eye on an imminent mid-term poll to the parliament.

Though every party calls itself secular, until now no party has announced its real secular stand on the issue. The bankruptcy of the parliamentary left is much more visible in the case as they had not mobilised people against Ram Janma Bhoomi issue, though the sitting MP from Ayodhya belongs to the CPI. The whole atmosphere is emotionally surcharged with the makings of a deliberate conspiracy. In the obtaining situation, AILRC demands the government to immediately stop the Ram Rath Yathra and all the arrangements to start the construction of Ram Temple from October, 30. AILRC also demands that the status quo ante as on December 23, 1949 with regard to the Babri Masjid should be restored immediately. AILRC urges people to understand the conspiracy behind the communalisation of society and join the path of revolution to solve the social maladies instead of waiting for an 'Avatar' like Rama.

6. Condemn the Brutal Repression in A.P.

M. Chenna Reddy, Cong. (I) CM of Andhra Pradesh had held out empty promises to restore democratic rights in the state and assured that he would not resort to the Police Raj like his predecessor, N.T. Rama Rao, in an attempt to divert the middle class opinion in his favour. But his police soon resumed their brutal repression against the revolutionary movement, saying that 'Naxalites' misused the freedom and liberty 'given' by the government. Encounter-killings, illegal detentions and indiscriminate application of TADA have all begun again in the wake of intensifying class struggles in the villages of Telen-gana and the forests of A.P., Maharashtra and Orissa border regions. AILRC expresses its solidarity with the people in their just struggles and condemns state-repression.

7. Against Repression in Bihar

Despite the change in governments both at the centre and in the state, Police Raj remains the same. Lallu Prasad Yadav's regime is witnessing the killing of a number of revolutionary activists and imprisonment of hundreds of them belonging to several parties, such as Com. Bijoy Kumar and com. Jitram Singh. AILRC condemns this repression and extends its support to the demands of 'Daman Bidrohi Morcha'. It demands that the Black Laws be repealed, the ban on MCC and MKSS of Bihar be revoked and the democratic rights be restored.

8. Repression in West Bengal

The 'Left Front' Government of West Bengal's claim of being a 'Sangramer Hatier' (Weapon for Struggle) is being belied by its practice. The ghastly incidents in Bantala and Birati, a lathi-charge and firing on people who took out a procession against bus-tram-launch fare-rise, shooting down a jute mill-worker at Syamnagar while he, along with others, was demanding back their money deducted from their salary by the millowner, opening fire against the people at Beguihat on 3rd September when they were protesting against power-cut during the Puja festival, etc., show the 'Left Front' Government in its true Hiterlite colours.

9. Release all Political Prisoners !

It is cruel irony that, while the nation has been paying a gala reception to Nelson Mandela, a large number of political

prisoners are languishing in jails all over the country for years and years. In West Bengal 26 political prisoners are behind bars since 8 years without even a trial. AILRC demands the release of all political prisoners in Bengal, Bihar, A.P. and other states.

10. Denounce the Cultural Fascism in M.P. !

Com. Gaddar's Jana Natya Mandali troupe, accompanied by Com. Vara Vara Rao, was subjected to harassment and virtual externment by the B.J.P. Government of Madhya Pradesh. It sought to prevent cultural performances in Bastar district. The troupe was detained in a police station in Bhilai for 12 hours when foul abuses were hurled against them. Finally it was forced to leave the state under threats. This assault on the right of freedom of expression deserves the severest condemnation by liberal and democratic forces.

11. People of Kerala, Fight against Communalism !

Kerala's proud legacy of fighting communalism and casteism under communist leadership in the 1940s and 50s suffered a set-back after the ouster of the Communist Ministry in 1959. With the Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy, fundamentalist forces have become aggressive in the state where communal clashes are now taking place. AILRC appeals to the people of the state to unite with the genuine Left and democratic forces in order to launch an offensive against the forces of reaction.

12. Uphold the right to erect a Memorial to Com. Rajan !

AILRC firmly upholds the right of the people to erect a memorial column in tribute to martyr Com. Rajan, who was tortured to death by the Kerala police in a concentration camp in the dark days of the Emergency. It demands the State Government to withdraw its stand of denying the people's right to honour com. Rajan's undying memory.

13. Protest against the Closure of Indian Post !

AILRC condemns the suppression of the newspaper workers by the government of Maharashtra in the interests of Shreyans Das, the proprietor of 'INDIAN POST', who closed it down. AILRC supports the struggle of the Bombay Union of Journalist and the 'INDIAN POST WELFARE ASSOCIATION' in this regard.

REPORT : BOMBAY SEMINAR

Down with Communalism !

A seminar on communalism and fundamentalism was conducted in Bombay on the 14th and 15th of April, '90 by the AILRC with the collaboration of Aavhaan Natya Manch of Maharashtra. The seminar hall was named after com. Avtar Singh 'Pash'.

Com. Sanober Keshwaar of ANM presided over the opening session when Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty of the University of Delhi delivered his inaugural address. He observed that communalism has become one of the characteristics of the Indian State, whose professions of Secularism have been belied in practice so much so there is a crying need for a democratic secularism in the place of State Secularism, while the former is bogus, the latter is genuine. It should emanate from below, reflecting the people's own responses to the growing communalist menace and challenging and countering State Secularism.

Com. K.V.R. submitted a key-note paper, in the course of which he attempted to trace the rise and growth of communalism both before and after 'Independence'. He sought to explain how the State machinery is being enlisted to serve communalist and fundamentalist forces in order to protect and promote the vested interests of the ruling classes.

Shri Sharad Patil of the Satya Sodhak Communist Party spoke at length about the resurgence of Hindu Communalism. He observed that caste is a unique characteristic of Hindu society but this was ignored by Marxism. Revolution cannot be brought about in the country until and unless caste was annihilated, according to Shri Patil. In contrast, Prof. G. Haragopal

of the University of Hyderabad cited a number of instances from the ongoing struggles of the peasantry in Telengana to substantiate his argument that both caste and communal problems can be resolved only in the process of the New Democratic Revolution and in the course of class-struggle.

The second day's session was presided over by Com. Anuradha Gandhi, a member of the AILRC, Shri Asghar Ali Engineer, the eminent writer and publicist of Bombay, traced the rise of communalism back to the post-1857 days of British Colonialism, when the replacement of Persian with English in administration and the growing backwardness of Muslims in matters of western education and government employment had forced Muslim leaders like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan to think of their community as a distinct entity. The colonialists in their own interests sought to drive a wedge with their 'Divide and Rule' policy.

Com. Baru Satwarg of the Krantikari Sahit Sabha of Punjab spoke about Sikh Communalism and fundamentalism, drawing attention to the ugly phenomenon of State Terrorism in response to the Khalistani agitation which is being increasingly marked by acts of violence. Prof. Dalip Singh of a Bombay College, gave his own version of the condition in Punjab.

Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty was requested to give a picture of the situation in Kashmir where too the State has become a terrorist in response to the growing militancy of the Kashmiri youth. He gave a concise account of how the cherished 'Kashmiriyat' has continuously been undermined by the successive governments of India after the State's accession whatwith a semi-military occupation, suppression of democratic demands, corruption among Kashmir's own rulers, growing unemployment of Kashmiri youth, rigged elections resulting in disenchantment with the normal political processes and, in this context, the rise of fundamentalism.

The last session was chaired by Com. Kanchan Kumar of the Delhi unit of the AILRC. A number of speakers such as Com. Anuradha Gandhi, Sunil Dighe, Nagesh Chowdary, Devanathan and Com. Rajkishore of Krantikari Buddhi Jeevi Sangh of Bihar and Com. K.A. Mohan Das of Jankeeya Kala Sahitya Vedi of Kerala spoke on different aspects of communalism and

suggested how to counter the growing menace. It was followed by a lively discussion in which Com. Gurubir took an outstanding part.

Com. N.K.'s 'Lal Bano, Gulami Chhodo, Bolo Vande Mataram,' a Telugu poem translated into Hindi and Com. Satwarg's 'Nikki Bukkal', a book in Punjabi were released by Com. Raj Kishore and Com. Kanchan Kumar respectively.

Shri Anand Patwardhan's 'In Memory of Friends', a Hindi documentary about the present Punjab was screened, followed by a discussion. ANM presented a street-play, denouncing Communalism. □

REPORT

Down with Glasnost and Perestroika! Uphold the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution!

The Delhi unit of the AILRC held a convention against modern revisionism, symbolised by Gorbachev's Glasnost and Perestroika and upholding the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The day, September, 9 happened to coincide with the 14th death anniversary of Mao. Delegates from RWA (AP), Aahwaan Natya Manch (Maharashtra) and Krantikari Buddhi-jevi Sangh (Bihar), Delhi Radical Students' Organisation, Indian Federation of Trade Unions, People's Union for Democratic Rights, Nishant Natya Manch, Pratidhwani, Pragati Sahiti, etc. participated in the convention together with like-minded individuals.

Com. Sanober of Aahwaan chaired the morning session and Com. Raj Kishore of KBS presided over the afternoon session. The speakers were Dr. K. Balagopal, General Secretary of A.P. Civil Liberties Committee and member of RWA, Com. Azizul Haq, political and cultural activist from West Bengal who was recently released after a long imprisonment, Dr. W.C. Deb, convener of the Delhi unit of AILRC, and Com. Siri Janssen, chairperson of the AKP (ML) Communist Party of Norway. The speeches were followed by a lively discussion, and then followed cultural performances by Nishant, Pratidhwani, Pragati Sahiti and also by members of AILRC.

Dr. Balagopal spoke on the developments in Eastern Europe and Soviet Russia. He said that retrogressive development took place in these countries towards restoration of capitalism by having recourse to material incentives, market indicators, etc.,

since 1956. Much of capitalism was restored in the USSR since 1965 when the CPSU in its September plenum decided to introduce 'basic' economic reforms. This process was soon picked up by East European countries. The Socialist principle of self-reliance was given up in favour of a large import of technology and capital from the west, leading ultimately to a crisis. The speaker criticised the highly centralised, authoritarian planning commission which precluded people's own participation in the process of planning, thus alienating the masses from the Party and the State. The authoritarian political structure also came in for sharp criticism as one emerging from the wrong handling of the problem of the 'alienation of masses from social labour', and trying to make them work more for producing more social wealth.

The wrong conception that 'Socialism would lay the material basis for the future communist society', means that the task of socialism is to build the economic base and postponing the building of communism to an indefinite future. Mao said, in criticism of the above : if the revolutionising of the superstructure does not take place, the backward superstructure can inhibit the development of the forces of production themselves.

Without any belief in Socialism at all, Gorbachev has been openly advocating 'Market Economy' and a rapid growth of social wealth. The revisionist essence of Perestroika lies in such arguments as '—whatever be the economic and political structure evolved by capitalism (Market Economy Production and Multi-party Democracy respectively) is also adequate for building socialism' and, 'it does not matter what the means are for achieving the goal'. Concluding his speech, Dr. Balagopal said, the ideas that have emanated from Mao and the Cultural Revolution are positive pointers of the direction in which we shall have to think and act.

Com. Siri Janssen spoke briefly about the position of her Party in regard to Soviet and East European developments. She criticised the growth of bureaucratic capitalism in USSR. She said that new revolutions are necessary in all these revisionist countries in order to build real Socialism afresh. East European developments last year were in the nature of some sort of bourgeois democratic revolutions, somewhat necessary for their

peoples in order that they struggle for a genuine socialist revolution. The change in their political system is, of course, not a change effected by the working class, but nevertheless important. The crisis in these countries took place in the background of economic stagnation and problems of technological development in the USSR. The speaker noted that the world situation is fast changing. Japan and Germany are coming up as important new forces. Though only the USA and the USSR have military might enough to compete globally, both of them are in deep economic trouble. The threat of another world war is not as imminent as it was. But it will reemerge after a period of restructuring. By virtue of its growing economic and political force, West Germany might well exploit East Germany as well as Western European countries and the unification of the two Germanys will further enhance its power.

Com. Azizul Haq observed that events in the USSR and East Europe show a resurgence of [social ?] fascism. They mark a retreat from socialism and restoration of capitalism. This certainly is no crisis of socialism as much as it is the crisis of capitalism in the garb of socialism. Gorbachev has worked out an integrated strategy and tactics, drawing from Bernstein down to Khrushchev.

Dr. Deb referred to Gorbachev's unashamed pronouncements in favour of abandoning a class approach which he called 'simplistic'. The speaker dwelt mainly on the cultural Revolution, explaining its background, aims and significance at length. He sharply criticised the role of Revisionists in Pre-Revolution societies and, in particular, the CPI and CPI(M). The cultural revolution was a struggle between capitalist-roaders and socialist-roaders in post-revolutionary China. It was an unprecedented campaign against revisionism in that country in imitation of Khrushchevism. During the cultural revolution, the victory of Mao's 'Proletarian Revolutionary line was complete so that the capitalist-roaders were obliged to beat a retreat. But in Post-Mao China, the same set usurped power. The student demonstrations of 1989 did not have a clearcut set of demands. Nevertheless they showed some signs of the resurgence of Mao's ideas such as "Rebellion against reactionaries". □

AILRC Tour of Punjab Interim Report July, 1990

The All India League for Revolutionary Culture (AILRC), formed in 1983, comprises of revolutionary cultural and writers' organisations from all over the country. The AILRC is committed to the growth and propagation of the alternative culture of the fighting masses of India—democratic, scientific and revolutionary.

Consequent on a Seminar on 'Hindu revivalism and the growth of communalism in India' held by the AILRC in Bombay in April this year, the AILRC Executive Committee decided to organise a tour of Punjab to find out the truth of the situation there—State terrorism, activities of the Sikh militants, spread of communalism, roots of the crisis, etc, and to submit a report to its members all over the country. The tour was arranged and the team was convened by Comrade Baru Satwarg (AILRC Executive Member and President of Krantikari Sahit Sabha of Punjab) and comprised the following members : (1) P. Varavara Rao (Revolutionary Writers' Association, Andhra Pradesh), (2) C.S.R. Prasad (Also of RWA, A.P.), (3) Raj Kishore (Krantikari Buddijeevi Sangh, Bihar), (4) Kanchan Kumar (AILRC, Delhi), and (5) Ms. Sanober Keshwaar (Aavhaan Natya Manch, Bombay).

The team made a six-day tour of the following villages and towns : Amritsar, Harsa Sheena, Jagdev Kalan (Amritsar District), Faisalabad, Desal, Fattu Dhingra, Mundi (Kapurthala dist.), Makhu, Malloke, Talwandi Bhai (Ferozepur), Dudike,

Ajitwaal, Moga, Chand Navha, Rode, Panghgrain Kalan (Faridkot dist.), Bhatinda city, Maur Mandi, Mehraj, Rampura Phul (Bhatinda Dist.) and Barnala (Sangrur dist.).

In the course of the tour, the team met and spoke to Dattar Singh (President, Democratic Teachers Association), at Amritsar ; Birendra Singh (Research scholar and lecturer in the Maths Dept.), Dr. S.S. Sagar (Lecturer in Guru Nanak Studies) Dr. Ramesh Kuntalmegh (Head of the Hindi Dept.), Parminder Singh (Lecturer in English at Jallandur and Jt. Secretary of AFDR)—all at the Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar. Then at Makhu the team met Mr. Chandrashekhar (Journalist), at Dudike, Jaswant Kamal (Novelist), Prof., Sarwan Singh (Sports writer and Lecturer at a local college) and Nirbhai Singh (Secretary of CPI (M-L), Faridkot Dist.). At Moga, the team met Narendra Singh Chahil (Advocate and former leader of PSU) and Swaran Singh (Akali Dal (Mann), Vice-President) at Panghgrain Kalan. Then at Bhatinda the team met Dr. T.R. Vinod, Vasudev Agarwal, and Bagga Singh (all office bearers of AFDR Dist. Bhatinda), Dr. Jiwan Jot (Editor, Shini), Malwinder Singh Malli (Editor, Paigam) and also various office bearers of the Technical Services Union. At Mehraj, the team met the office-bearers of the Khetri Mazdoor Union, and at Rampura Phul, Roshanlal Phulvi (Freedom-fighter and President, Punjabi Lekhak Pathak Sabha and founder of Nari Adhikar Manch), and H.M. Bansal (Principal of the Shahid Smarak College for Women), Mukhtiar Singh (Editor, 'Parcham'), the editors of 'Disha' and 'Lal Tara' and Surjeet Singh Phul (Dist. Secretary of Bhartiya Kisan Union and Editor of 'Kisan'). At Barnala, the team met Meghraj Mitter (writer and rationalist), Dr. Pritam Singh Rahi (President, Punjab Writers' Association), Basant Kumar (Novelist), Jagir Singh Jatav (Vice President of Kendriya Punjabi Lekhak Sabha) and Omprakash Gasso (Poet and novelist). The team also met a cross-section of peasant organisation members, trade union activists, migrant labourers, village Panchayat committee members and sarpanches, victims of both state and 'terrorist' violence, advocates, and doctors, peasants, and the people in the street.

The team will prepare a detailed report shortly and submit it to the AILRC executive committee which will release it to the

Press after finalising the same. In the meanwhile, we would like to share with you the following brief observations.

One, particularly a Marxist-Leninist, need not come all the way to assess the state terrorism here. Since investigation is an essential part of the dialectical world-outlook, we could feel its taste right from the moment we entered Punjab.

The common man, the communalist and the communist have one thing to say in common, whether they fight it or not, that **the main enemy is state terrorism**. All of them see the genesis of the problem in the attitude and the overt and covert acts of the Central Government since 1947. All of them viewed the utterances and practices of all Parliamentary parties as mere election croppers. So every human head, living or dead, is counted as a vote for them either way. For the present-day situation in Punjab every one rightly fixes the responsibility on **the Central Govt. as the main culprit**.

The writers and intellectuals of different shades, basically democrats, specifically tried to remind us at every step that the people of Punjab are not communal. Even the Delhi riots of 1984 could not provoke any communal tensions in Punjab.

We could also see the cherished pride for **Punjabiyaat**, its language, valour, values and culture being deliberately hurt by the rulers at the Centre and its agents in Chandigarh.

There is unequivocal condemnation of indiscriminate killings of innocent people by the state and by the so-called terrorists by one and all.

How a state could be an oppressive tool is demonstrated in Punjab in different dimensions and it proves beyond doubt that **private violence is the offshoot of state violence**.

Therefore, we appeal to the people of Punjab in general to know their enemy and choose their friends in fighting for their aspirations. We appeal to the revolutionaries in Punjab in particular to realise the aspirations and just demands of the Punjabi people by leading them into the mainstream of the New Democratic Revolution. □





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RUPEES FIVE
