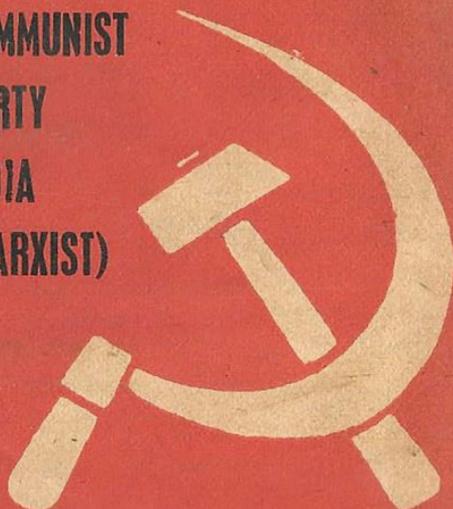


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**CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON
POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT**

10/2005

CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON **POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

CALCUTTA, JUNE 24-28, 1981

The results of the recent by-elections have revealed two different tendencies. They show the outstanding victory of the Left forces headed by the CPI (M) in West Bengal. They simultaneously reveal the defeat of the bourgeois opposition parties at the hands of the Congress (I) outside West Bengal—in Orissa, Bihar and U.P. These successes of the Congress (I) were also partly the result of misuse of State power, rigging, bribery and coercion. Nonetheless, it cannot be said that the bourgeois opposition parties have rendered a good account of themselves in the midst of widespread suffering and privations of the common man, imposed by the Congress (I) regime.

The West Bengal victories of the Left Front, headed by the CPI (M), constitute an inspiring achievement of our Party, of the Left Front and the people of West Bengal against the challenge of the authoritarian forces. They climaxed the struggle of the Left forces against the campaign of slander, murder and arson sedulously conducted over months by the Congress(I), aided by the Central Government. The decisive victory of our Party and the Left forces, the virtual rout of the Congress (I), has not only enhanced the prestige of our Party, it has strengthened the democratic forces all over India, and the desire and urge for Left unity.

The CPI (M) nominee of the Left Front for the Sreerampore Lok Sabha constituency, and one CPI and five CPI(M) nominees for the Assembly constituencies won the election with big and increased margins. The Polit Bureau statement on the election observes: In contrast to the Congress (I)-ruled Sta-

ten where also by-elections were held, the percentage of polling in West Bengal was much higher. This is obviously the result of the people in West Bengal looking upon the Left Front and its allies as a reliable political force in the State with its own alternative policies, while in the States where other opposition parties are stronger, they have been unable to project such an image.

The defence of people's interests over four years, the help rendered to the working class to improve its living standards, the protection of democratic liberties and refusal to use preventive detention measures and the National Security Act, the freedom of strike and trade union movement guaranteed to the workers and employees including State Government employees, the agrarian legislation which has shaken the countryside and given new confidence to the oppressed bargadar, the relief from debt, etc.—these were the instruments of the Left victory,

As against this what is the source of the Congress (I) victory in other States? The statement of the P. B. correctly observes "The P. B. notes that the by-election results are no cause of rejoicing for the Congress (I). The low polling—as low as 25 per cent in a highly political constituency like Allahabad—is an index of the tremendous dissatisfaction of the people with the Congress (I), who, in the absence of a viable alternative, abstained from exercising their franchise".

The P. B., besides, noted the unscrupulous use of the administrative apparatus by the ruling party in the elections. This was the case in Bihar, and was most blatantly seen in the Garhwal Lok Sabha constituency where armed policemen were brought from outside the State to intimidate the voters, booths were captured and the election rigged.

Such is the contrast between the two victories.

ATTACK ON LEFT-ORIENTED MINISTRIES

The months since the last meeting of the Central Committee saw a concentrated offensive of the ruling party against

the Left Front Ministries of West Bengal and Tripura and the Left Democratic Front Ministry of Kerala. The battle between the forces of authoritarianism and the forces of democracy was finding expression in the three States with the Congress (I) unscrupulously using slander and lies, entering into unscrupulous alliances with forces it considered reactionary, and organising violence with the aid of anti-social gangs to create law and order problems in these States.

The aim of these manoeuvres and slanders was to create an atmosphere of destabilisation of the Ministries, by isolating them from the democratic public opinion in other States and undermining their base in their own States.

These attacks failed miserably exposing and unmasking the anti-democratic practices of the Congress (I). The people of West Bengal refused to respond to the April 3 bandh call, the working class kept the wheels of industry moving, and the bandh only demonstrated the isolation of the Congress (I) from the people. The raw violence exhibited on the streets of Calcutta on April 3, the burning of buses and trams, and the killing of women and children sent a wave of revulsion throughout the country and compelled the organisers of the bandh to disown and repudiate them. But nothing could save the Congress (I). The people of Calcutta had seen the anti-social elements organising the bandh and throwing hundreds of bombs on passing vehicles.

So deep was the revulsion and anger in West Bengal, after tens of thousands saw the exhibition of burnt buses and trams, that the Congress (I) got cold feet and decided to 'boycott' the municipal elections.

The incendiary violence discredited the Congress (I) party, and the big bourgeois Press itself had to comment on it and denounce it. Perhaps, since the return to power of the Congress (I), there was not such universal condemnation of the ruling party by the Press.

To quote one such editorial: "Perhaps never have buses and trams with passengers in them been subjected to such

systematic and savage attacks. The pattern of violence showed elaborate preparations. Not all of those responsible may have been Congress (I) supporters, anti-social elements must also have taken a hand. But little distinction could be made between their apparent aims. Surely, the Congress (I) leaders knew the likely consequences of their bandh plan, they may have even calculated that violence, even resulting in deaths and injuries, would serve their purpose of increasing tension, that further disorder would strengthen their case against the Left Front Government." (*The Statesman*, April 5)

Following the defeat inflicted on April 3, the people of West Bengal inflicted another crushing defeat on the Congress (I) and its allies in the municipal elections in May. Though the Congress (I) boycotted the elections, the organisation and its allies were straining every nerve to secure the popular vote. They were routed. The Left Front and its allies captured 66 per cent of the 1409 seats and secured absolute majority in 68 out of 87 municipalities for which elections were held.

The Tripura Left Front Ministry was also under continuous pressure from the Centre and the Congress (I). In both States, the Centre misused its power and starved them of supplies of essential articles including food. In Tripura, besides, the Congress (I) elements entered into open alliance with a secessionist tribal group which, encouraged by help from across the border, was organising raids and assaults on the non-tribals. The Congress (I) also joined hands with the notorious Amra Bengalee organisation which had played a gruesome role two years ago in attacking and murdering tribal citizens.

In Kerala, the Congress (I) has been unscrupulously attempting to exploit RSS and Naxalite activities to undermine the Coalition Ministry and create an all-India atmosphere to bring it down.

Smt. Indira Gandhi during her visits to Kerala would not utter a word against the murder campaign of the RSS; on the other hand, she maligned the Ministry and held it responsible for alleged breakdown of law and order. Similarly, the murders

and violence organised by the Naxalites were used to condemn the Ministry and make out a case for collapse of law and order.

The campaign was carried on to dizzy heights by the Union Home Minister for State, Sri Makwana, who virtually called for a liberation struggle. This inciting call was initially given by the State Congress (I) leader Karunakaran, who called on several parties to join together for such a struggle. But with the counter-offensive from the partners in the Ministry, the Congress (I) retreated from its call and Makwana denied that he ever gave such a call. Once more, popular forces compelled a temporary retreat on the authoritarian forces. The Central Government is now planning to interfere in the affairs of the State by appointing a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the "spirit" scandal.

It must be realised that the survival and continuance of the Ministries in the midst of the deepening crisis of the economy constitutes a signal achievement of the democratic forces. No Left Front Ministry or Communist Ministry of an earlier period could survive for more than a couple of years despite the fact that the crisis was not so all-pervading and the authoritarian forces had not yet fully revealed their dictatorial ambitions.

Today, if the Ministries continue despite repeated conspiracies, it is because of the wide sympathy of the democratic forces with them, and the Party's efforts to harness broad resistance to authoritarianism, and a general sense of awareness among the advanced sections all over the country that the existence of these Ministries is connected with the survival of parliamentary norms.

This support, of course, would have been unthinkable without the achievements of these Ministries, their alternative policies, their defence of the democratic rights of the people and our Party's principled stand on the national and international issues facing the country.

The understanding of the Party that broad sections of

the people, including bourgeois opposition parties, are interested in stemming the advance of one-party rule, the understanding that intense conflict for governmental power drives opposition parties to take a stand against assaults on parliamentary norms, has helped it to unite these forces on a number of important issues. The Left-oriented Ministries could survive and fight back because Indira Gandhi could not succeed in her efforts to isolate them from the democratic forces in the country; she did attempt to capitalise on anti-Communist prejudices, appealed to the short-sighted and selfish policies of some sections of bourgeois parties in some States, but she failed.

Those who thought that with the return to power of Indira Gandhi, the fate of the Ministries was automatically sealed, underestimated the strength of democratic forces, of the opposition to authoritarianism.

This aspect of the situation was highlighted during the no-confidence motion against the Government in the Lok Sabha when speaker after speaker from different political parties, keeping aside their differences on many questions, concentrated on exposing the Government's attacks on democratic rights and its anti-people economic policies.

CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES

Nowwithstanding these achievements, the fight against the authoritarian forces takes place in changed circumstances, not all of which are favourable to the unity of democratic forces. The situation gets complicated by the assault of divisive forces on toilers' unity, on the unity of the democratic forces. These challenges partly arise out of the capitalist path with its compromise with the pre-capitalist relations in existence, which provides material conditions for sectarian caste and communal outlooks. These challenges are partly the result of direct imperialist conspiracies.

The concept of national unity is being assailed from all sides. The assault of divisive forces renders difficult the task

of mobilising all democratic forces in the struggle against authoritarianism.

The situation gets complicated by the opportunism of some bourgeois opposition parties which exploit the divisive and obscurantist appeal in their conflict with the Government to get cheap popularity and electoral advantage.

Along with internal fissiparous tendencies, the country is facing a direct challenge from U.S. imperialism which is feverishly arming Pakistan's military rulers.

The divisive challenges, the threat to national unity, comes in the midst of a worsening economic situation, an unprecedented rate of inflation, imposing extreme suffering on the people. The crisis-ridden economy has to seek more and more foreign help, with the grip of multinationals and the World Bank tightening over it. This leads to greater and greater attacks on democratic rights, sharpening the authoritarian attacks on the people.

The mass struggles against the effects of the economic crisis and impoverishment, which witnessed a period of lull immediately after the return of Indira Gandhi to power, are now showing an upward trend.

The massive peasant struggles of last year ending in the gigantic Kisan March made the new rise evident. This was accompanied by the struggles of students and other sections of the people.

During recent months, the lull on the working class front has been broken. The loco strike and the Bangalore public sector strike are the warning shots of things to come. The Bombay Convention with its proposed call for a one-day token industrial strike may mark a new stage in the development of the workers' struggle after January 1980. While the rising mass discontent expresses itself against the regime in several ways, the Left forces and their mass organisations are active in the field to channelise it into a democratic anti-authoritarian direction. The Left-oriented Ministries, their achievements,

become big weapons to stabilise and direct this discontent into the required channels.

The bourgeois opposition parties continue to have their conflict with the ruling party. But they are not only unmindful of the divisive challenges, but are also not choosy about the means to fight the ruling party. Thereby they contribute to the disunity of the democratic forces.

In recent months, their rivalries have intensified and they have shown their incapacity to unite their forces to confront the ruling party in the several by-elections. Their common front on the no-confidence motion was followed by contests among themselves in the elections. The Congress (U) seems to be passing through an inner crisis. Unable to live without power, sections of Congressmen seek peace with Indira Gandhi to be admitted to the Congress (I) table.

The Six Parties' Coordination got gradually frozen. But the efforts for joint action did not end with it. They found new ways—Kisan March, etc. And now the trade union leaders from these very parties have come together for common action.

LEFT UNITY STRENGTHENED

In this period, with all the zig-zags, the urge for Left unity has grown. Left unity is strengthened. The CPI still has its own inhibitions in relation to the development of a broad forum of resistance.

The CPI has undergone an inner convulsion with the expulsion of Dange. Though very few people have left along with him, there are quite a number of his supporters functioning from inside the party, which is bound to lead to vacillations on important issues.

Indira Gandhi, in pursuance of her game of organised disruption of the Left, has floated a new FSU to checkmate the CPI and its control of the Soviet friendship organisation. This is a serious attempt to wean away certain sections from the

CPI and growingly push forward the Congress (I) friendship organisation as the main organisation.

The ruling party is systematically pursuing its efforts to undermine parliamentary democracy and install one-party rule. It has been frustrated repeatedly in its efforts by the united voice of the Opposition and democratic forces. But its efforts continue. But it is leading itself into a more and more difficult situation. It has not only been unable to offer any economic relief, it cannot offer even the good and functioning administration which it had promised. In fact, the administration has totally collapsed and compromises the security of the ordinary citizen.

The bureaucracy and the police run amuck. To forestall popular resistance, the Congress(I) is taking one dictatorial step after another—the NSA, attacks on the Judiciary, grabbing more powers for the Centre, open defiance of the courts, attacks on the Left-oriented and other non-Congress (I) Governments.

To keep itself in power, it relies on divisive forces, on the backward sections, on Muslim communalists, and is afraid of exposing the divisive conspiracies of the imperialists. The ruling party endangers the unity of the country and makes the country dangerously vulnerable to imperialist conspiracies.

The continuance of the authoritarian party in power means not only danger to democracy, it means an invitation to internal and foreign anti-national forces to prevail over the people. The Party, therefore, must address itself to these various tasks in the fight against authoritarianism.

BOURGEOIS OPPOSITION PARTIES IN DISARRAY

The process of bourgeois opposition parties drifting away from each other continues. In Parliament they join in common opposition to, and exposure of, the Congress(I) Government, their unity was shown on the no-confidence motion.

But outside, in recent months, they have hardly shown any interest in united activity and have embarked upon consolidation at each other's expense.

Their incapacity to give a combined fight to the ruling party in the by-elections speaks for itself. But the Party had foreseen these vacillations and wanderings and warned against them. Notwithstanding that, these same parties united in launching a 'mass' movement in Gujarat against the ruling Ministry, involving thousands; such is the contradictory character of the situation. And it is so because the opposition bourgeois parties are in dire need of governmental power and are unable to strike a bargain with the ruling party. Their conflict continues, it is more and more attuned to parliamentary heroics, but also can, and does, take the form of appeal to the masses.

The Central Committee's review of the Assembly elections of May 1980 had significantly observed: "Defections, betrayals, crossings-over from the Congress to the Janata have taken place in recent times. In the Rajya Sabha, the Congress(I) was in a minority. Only at its last session, the Rajya Sabha adopted an amendment to the President's Address disapproving any action against non-Congress(I) Governments, despite Congress(I) opposition. But now the Congress(I) has secured a majority in the Upper House to endorse the dissolution of nine Assemblies.

"The Congress (U) is getting weaker every day. Sri Swaran Singh is again wearing the Congress(I) badge. Sri Devraj Urs is endeavouring to seek an understanding with the Left. In Kerala the Congress is part of the broad alliance which supports the Coalition Ministry..."

The C. C. review of the Lok Sabha election of January 1980 observed: "Indira Gandhi's victory of Chickmagalur boosted the prestige of the organisation. At this, a large number of Congressmen walked over from the Congress... But then a reverse process started for some time. Devraj Urs, the Karnataka Chief Minister, fell out with Indira Gandhi, joined

the Congress and gave it a big boost. A number of Congress(I) members of Parliament went over to the Swaran Singh Congress (Congress-S) raising its strength to 74, reducing the Congress(I) to 70. The Congress(S) was recognised as the official Opposition and its leader Y. B. Chavan as the leader of the Opposition." The 1978 Assembly elections in five States demonstrated the strength of the Congress(I) and again there were crossings-over.

The 1980 election which gave the Congress(I) an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, was marked by poor showing of the Congress(U). And crossings-over were inevitable. Those who had lost all hope of coming anywhere near power by opposing the Congress(I), now decided to make a bee-line to it. Chavan had planned his desertion for a long time and has succeeded in taking away the bulk of the Maharashtra Congress(U) leadership with him. To a certain extent this was inevitable, the Congress(U) position being thoroughly untenable. Its dominant leadership did not favour an understanding with the Left. Chavan's remark that in the Kisan March he saw nothing but a sea of red flags, was nothing but a protest against joining hands with the Left. Jagjivan Ram shares this view with Chavan. At the same time, being 'genuine' Congressmen, they could join hands with neither the BJP nor the Janata. They knew their followers were extremely vulnerable to the anti-BJP and anti-Janata appeal. This meant ploughing a lonely furrow and some of these leaders were not prepared for it. Chavan's defection is no doubt a windfall for Indira Gandhi and has disorganised the Congress(U).

Whether Devraj Urs and Jagjivan Ram will carry on a fight to maintain the organisation is to be seen. Obviously, it cannot be liquidated just for the asking. There are democratic elements in the organisation seeking greater cooperation with the Left and more earnest than their leaders to fight the authoritarian forces. The resolution of the Jullundur Party Congress noted: "The leadership which now controls the Congress was deeply involved in the installation of the Emer-

gency rule and imposition of the notorious 42nd Amendment Act on the people. Many of them had compromised their honour and conscience to prostrate themselves before Indira Gandhi and Sanjay to continue in their ministerial posts. Recently, they have been critical of the 'wild excesses' of the Emergency though parading its gains as well.

"Simultaneously there are other elements who are forthright in their denunciation of the Emergency rule, the anti-democratic functioning of the Congress, and support the demand for democratic advance and uphold anti-imperialist, anti-monopolist, anti-landlord and non-alignment policies. They also stand for expanding friendly relations with the Socialist world." It will be an obvious error to ignore these elements and not help them to consolidate themselves despite defections of top leaders. We must, however, be prepared for further defections and crossings-over after the results of the by-elections.

The other bourgeois opposition parties except the BJP also reveal inner stresses and loss of grip.

The Lok Dal was faced with disintegration, with the threatened action against Devi Lal and Kumbharam Arya. The issue here was direct association with the Kisan March. Though peace is now made, the dictatorial and whimsical functioning of Charan Singh has become an obstacle to the expansion and maintenance of the organisation. That is why both Madhu Limaye and George Fernandes had to withdraw from the Six Parties' Coordination and the Kisan March respectively. However, Charan Singh and his Lok Dal do continue to maintain a mass base in U.P. Karpoori Thakur continues to have his mass influence but he also is not pulling on with Charan Singh.

While the Janata Party is just marking time, the BJP is vigorously projecting itself as an active party intervening in the day-to-day issues affecting the people. This it does through the big bourgeois Press which gives it wide publicity and presents it as the alternative to the Congress(I) or the only parliamentary opposition to the ruling party.

The BJP, with its hard RSS core, is playing a very treacherous game. In its hunt to acquire the status of an alternative to the Congress(I), it unscrupulously supports Congress(I) candidates where its candidates have no chance. It adopted this tactic in the 1980 elections, it also supported the Congress(I) candidate against Bahuguna in the Garhwal Lok Sabha by-election. The RSS in Kerala, with its campaign of murders, acts as the spearhead of opposition to the Kerala Ministry.

All these parties lose no opportunity to speak against the Left-oriented Ministries and attack them for failure to maintain law and order, or partisanship in the conduct of the Ministry. Not on a single occasion do they refer to the many progressive steps the Ministries have taken.

Despite all these vacillations and wanderings, they do not support the Congress(I) game of toppling the Left-oriented Ministries. They express themselves against destabilisation of non-Congress(I) State Ministries.

CAMPAIGN FOR REACTIONARY STAND

A new situation that has developed in relation to these parties is that they are now actively campaigning for their reactionary stand on a number of issues related to foreign policy and certain important internal developments.

Not that these parties have suddenly changed their stand. But, hitherto, these issues were not in the forefront and they were not actively campaigning for their viewpoint. The BJP, Janata and other bourgeois opposition parties, except the Congress(U), have been lashing at the Soviet Union and the Government of India on the Afghanistan issue. The BJP and the Janata have been screening the U.S. moves against India and belittling the consequences of the pouring of American arms into Pakistan. On Kampuchea, on Afghanistan, these parties adopt anti-Vietnamese, anti-Soviet positions which facilitate U.S. objectives; on Diego Garcia, which directly affects India's security, the BJP's position is one of covering

up U.S. designs. This opportunist oppositional politics found its expression on the internal issue of Assam. All these parties virtually sided with the secessionist leaders. We had to oppose them in Assam—our comrades heroically carrying out the Party's mandate, to fight the U.S.-inspired secessionist agitation. We refused to join this opportunist crowd in its no-confidence motion against the Government, but we moved our own cut motion against the Government.

The BJP is the spearhead of this reactionary agitation. Being deeply anti-Soviet, it is the BJP which organised anti-Soviet demonstrations during Brezhnev's visit to sour Indo-Soviet relationship under the excuse of defending Afghanistan. It is the BJP leader, Vajpayee, who chided the External Affairs Ministry for mentioning Diego Garcia in its document to the Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers' Conference. It is clear whose interests are being served thereby. Internally also, it is the BJP that is the most vociferous advocate on behalf of the secessionist movement in Assam. The BJP made full use of the anti-Harijan movement in Gujarat to rouse caste feelings.

The anti-non-alignment sorties of the BJP are directed towards undermining the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation—the objective of U.S. foreign policy-makers. Anti-Sovietism and anti-Communism constitute the cornerstone of the BJP's foreign policy outlook. We should not forget that when Vajpayee was the Foreign Minister, secret talks were held with Israel—that stooge of the imperialists.

The net of the imperialist conspiracy is being spread far and wide, and its immediate objectives are internal disunity and disintegration and a shift towards the imperialist camp in the country's foreign policy.

The struggle against authoritarianism cannot be divorced from a consistent fight against this danger and all shades of opportunism which try to conceal it.

The opportunist attitude of the bourgeois opposition parties leaves the initiative for propaganda against the imperialist

danger in the hands of the authoritarian party; it aids and abets the Congress (I) to consolidate its hold and to present itself as a patriotic party concerned with the safety and integrity of the country.

FIGHT FOR REALIGNMENT OF FORCES BROADER RESISTANCE

It is obvious that the rapidly developing situation, with the changing positions of the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties, should witness diverse forms of cooperation and action in the struggle for broader resistance, for a new realignment of political forces. After January 1980, when Indira Gandhi was restored to power, it took the form of the Six Parties' Convention.

The communique issued at the end of the November C.C. meeting said: "The recent coming together of the six parties—the Lok Dal, the Congress (U), the RSP, the Forward Bloc, the CPI and the CPI (M)—on the issues of price-rise, communal harmony and civil liberties shows the possibilities inherent in our work along the line laid down in September 1979." The political significance of the unity of action among the six parties was spelt out in the P.B. report to the C.C. as follows: "The realignment of political forces for which the P.B. and the C.C. have been working has thus assumed the form of minimum joint action on the three issues, which can step by step be developed into the unity of anti-authoritarian, secular-democratic forces."

The six parties' combination emerging at a time when the morale of the bourgeois oppositional forces was at a low level did good service to the cause of broad mobilisation and rousing the people to activity.

Under its impulse several conventions were held, and joint demonstrations against price-rise, gheraos of Assemblies were planned.

RISE OF MASS DISCONTENT—DIFFERENTIATION INSIDE BOURGEOIS PARTIES

However, it was clear from the beginning that this form

of cooperation would not last long. The Janata Party would not join because the BJP was not invited. It was not clear till the end whether the Congress(U) was officially participating or not. The representative of the Lok Dal who took a prominent part in the formation of the combination, himself, lost his enthusiasm under the pressure of his leader Charan Singh.

There were weighty reasons for this change after the initial success of the move. The conservative leaders in many parties—Charan Singh, Chavan, Jagjivan Ram, even Devraj Urs in the beginning—were not keen on going along with the Left.

This hesitation coincided with the rise of mass discontent, and especially the peasant unrest. But the Six Parties' Convention had given a momentum to the movement which could not be checked.

“The Six Parties' Convention in the last week of September 1980 gave an impetus to these movements. Many forms of united actions were resorted to in different States strengthening the united movement of the peasantry. The Six Parties' Memorandum submitted to the President at the beginning of the Winter Session of Parliament gave fillip to these movements. These movements embraced all sections of the peasants irrespective of their political affiliations. The demand of the peasantry regarding remunerative prices was focused during the Winter Session and was supported by a large number of MPs including those belonging to the Congress(I).”

The waning enthusiasm of the leaders of the bourgeois-landlord opposition parties led to differentiation and the threat of split. The Lok Dal officially withdrew from the Kisan March but the leader of its Kisan Sammelan (Devi Lal) continued to support and organise the march. Chavan looked askance at this growing association with the Left and the peasant demands raised, while his follower Sharad Pawar, heading the Six Parties' Combination in Maharashtra, led the long march which resulted in the arrests of thousands of peasants; he insisted on the inclusion of agricul-

tural workers' demands in the All-India charter and accepted the chairmanship of the All-India kisan Coordination Committee. The achievements of the kisan agitation in different States have already been detailed in the February C.C. document. The All-India Kisan Coordination Committee was the new form of cooperation and it has to be vigorously pursued. Some difficulties may crop up because of the vacillations of some parties but the peasant discontent will not be allayed, and organisations with a peasant base will have to take note of it. The CPI(M), helped by the other Left parties, should be able to coordinate the activities of the Left and democratic parties and extend them on a broader scale.

THE KISAN MARCH

The peasants' response to the agitation created panic in ruling party circles and the Congress(I) was forced to demonstrate its peasant strength in the capital. It decided to organise a demonstration in support of Indira Gandhi, spent crores of rupees (Rs. 100 crore, it is rumoured), and employed a huge number of trucks and buses to bring the demonstrators to the capital. It did succeed in bringing large numbers, but everyone could see that it was not a spontaneous demonstration of the peasants. The Press noticed it; the citizens took note of it. And they also noted the difference when, a few days later, the Kisan March organised by the six parties walked the streets of the capital with waving banners and angry slogans.

The March 26 rally was the biggest achievement of the Party's struggle to mobilise larger and broader sections against the Government. Now all sections of the peasantry, including agricultural workers, were brought in and the participation of the largest number of organisations was ensured.

As the editorial of *People's Democracy* put it, “The Convention against Price-rise, Communalism and Attacks on Civil Liberties held in New Delhi six months ago; the local and Statewide demonstrations, bandhs, etc., which preceded and followed the convention; the historic long marches in Maharashtra and Karnataka; the Assembly gheraos in Maharashtra and Punjab; the demonstrations and

bandhs in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar—these were the forerunners of the Kisan Rally held in Delhi on March 26. Parallel to this mass action of the fighting peasantry were also the actions of the working class and middle class employees, such as the eighty-day-long strike of the Bangalore-based public sector employees; the one-day solidarity strike of all public sector employees throughout the country; the railway loco running staff strike, etc. The entire organised working class of Delhi and its neighbouring region, therefore, came out in support of and joined the Kisan Rally." As Comrade EMS said in his statement: "The convention was of six political parties, the March 26 rally was participated in by Kisan Sabhas, agricultural workers' organisations and trade unions connected with these six parties and also other parties." Among those who worked for the success of the rally were Congressmen led by Sri Sharad Pawar, Lok Dal men under the leadership of Sri Devi Lal and Sri Kumbharam Arya, Akali Party leaders, democratic elements under the leadership of Sri Bahuguna and Sri Chandrajit Yadav, CPI(M), the CPI and other Left parties.

BROADER BASIS FOR OPPOSITION

Today, formal functioning in the name of the six political parties is not in evidence; however, the broader mass activities at the same time must increase in the background of the upsurge of discontent among the people. The opposition is no longer confined to the three minimum issues of communalism, high prices and attacks on civil liberties, but extends to the immediate economic demands of the masses. Throughout this period the independent mass activity of the Party and its Left allies has been on the increase. Along with calls for one-day strikes for immediate demands of the workers, demonstrations against unemployment, against price-rise, organised singly or jointly by Left parties, there have been huge agitations against raising of bus-fares in which students and the mass of people participated, leading to police firings; there have been joint gheraoes of Assemblies or protest demonstrations in front of Assemblies. Apart from this, doctors, engineers, teachers and nurses have carried on prolonged struggles on their own.

The Party seized this link of growing discontent in several States and basing on it, was able to advance the task of broadening the resistance and involving many organisations. Students' participation in broad democratic agitations like opposition to increased bus-fares has already been mentioned. They, besides, have fought for their own specific demands and also have been the victims of reactionaries as in Aligarh. They have to face unheard of brutalities sometimes, brutalities unimaginable by the people. Young school children are chosen for atrocities.

The *Indian Express* editorial (January 9, 1981) observed: "We seem to be running out of adjectives to repeated outrages on the most vulnerable sections of society. After the burning of Harijans, raping of women, gouging of eyes of innocent men and lathi charge on them, it is now the turn of the school children to be at the receiving end of police brutalities. More than a hundred boys of the high school of Angul in the Dhenkanal district of Orissa were severely lathi-charged and actually made to march naked to the local police station a kilometre away carrying headloads of bricks and stones. These boys were forced to kneel down for about one hour, still carrying the heavy loads on their shoulder."

These forces of mass resistance have been gathering in the recent months, breaking the lull of the immediate post-election period. And now the working class unrest is bursting forth in new anger promising prolonged and united battles. The number of strikes and loss of working days was lowest in 1980 after the return of Indira Gandhi to power. It took some time to overcome the lull.

The Government, on its part, offered some baits to certain sections of workers led by leaderships which it could trust. It announced bonus linked with productivity to the railway workers, and the leadership surrendered the principle of bonus as deferred wage. The mass of railway workers not only did not protest but a large section avidly grasped what was given, though a militant section did realise that the workers' interests were compromised. This grant of bonus was intended to boost the NFIR leadership to consolidate its hold. There was

not a word of sympathy for the loco men, not a word of protest against the repression of loco workers from either the NFIR or AIRF leadership.

The Government also attempted to cultivate the central government and defence employees by accepting their demand for bonus, once again linked with productivity. The Communications Minister, in an effusion of generosity, also accepted some other demands—two promotions for P & T, etc., for which he was pulled up by the Cabinet and he is now virtually repudiating his acceptance.

But the opportunities for manoeuvring through concessions were extremely limited in view of the intensity of the crisis, and the Government decided to come out with a heavy hand on every agitation for wage-increase, or for continuance of favourable agreements already entered into.

The wages and incomes policy enunciated in the Sixth Five-Year Plan document made it clear that the Government would disfavour all claims for wage- and salary-increases. The blow, therefore, fell heavily on those who fought for their demands. All the three important struggles against which the Government took exceptional measures were led by the Left. The loco and LIC struggles were led by our comrades and the Bangalore public sector struggle broadly by the CPI-led AITUC and HMS.

In the meantime, the lull on the industrial front has been broken. Inflation and high prices brought the workers on the streets, their condition becoming unbearable in many industries. Some State Governments like the U.P. Government resorted to illegalisation of strikes but the strikes became prolonged. In general, the policy of the Congress (I) State Governments is to use the full repressive machinery against the CITU-led unions. In U.P., Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, CITU unions have had to face intense repression, and, in many places, goonda attacks with the aid of the police. In Haryana, the workers had to face murders, rapes and imprisonment.

In U.P. and many other States, the Congress (I) Governments ask the employers not to negotiate with CITU unions. The Rampur textile strike in U.P. was prolonged for over 181 days because the employer, encouraged by the Government, refused to negotiate with the CITU union which led the workers.

Karnataka, Haryana and Punjab have seen increase in our independent activity. In Assam, where CITU unions had to fight in a hostile atmosphere because of the secessionist movement, our plantation unions have registered significant advance despite brutal repression. In Delhi, Maharashtra and several other States united activities with other central organisations have been developing. The CITU, for the last year and half, has been endeavouring to forge a front for joint action, leading several strikes and agitations on its own, working for united actions on the local scale. These efforts for unity ended in a representative all-India convention of central trade unions and federations to fight the anti-labour policy of the Government. The loco strike, the LIC strike and the Bangalore strike all growingly brought the central unions together.

The struggle for broader resistance now rests on the solid foundation of the rising working class struggles and peasant struggles. The Party and its State Committees and all our trade unions must seriously take the call for Statewide conventions and prepare for the one-day all-India token strike in industries. The achievement of this all India one-day action would be a historic development, placing the initiative for the anti-authoritarian resistance in the hands of the Left and radicalised forces of the working class.

THE EXPERIENCE OF GUJARAT AGITATION—ATTACK OF DIVISIVE FORCES

The Gujarat anti-reservation agitation, which led to mobilisation of the masses in hostile camps, was led by all the bourgeois opposition parties, and our Party had not only demarcate itself from it, but actively oppose and expose it.

Here was a contradictory phenomenon. The Harijans and Adivasis whose reservation we were protecting represented the

backward mass which loyally supported the Congress(I) during the Emergency. The mass which had lent its support to fighting the Emergency was in the anti-reservation camp.

Conscious of the monstrous injustices involved in the practice of untouchability, knowing that without decrying it the minimum democratic strength for their own emancipation could not be forged, the bourgeois leaders of the National Congress called for special attention to this problem, and proclaimed the observance of untouchability to be a sin. After Independence, they guaranteed equal rights to the untouchables and made the practice of untouchability a criminal offence. In pursuance of the objective of equality, they made a special provision for educational facilities to the Harijans, provided for reservation of seats in Parliament and in the Assemblies and jobs in Government services.

No political party dared oppose or criticise these concessions. They all became part of a common policy accepted by all. Here was what might be called a "national consensus" among bourgeois-landlord parties.

END OF CONSENSUS

The consensus lasted three decades and there were three reasons.

First, it was part of the National Congress heritage and outlook towards the Harijans, part of a 'national' tradition. Secondly, it was necessary for all parties to accept it as they required Harijan support in the elections. Thirdly, the situation regarding jobs and unemployment had not become so acute as in recent times and could not be used to whip up opposition to reservation and secure electoral support in the bargain.

But the Gujarat agitation with its death toll and mass frenzy shows that the national consensus among the bourgeois parties has ended. The intense struggle among the bourgeois-landlord parties for governmental power has now ended the unwritten understanding that special concessions to Harijans should not be made a point of conflict in the electoral battle.

DIVISIVE MOBILISATION

If the Congress(I) party, because of the State patronage in its hand and the concessions it can give, can tie the Harijan vote to itself, the opposition bourgeois parties consider it legitimate to rouse the other sections against the Harijans, presenting the latter as recipients of partisan Congress(I) patronage. In Gujarat, besides, the Ministry was based on the support of Harijans, Adivasis, Muslims, etc., while the traditional holders of power were kept away from the Government.

This direct appeal to caste and anti-Harijan feelings is a sinister development dividing the toiling sections for the benefit of the ruling classes.

The agitation lasted three months. In the course of it, almost all major towns came under curfew at one time or another. Repeated firings were resorted to by the police. The total toll of lives was 45.

The Harijans were the worst sufferers from police brutalities in the beginning. Later on, perhaps, the police beat everyone they came across.

The big bourgeois Press, the capitalists, millowners, the medical profession, all non-Harijan university students, professors, teachers, central and state government employees, the trading community and mill workers supported the agitation. Some leaders of the central government employees' organisation and some leaders of the All-India Insurance Employees' Association under our influence waged a heroic battle for unity and refused to succumb to the anti-reservation mood. Some of them were removed from office-bearership of the AIEEA, but, later on, were restored to their position when the call for LIC strike came.

As against this 75,000 Harijan mill workers employed in the spinning departments of the mills went on strike to support reservation. On this the Sawarna Hitrakshak Samiti called on the sawarana workers to go on strike and the caste division among the workers was complete.

This divisive mobilisation, this confrontation between two sections, both of whom are victims of bourgeois-landlord rule,

was rendered possible because of the deteriorating situation and the mounting mass unemployment of recent years.

NEW SITUATION

Reservation in services, introduced as a measure to attenuate social discrimination, drew in the beginning the attention of upper-caste elements who monopolised the services. The Harijans themselves considered it to be an antidote to the top-caste monopoly in the services.

But in recent years, things have rapidly changed. While the Harijans and Adivasis living below the poverty line constitute 21 per cent of the population, others living below the poverty line constitute not less than 27 per cent. These backward communities which were nowhere securing a share in government services, are now in the field looking to government jobs for the educated sections.

Besides, the last three decades witnessed a process of utter ruination of the people. The first sufferers were the tribals who lost their land despite the so-called protective legislation, and the Scheduled Castes.

But, later on, under the Congress land reforms legislations, lakhs of other toilers were evicted from land or ousted from their traditional occupations by the march of 'modernisation' and competition.

As a result, the rural areas carry a huge number of landless and jobless besides Harijans. The cry for the protection of the interests of the backward castes, and provision for reservation of jobs for them, is now a familiar cry in certain parts of the country. The competition for land, for jobs, for financial concessions and loans and educational opportunities gets immensely intensified leading to easy diversion into casteist channels. In the cities, where the jobless flock, where educated unemployment is acute, the discontent is widespread, ready to be diverted into disruptive channels.

In this background, when the Congress (I) made exaggerated claims about facilities and concessions offered to Harijans, it became easy to divert the economic discontent against them.

Though the Gujarat agitation has been temporarily withdrawn, and its spread to other States stalled, the challenge will come again and again.

It will come because the unemployment situation will worsen every year, because the opposition bourgeois parties are ready to use the divisive appeal in their struggle to get electoral support. The working class, the CPI (M) and the advanced Left have to find ways and means to combat it.

The reservation question can no longer be presented as a question of Hindu social reform. It is directly linked with the common struggle against the antiquated land relations, against unemployment and for rapid industrial development under a new socio-economic order.

BREAK WALLS OF SEPARATION—FOR COMMON STRUGGLE

The Communist Party since its foundation had a correct understanding about the problem of untouchability when it linked it with the question of agrarian revolution. But the failure to develop a revolutionary movement in agrarian areas and in the country as a whole prevented the development of a common struggle in which both Harijans and non-Harijans could participate and through which the deep gulf that separated them could be bridged.

The day-to-day common struggles led by our mass organisations were insensitive to the special problems of Harijans, to the problems of Harijan toilers, and this created indifference in the minds of these sections to the common class struggle. These weaknesses have to be overcome if this democratic section is not to act as a reservoir for the authoritarian party. The biggest obstacle is the casteism of wide sections of the mass who observe untouchability. It is because of this that the Harijan mass is alienated.

Our Party and the organised trade union movement led by our Party did not succeed in inculcating a strong anti-caste feeling among the mass of workers in the spirit of proletarian consciousness. It is no surprise, therefore, that

our kisan and agricultural workers' organisations also could not succeed.

The anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat, and the support it started getting in other States, have underlined the danger of the antipathy that can be created against Harijans among other sections of the toilers—a fact which Harijan leaders must take note of. By propagating excessive claims about concessions and facilities to Harijans, the Congress (I) presents Harijans as favourites of the Congress and rouses the anger of other toilers and pits them against the Harijans.

The emancipation of Harijans will not be achieved through reservation of jobs ensured by a bourgeois-landlord Government. It cannot be achieved in opposition to other toiling sections but in alliance with them in the common fight against the bourgeois-landlord classes, and the Congress (I) which represents them—this fact the Harijan leaders must note.

Reservation and a minimum educational advance have created a thin stratum among Harijans which is interested in supporting the ruling party, and thereby the present social order, for further petty concessions and which uses all its influence to ensure that the Harijan masses do not join the common movement to change the social order.

Whether it is working class strikes, struggles against high prices, movements of peasants and agricultural workers, fight against Emergency rule or the class movement for Socialism, the Harijan masses, whose emancipation is linked with the success of the movements, are kept away from them.

This makes the Harijan mass an appendage of the Congress (I) which maintains and protects the property relations which sustain untouchability and the sufferings of Harijans.

RULING CLASSES AND RESERVATION

It is, of course, wrong to oppose reservation. Harijans, it must be noted, have not derived even the full benefit of reservation. Besides, the main mass of Harijans is totally unaffected by it.

While reservation and special facilities do make for minimal progress and have produced a vocal intelligentsia, the ruling classes and the ruling party use this device to tie down the 'untouchables' to their apron-strings and prevent them from joining the common struggle against the present regime.

The ruling classes have succeeded all these years in isolating this downtrodden mass and keeping it as its reserve force. The question is how to break this isolation, how to foil the efforts of the ruling party to pit this mass against other toilers.

Unless the weaknesses in the approach of mass organisations are removed, and the Party is able to tell the Harijan mass the real truth about reservations, accompanied by ideological propaganda against untouchability and the caste system, divisions are likely to be intensified by the ruling party and other bourgeois parties. In the struggle against authoritarianism, this backwardness of the Harijan mass acts as a big drag adversely affecting the movement.

ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM—THE REACTIONARY AGENCY OF IMPERIALISM AND INTERNATIONAL MUSLIM REACTION

The problem of the Muslim minority in our country dogged the national struggle at every step, ultimately leading to the partitioning of the country. The partitioning showed the failure of the bourgeois leadership of the anti-imperialist movement to overcome religious barriers and absorb the Muslim mass into the mainstream of the anti-imperialist struggle, as also its failure to win over the Muslim mass from the influence of the vested interests in that community. The problem dogs the country and the democratic movement even today. The ruling bourgeois-landlord classes have failed to integrate the Muslim minority with the common current; and the advanced democratic movement including the working class movement has also failed to score any significant success in this direction.

The Party Programme states, "In conditions of capitalist competition, the guaranteed rights to the minorities provided in the Constitution are also not implemented. The bourgeois-

landlord State thus fosters centrifugal and disruptive forces and fails to build the unity of the country on secure foundations."

Regarding our Party's attitude, it is stated, "While defending the right of every religious community—whether it is the majority or minority—as well as of those who have no faith in any religion, to believe in and practise whatever religion they like or to remain irreligious, the Party should fight against all forms of intrusion of religion in the social, economic, political and administrative life of the nation. Equally opposing the efforts of leaders of all religious groups to interfere in the public life of the country, we should concentrate fire on the chauvinistic leaders of the majority religious community—the Hindus. At the same time, we should continue to point out to the minority religious groups that their legitimate rights can be defended and protected only on the basis of a consistent application of the principles of secularism."

This outlook has been guiding our Party all these years. Naturally, our sympathies lay entirely with the Muslim minority and we defend it against all communal attacks and discriminatory attacks of the bourgeois-landlord Government.

Hitherto our Party looked upon riots and Hindu-Muslim conflicts as a "communal" problem—a strife between followers of two different faiths, because of obscurantism, a weapon of internal communal reaction, mainly Hindu chauvinism. It had branded the Hindu chauvinist forces led by the RSS as mainly responsible for organising pogroms and hunting the minority.

Our Party has also been criticising the bourgeois-landlord Government for its failure to protect the life and property of the Muslim minority, for its treatment as a second class citizen and the fake secularism it stood for. Our Party had denounced such concessions to Hindu fanaticism as prohibition of cow-slaughter. We had also laid stress on the miserable economic plight of the Muslims, discriminatory treatment in matters of employment, etc.

Our sympathies lay entirely with the Muslim minority masses and we defended them against all communal and discriminatory attacks.

But, as in the case the of the Harijans, the other part was not sufficiently stressed—that without freeing themselves from the bondage to the minority communal outlook, without joining the mainstream of democratic struggle, their liberation will not come. There was failure to warn and educate the Muslim masses against their own communal leadership, steeped in an anti-Communist, anti-democratic outlook. Hitherto it was regarded only as a problem of internal understanding and adjustment.

The Muslim mass, because of its dire economic situation and the discrimination practised against it, is getting extremely vulnerable to the obscurantist appeal of fundamentalism. This appeal is intended to create a permanent wall between the Muslim masses and the democratic forces and undermines the unity of the country and makes it helpless against imperialist pressures in times of crisis. It inhibits the Muslim mass from joining the common struggle against unemployment, dire poverty, against economic enslavement, and does the biggest disservice to the minority masses.

It is no longer the old Hindu-Muslim problem; the old separatism is being exploited by the imperialists and communalists to plot against the democratic movement, the Communist movement and the freedom of the country.

The ramifications of this plot have spread far and wide and the secessionist forces in Kashmir have gathered strength, and may soon get out of control.

And here comes the weakness of the Indira Gandhi Government. It is not only unable to fight this conspiracy; it placates these forces to secure their electoral support. Growingly isolated from the main democratic mass, the Congress(I) relies on backward sections like Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims. Some of those who are in possession of the Muslim mass are acting hand in glove with Islamic fundamentalists abroad and are now in a position to blackmail the Government and force it to make reactionary concessions. These, at present, consist of freedom to carry on separatist and anti-India propaganda. It is no surprise, therefore, that Indira Gandhi sent a message to the Jamait-e-Islami Conference in Hyderabad and the Congress(I)

Government of Andhra Pradesh spent a few lakhs of public money to make this reactionary conference a success.

This is the new dimension of the communal problem. The Party must make serious endeavours to rescue the Muslim masses from the influence of the fundamentalists and expose and unmask their propaganda.

The Indira Gandhi Government is afraid to do it because it does not want to give offence to the reactionary rulers of certain oil-producing countries. In the dire condition of our economy it relies on the influx of petro-dollars into the country.

The mobilisation of progressive intellectuals, of democratic opinion and simultaneously greater intervention to defend and protect the rights of the Muslim minority are steps necessary to combat this menace.

In these circumstances, the chauvinistic appeal of the RSS in terms of a Hindu nation becomes a provocative agency of imperialism to drive the Muslim mass into the camp of the fundamentalists. The RSS brand of Hindu chauvinism now not only unleashes riots, terrorises the Muslims with the help of the bureaucracy as in Bihar Shareef, it objectively plays the game of completely partitioning off the Muslims from the Hindus, the Muslim toilers from other toilers, and works havoc with the unity of the country. The appeal of Islamic fundamentalism will be drastically reduced but for the aggressive RSS communal propaganda which endorses from a different direction the fundamentalist appeal that the Muslims are a totally separate entity distinct from the rest of the people.

The mass organisations also have a role to play by making special efforts to draw the Muslims into the day-to-day struggle and also intervene in their problems as a minority.

The raising of such slogans as Khalistan, Sikhs a separate nation, Amritsar a holy city, are part of this same process of national disintegration under Congress rule. Known imperialist agents now raise the disruptive slogans with impunity and are backed by obscurantists.

THE TRIBALS AND FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

Three decades of Congress rule have created an explosive situation in the tribal areas, providing ready-made ammunition to imperialist conspirators. As in the case of the untouchables, the Government of India provided reservation in services for the Scheduled Tribes. It also provided for special facilities for education and reservation of seats in educational institutions. But all these provisions have proved farcical and the Scheduled Tribes have been less successful than the Harijans in reaping minimum benefits from reservation.

Meanwhile, the process of expropriation from land has gone apace, notwithstanding pious legislations preventing transfer of land to non-Adivasis. The Adivasi, driven from land, is forced to enter the labour market—the rural labour market—where regulation of labour conditions does not exist. The minimum wage legislation for the agricultural worker is not implemented in Congress(I)-ruled States. And a large number of Adivasis work as bonded labour or slaves on farms or far-off brick kilns.

In the Adivasi areas, endowed with rich mineral reserves, the Adivasis get the lowest paid jobs.

The Hindu society treats them as outcastes and an educated tribal has very little chance of getting a job. Money-lenders, traders, officials and the police rob and loot them and their women are objects of lust and outrages.

During the last thirty years, a generation of educated people has arisen from amongst them, they are vocal against this exploitation and inhuman treatment. The policy of the bourgeois-landlord Government is to bait an upper section with jobs, ministerial posts, expenditure of a few lakhs of rupees in Adivasi areas, but do nothing fundamental to improve the situation of this oppressed section.

Some foreign church missions have been working on this explosive material for the last three decades. The results are today seen in the North-Eastern tribal States where the writ

of the Government of India hardly runs. Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram are areas where the ruling party at the Centre is forced to ally with anyone who, for the time being, has influence over the people. Tripura shows a different pattern because of our hold and influence over the people.

In the interior also, the slogan of separate State—Jharkhand, etc.—are being raised for a long time. But the Congress(I) Government would not think even of an autonomous district or region.

Today the discontent has spread far and wide and the Adivasis are vulnerable to the separatist appeal. This situation is being fully exploited by some foreign church missions which have firm roots among the Adivasis in some areas and work in collusion with imperialist Powers.

Our exposure of the misdeeds of these missions concerns their reactionary political activities against our country and in the interest of foreign imperialist Powers. It is not directed towards preventing any citizen of India from propagating his religion or faith. Thousands of toilers holding the Christian faith are in the forefront of the common struggle in several places and our Party and the democratic movement fully support the citizen's right to freedom of conscience and religion.

Their sinister hand in the Tripura developments was exposed by our comrades. In that State, they openly support an organisation of tribals (the Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti), which under their influence takes a secessionist stand and concentrates on opposing the CPI(M) and the united democratic movement in the State.

The Baptist Mission is desperately trying to convert the entire tribal mass to Christianity, thereby it seeks to create a wall of religious separation between the converts and the rest. This is to be followed by the propaganda that tribals are distinct and separate from India and have nothing to do with the Indian people. This appeal of separation finds ready soil in the background of the horrible life conditions imposed by the bourgeois-landlord Government on the tribals. It is

reinforced by conversion which is intended to draw the tribal mass near the Western Christian countries.

The Reverend Cunville of the Baptist Mission calls for a virtual invasion by the world churches to convert the Tripura tribals to Christianity. "All churches, not only from North-East India but around the world, should support and loan their best men and women for the disciplining of Tripuris as far as possible under the direction of the TBCU" (Tripura Baptist Christian Union).

Here Church leaders like the Rev. Cunville are openly speaking as Church leaders in the name of Christ and communion. But in other places, they pose to turn towards the Left, presenting a Left image, to fight the CPI (M) and sow the seeds of separatism among the tribals.

A report submitted by the Thane District Secretary of our Party, Comrade Khopkar, who is a member of the Party's Maharashtra State Committee, gives the following account of the activities of such Church agents in the tribal Warli area of the district: "Now the Church missionaries call themselves Kashtakari Sanghatana (toilers' organisation) and declare it as a progressive Left democratic organisation, and simultaneously a non-party organisation.

"In their study camps, their advice to Adivasis is as follows: (1) We Adivasis are a different people. The other people are exploiters. If we want to be liberated completely we must throw out all non-Adivasis from the area and we must have a republic of our own. Actually some of our people have established their own rule in Nagaland, Mizoram, etc. (2) In the Soviet Union and China, workers are exploited and ill-treated and real democracy exists in the USA only. (3) Christ alone can bring justice". This is enough to show the wide ramifications of imperialist agencies exploiting the tribal problem.

"Drive out non-Adivasis from the Adivasi areas" is also the slogan raised in the Bihar tribal areas. In the Warli area,

these agents of certain Church missions have organised assaults and attacks on our comrades. They indulge in slanderous propaganda and incite murders and clashes between Adivasis and non-Adivasis.

The inability of the bourgeois-landlord Government to liberate the tribals, followed by the worsening of their conditions and their slave status, is providing fertile soil to imperialist agencies to organise their plots. The most down-trodden section of the Indian society, instead of being rallied by the revolutionary forces, either hangs on to the tail of the authoritarian party or falls victim to imperialist wiles.

The bourgeois-landlord Government is unable to denounce the misdeeds of these foreign Church missions, fearing that it will be accused of religious intolerance by its western financiers who hold the purse strings. It, therefore, refrains from exposing the conspiracy to undermine the unity of the country. One more instance showing that the authoritarian party, relying more on backward sections, cannot protect the country against imperialist machinations.

THE CHALLENGE FROM THE RELIGIOUS "LEFT"

In this connection, it should be noted that a systematic offensive from the "Left" is being opened by some Church agencies against our Party, but it is done in the name of moving close to the Left, and especially the CPI(M). A big centre of these activities is Bangalore from where such innocent-looking organisations as the Centre for Informal Education and Development Studies, Indian Social Institute, etc., are working and spreading their nets.

They organise seminars, call our Party members and leaders to participate in them, the aim being to get a Left image and attract young people whom they offer research jobs, scholarships, etc., and convert them into their propagandists. It also appears that at least in Karnataka, they are trying to penetrate our Party.

Some of our Party members, throwing off their guard

against imperialism and these foreign Church missions, and misled by the radical phrases of these agencies, participate in their manoeuvres and play their game. Both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu must take note of this situation. It seems that our Andhra Party being vigilant has taken action in time and asked our members to dissociate themselves from such organisations.

Needless to say that these foreign missionary activities are supported by the anti-Soviet "Left" elements in our country. Having warned against these agencies, and their efforts to penetrate our Party, we must also note that they are establishing ties with other Left groups.

Simultaneously we must note that an ideological offensive against the Party is conducted by the Trotskyites, Naxalites and all sorts of "radical" intellectuals. The coordinating and guiding hand is provided by international agencies, and the most vociferous are those returning from the USA. Our Party, being busy with day-to-day problems, is unable to meet this challenge properly. It is a pity that our intellectual comrades—professors, teachers, lawyers—are unable to put up a fight, and stand paralysed before the offensive on every front. The Party must arm them to do this all-important job.

In its absence, a section of the radically minded younger generation is being corrupted by this "Left" ideology which ends only in counter-revolutionary anti-Communism. The menace of the Naxalite ideology, its changing tactics, must be systematically fought if this counter-revolutionary group is to be isolated and defeated.

FEATURES OF ACUTE CRISIS

Certain features of the acute crisis of the system must be noted. Political protests, agitations, movements and strikes are the necessary accompaniments of a developing crisis. Its acute stage is represented by a general breakdown of law and order, of the administration, the violation of the rule of law with regard to the mass of ordinary people not involved in

political or economic movements, and the incapacity or unwillingness of the administration to offer security and safety to the common people against anti-socials.

The looting of trains, the robberies in the capital of India and the capitals of States, the armed hold-ups and lootings of banks, the robbery of common citizens, widespread dacoities in the rural areas, the rapes of women by gangsters and policemen, the rule of vast areas of the cities and their slums by gangs who are able to extort money from the people, speak of an unprecedented crisis of administration and the society.

It is not known to the common man that when there is a coal shortage in the country, lakhs of tonnes of coal are regularly looted from Dhanbad and other mining areas by gangsters working in league with the police and mine officials. The existence of mafia operators in the Dhanbad area looting and disposing of lakhs of tonnes of coal is well-known and was recently owned up by a Cabinet Minister of the Central Government.

While gangsters spread terror and the police indulge in brutalities, the people's spontaneous anger also rises and they surround police stations demanding punishment of guilty officials for their collusion with gangsters or attacks on the people. These clashes result in police firings and deaths.

These are not outbursts of hunger; they do not arise out of high prices or other economic demands. They are against torture and rape in police custody, or refusal of the police to register complaints or take action against murderers, dacoits and rapists.

They are protests against the general breakdown of administration, against the breakdown of the law-enforcing machinery and the growing influence of anti-socials on it.

COLLUSION

The collusion between the police, the bureaucracy and anti-socials has been growing in recent years. It seems to have

increased in the year and half since Indira Gandhi's return to power. In fact, the Sanjay gang typified this collusion. The breakdown of law and order appears to be widespread in Bihar, no one knowing where the bureaucracy ends and the criminals take over. The collusion between the landed interest, the administration and anti-social elements—dacoits and others—is patent in the villages of the State. It shows that the conflict of agrarian interests has reached a high pitch of intensity in Bihar.

CONGRESS (I) LINK WITH ANTI-SOCIALS

But a recent and alarming feature of the situation is the manifestation of links between Congress(I) politicians and leaders with anti-socials. In West Bengal, this process has been in evidence for some time. The April 3 bandh again demonstrated visibly the anti-social character of the striking force of the Congress(I).

But now with the rapid and mounting discontent among the people against Congress(I) policies, outside West Bengal also the same process is in evidence. The links of certain Bihar Congress(I) leaders with dacoits were exposed some time ago. A dacoit in U.P. was shot dead by the police. In his pocket they found a letter written by a Congress(I) MLA thanking him for the help rendered during the election to ensure his success. The following report from *The Times of India*, dated June 8, should not cause surprise: "Agra, June 7 : Mr. Sahai (Secretary of the U.P. Sarvodaya Mandal), who returned today after visiting several Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies, said that he had evidence that dacoit gangs were taking active interest in the poll campaign in the Tindwari Assembly constituency from where the U. P. Chief Minister, Mr. Vishwanath Pratap Singh, is seeking election." Press reports recently exposed the links of the Andhra Home Minister with a known anti-social. Earlier the capital was scandalised by the report that a dacoit from Madhya Pradesh was taking shelter in the residence of a Congress (I) M.P.

Blackmarketeers and smugglers are already there in the ruling party.

It is necessary to remember that authoritarian rule will growingly mean the rule of anti-socials working hand in glove with the police and the bureaucracy armed with unlimited powers.

SURRENDER TO POLICE

Another feature of the intensified crisis is the complete inability of the Ministers, the ruling party and elected representatives to keep the bureaucracy, especially the police, under control. Leave aside graft, the authorities are unable to take action against those who are guilty of loot, rape or murder. Any action proposed is immediately opposed by the policemen and the Government is blackmailed into hastily withdrawing it.

This has happened in Dabwali where some policemen were charged with the rape and murder of an orderly's wife. This happened in Baghpet here the Government hardly took any action against the daylight murder of three persons by policemen and the outrage on the wife of one of the murdered. This again happened in Gwalior when policemen and Home Guards looted a sweetmeat shop and killed a chowkidar, but the Government dared not take action against anyone for fear of provoking police agitation.

This was also seen in the withdrawal of the action against the police personnel involved in the Bhagalpur blinding cases in Bihar. The policemen who were found guilty by the Mukdar Commission and charge-sheeted for the rape of Ramiza Bi and the murder of her husband in Hyderabad were let off by the court, the Public Prosecutor himself arguing more in defence of the culprits. The policemen who raped and killed Shakila and later murdered her husband in Hyderabad were also let off.

No law for the ruling party, no law for the bureaucracy, is the feature of an authoritarian State. The image of a police State run with the aid of the rough storm-troopers of the ruling

party is slowly emerging in practice notwithstanding repeated assurances against imposition of Emergency rule.

And, finally, the hold of the ruling party over the border States has either slipped or is precariously held.

In Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and other States, the Congress (I) is forced to ally with the party which, for the time being, has majority in the Legislature. One Congress (I) Chief Minister was found to be in close touch with the rebels and had to be removed. The writ of the Central Government is dependent on the goodwill of local leaders and parties with secessionist sympathies.

In Assam, the local bureaucracy is working hand in glove with the leaders of the secessionist movement. Assam is once again under President's rule.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

These developments are taking place in the midst of a worsening economic situation and its effects on the people. In fact they follow from the sharp struggles and conflicts arising from the challenging mass discontent.

The rate of inflation has reached as high as 14 per cent. The unchecked rise of prices continues and all the promises of the Finance Minister and the Government have turned out to be mere words. A relentless drive against the living standards of the people is demanded by the World Bank (abolition of food subsidies, etc.), and by the compulsion of foreign borrowings. The Sixth Five-Year Plan, with its resort to commercial borrowing, will mortgage the economy still more to exports to western countries. In the midst of this, the search for petrodollars from countries with reactionary regimes, the open invitation to foreign investment and the search for joint ventures, all bespeak of a dangerous situation. Unemployment increases by millions every year and has reached explosive proportions giving a free field to anti-national agencies to carry on their nefarious work.

According to the Sixth Plan document, integrated steel plants were able to utilise only 69.2 per cent of their capacity in 1979-80; the aluminium industry 58.2 per cent; fertiliser (N)

stabilised plants 76.6 per cent; cement 72.6 per cent; newsprint 68.2 per cent, and so on. Commenting on this, the Sixth Plan document observes: "As is evident from the table, recent trends in capacity utilisation in several industries are discouraging. This is also true for agriculture. For example, the irrigation potential which has been created is not fully utilised. Levels of yield per acre for many parts of the country are far below what can be attained with known technology."

The Planners present this deep malady of the economy as a result of lagging infrastructure. They observe: "The poor utilisation of agriculture and industry stems from many factors but the major problem area can be located in the basic infrastructures of power and transport." But will they answer why utilisation of thermal power generation capacity has been below 50 per cent? In 1979-80, it was only 45 per cent.

Naturally sickness in industry grows. According to the Reserve Bank of India, at the end of June 1979, there were large sick industrial units in which bank credit amounting to Rs. 1011.72 crores was locked up. (This exceeds the value of the total investment in the public sector under the Department of Heavy Industry.) According to returns received by the RBI from commercial banks, the number of sick units in the small-scale sector was as high as 20,326. The *Economic Survey* (1980-81) observed, "Industrial sickness involving both large-scale and small-scale industries is a matter of serious concern."

The most palpable manifestation of the crisis is the torrent of mounting unemployment. There were 22.1 million unemployed at the end of the Fifth Plan. These official figures are an underestimate. New entrants in the labour market will number 32 million during the Sixth Plan which claims to find jobs for 30 million. This will leave a backlog of 24.2 million. In reality the figure will be much higher, not less than 40 million, because the claim to find 30 million new jobs cannot be substantiated. The number of educated jobless alone is expected to rise by 11.85 million in 1985.

This huge jobless mass is bound to enter the active field of agitation and resistance in the near future. Already agitations

for relief, for work, have started. There have been morchas and demonstrations of the unemployed youth. While the Left-oriented Governments are providing the unemployed with some relief, the Congress (I) Governments are deluding them with resection and other gimmicks. Attempts are being made to divide the movement on caste lines by concentrating on the reservation issue. But this will not succeed.

A number of Congress (I) Governments had already recognised the explosive situation in the rural areas and started a rural employment programme—the food-for-work programme—to pacify the anger of the rural masses. But because of corruption in the administration very little relief could reach the people. Only the Left Front Government of West Bengal could make a success of the programme. Another manifestation of the crisis is the growing reliance on foreign collaboration agreements which were the highest in number in 1980-81. They were permitted at a time when multinational drug companies in India were defying Government law, and when foreign capital was refusing to carry out the FERA directive to dilute foreign equity to 40 per cent. The Government acquiesced in their defiance.

India's large balance of payments deficit in 1980-81 does not seem to be a temporary phenomenon. As the report of the World Bank (April 1981) observed, "the deterioration of balance of payments prospects does not appear to be of short duration and does require economic policy changes to manage the large deficits in the coming years. In the last four years, exports have financed a decreasing share of imports. The modernisation of industry and continued liberalisation of trade will lead further to growing imports." Growing reliance on exports to western markets is thus emphasised.

The high inflation rate and the high prices that are dominating the economic scene despite the promises of the Finance Minister to relieve the situation, are part of this crisis, part of the mechanism to transfer the burdens of the crisis to the poorer sections. Allow prices to rise to curtail consumption, this has been the recipe of the World Bank. In its latest report also, the Bank observes that instead of allowing edible oils consumption

to be curtailed through the prevailing high prices, the Government imported large quantities of oil to bring down prices. By May 9, 1981, the wholesale price index at 275.2 was 14.6 per cent higher than a year before. This rise conceals the story of the indescribable suffering of the people, who are forced to go without daily necessities of life like oil, sugar, etc. The Government has no intention, nor will it succeed in bringing down the high prices, and people's protests are rising as the situation becomes unbearable and all hope of relief disappears. Housewives are again on the move to demand relief from the high prices and the Government has nothing to offer. The ruling high prices are bound to lead to big convulsions and confrontation between the Government and the people.

But the crisis is all-pervading and threatens to bring about the collapse of the public distribution system, imposing outright starvation on huge sections of the rural population. This is the direct result of the Government's pro-trader, pro-speculator policy as well as of the inflation which assures every speculator and trader that by cornering grain and other commodities, he will get a bigger return. In this period of uncontrolled rise in prices, the Government allowed the trader to have a free hand instead of nationalising wholesale trade in foodgrains. The result was that the trader cornered the wheat by offering slightly higher prices to the peasant-seller, while the better-off sections of the producers kept away from the market. The produce of the small peasant having gone into the hands of the trader, the Government agencies could purchase very little. The Haryana and Punjab State Governments failed to procure the required quantity of wheat, and the Prime Minister undertook a journey to Chandigarh to discipline the Chief Ministers. But the target had to be scaled down.

And now a serious and explosive situation has arisen. Foodgrains stocks with the Government have dipped to below ten million tonnes and a high rate of procurement was essential. But it is not possible to reach the wheat procurement target of 9.5 million tonnes. In Punjab, by May end, the procurement was less than 25 lakh tonnes against a target of 47 lakh tonnes; in Haryana, it was less than ten lakh tonnes against a target of 17 lakh tonnes.

The country's food distribution system stands endangered. This may result in reduced rationing in the urban areas and outright starvation in the rural areas.

Besides, this means that the Government will have no food stocks for the food-for-work programme which offered some relief to the poorest section of the rural population. There was no allocation after October 1980, while in 1981-82, no foodgrains have been supplied to the States so far. In 1979-80, utilisation of foodgrains for the food-for-work programme was of the order of 23.6 lakh tonnes, while the employment generated was of the order of 5377 lakh mandays. With the end of this employment and relief, there are bound to be angry agitations in the rural areas.

Thus all the facets of the crisis are driving for a major confrontation between the people and the Government.

INNER-DISSENSIONS, LOSS OF CREDIBILITY

The credibility of the ruling party is compromised by the inner-crisis of the party and the incompetence that dogs it. The ruling party has specialised in getting the most incompetent people as its Government functionaries. Never was the prestige of its administration so low as now. The Pahadias and Antulays are certainly not names which can bring credit to any public organisation. So mean is the moral, intellectual and political level of Congress(I) State Ministers that a Rajasthan Minister is found guilty of violating the Child Marriages Act and giving away his ten-year-old daughter in marriage,

The notorious Antulay is starting Government newspapers in Maharashtra, and has no compunction in joining hands with the Shiv Sena whose followers indulge in looting the shops of non-Maharashtrians. Anjaiah had to be rebuked for distributing ministerial posts to almost every second MLA.

At the Centre also, Indira Gandhi has not been able to knock together a team of efficient and decent people. Never before was there such a weak Cabinet at the Centre, some of whose members are objects of ridicule among the people. Neither the bureaucrats nor the people seem to have any

regard for this crowd. No wonder many portfolios still remain undistributed.

Inside the States, factionalism and inner-fights are taking an intensified form. Though the Sanjay group is now put on the shelf, in-fights over power continue to disarray the Congress (I) party. The expulsion of V.C. Shukla from the Central Cabinet, though it has temporarily shaken the dissidents in Madhya Pradesh, will intensify the differences to a breaking point.

In Maharashtra, Antulay, with his crude and vulgar methods of functioning, and his collusion with the Shiv Sena, will have to be replaced. Perhaps, that is the meaning of Chavan's defection which will strengthen the Maratha lobby and provide a leadership with better image among the people.

Chief Minister Jagannath Misra of Bihar is an extremely controversial personality. The way Supreme Court directives on the Bihar blindings were circumvented under his regime is known to all. He is the target of oppositional attack for corruption in administration, favouritism in appointments and casteism. Factionalism, intrigues and collapse of the administration are inevitable under the circumstances, and this is what has happened in the State.

In this situation, Indira Gandhi relies more and more on trusted men of the bureaucracy and devoted sycophants in the party. The circle of real rulers gets closer and closer making the establishment of a dictatorship a matter of necessity. The ruling party is, therefore, inevitably proceeding towards this objective under a facade of promises to the contrary.

DRIVE FOR DICTATORSHIP

After the enactment of the National Security Act, which the Home Minister himself described as MISA with a "changed name", the Congress(I) Government is concentrating on two objectives—a subservient Judiciary and a Presidential form of Government.

In recent months, the conflict between the Judiciary and the Executive has assumed an intensified form.

In the LIC bonus case, the Government repeatedly defied or circumvented the decisions of the Supreme Court. Commitments made by the Attorney-General were repudiated by the Cabinet. But the Government had to retreat after the final verdict of the Supreme Court in favour of the employees and agreed to give the prescribed assurance on the question of bonus. Even at this stage, the Government was not willing to carry out the decision of the Court. They wanted the officials of the LIC to defy the verdict. Only when the latter demanded written instructions to disobey the Court's ruling, and in its absence threatened to resign, the Government yielded. The legality of the LIC Act is still under dispute, the Government is bound to resist the Supreme Court's verdict.

Meanwhile, in order to make the Judiciary subservient, the Government claimed the right to transfer High Court Judges from one State to another and ordered certain transfers. This was also challenged. The Government then resorted to the trick of seeking an undertaking from Additional Judges that they had no objection to being transferred to another State during the course of their service. This was a demand on those who were yet to be made permanent. The Additional Judges were being coerced to accept this condition if they desired a permanent post on the Bench.

This clandestine pressure led to loud protests both from the Bench and the Bar, but the Government would not yield. The terms of those who declined to accept the condition were not extended. This happened to two Judges of the Delhi High Court. A writ was filed on their behalf and the Supreme Court asked the Government to grant extension to them till the writ was decided. The Government refused. The Government is biding its time and hopes that with the retirement of a few Judges from the Supreme Court, it will be able to pack the highest judicial body with its "committed men". Then the entire approach of the Court is bound to change.

In the meantime, partisans of the Government from the Bar like Ashok Sen and others warn the Judges against interfering with the decisions of Parliament. Ministers and Congress(I) lawyers utter unseemly threats to them. The

authoritarian party is dragging the bourgeois judicial system into the street, exploding the myth of its impartiality and independence and pronouncing it as a subservient instrument of the ruling party.

The fight against these attempts to create a subservient Judiciary forms an integral part of the fight against the imposition of one-party rule and provides the widest possible common platform of resistance.

It is gratifying to note that the resistance to the attack on the Judiciary is gathering strength. Some Judges are forthcoming in their statements and judgements affecting the issues. Lawyers and leading members of the Bar in many places have condemned the Executive's aggression on the prerogatives of the Judiciary and the court. Two Chief Justices who were earlier transferred to High Courts in other States refused to accept their new assignments. This resistance, however, must be carried to the people to be effective.

DRIVE FOR PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM

The second objective, a Presidential form of Government, is also being relentlessly pursued. There is every danger that Indira Gandhi may succeed in reaching it through "constitutional" means, unless public opinion is roused against it.

The constitutional change required for the purpose can be introduced through the present Parliament. The Congress(I) has the requisite majority in the Lok Sabha for the purpose. But at present, it does not have the requisite number in the Rajya Sabha. Next year the Congress(I) position in the Rajya Sabha will improve.

This is a big danger that faces the people and the threat can be executed behind their back, without involving them. The opposition to a Presidential form of Government again becomes the platform of the broadest resistance.

But, once more, appeal to the masses and their involvement are required to successfully combat this treacherous move.

The question of the form of Government has assumed importance because, in times of crisis, certain forms of bourgeois rule offer greater facilities for carrying forward the

struggle. They become crucial points in the advance of the democratic movement at a particular stage.

Both the Parliamentary form of Government as it exists in Britain and the Presidential form as it exists in the USA are forms of bourgeois class rule. By themselves, they do not represent any fundamental change in the position of the masses with respect to political power or control over the State.

But in India, today, the Presidential system that is advocated in opposition to the present Parliamentary system is nothing but the embodiment of one-party rule, one-party dictatorship and ultimately the personal dictatorship of the leader of that party.

The question is raised by the ruling party today because the parliamentary system with its opposition parties, with its freedom of exposure and criticism of Government actions and its capacity to bar unpleasant and reactionary measures, is an obstacle in the way of one-party rule and an open dictatorship against the people.

The Maharashtra Chief Minister, Antulay, one of the main crusaders of the Presidential system, openly identified it with dictatorship. He says: "Now in the Presidential system, the President within his ambit has powers where even the Supreme Court cannot interfere. And he is not removable by the Senate, nor the Congress, not even the two put together." An irremovable President who can pack the courts with his nominees, and cannot be removed by either House---this is the gist of the demand for the Presidential form of Government.

BASIC UNDERSTANDING

Similarly, in the fight between the Judiciary and the Executive that is going on now, we should not dilute our basic understanding of the class character of the Judiciary. As Marxists we do not hold that the Judiciary is independent of the class interests which the State serves. Nonetheless, occasions arise when the two wings of the bourgeois State clash with each other and the stand of either may help the progressive forces. In 1969, the Judiciary took a reactionary stand on the question of right to property---in defence of this right---and

attempted to declare illegal the bank nationalisation and abolition of Privy Purses measures of the Government. And we supported the Government measures and opposed the Judiciary's "independence".

The conflict between the Judiciary and the Executive is today linked with the people's struggle against authoritarianism, and every effort of the Executive to reduce the importance of the Judiciary must be combated. The present-day Judiciary—the Judges of the Supreme Court—have become an obstacle in the way of the arbitrary exercise of power by the Executive, they defend fundamental rights and protect them against interference by the Executive; they have blocked the way to arbitrary changes in the Constitution by enunciating the doctrine of the basic structure of the Constitution; so long as the Judges continue on this path, they will have the support of the democratic forces.

But we must be prepared for a sudden change in the situation and reversal of the role of the Judiciary after a few new appointments to the Court.

HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARTY AND LEFT FORCES

The development of the last few months, the changing correlation of forces, the vacillations of bourgeois parties and the rising struggle of the masses place a heavy responsibility on our Party and the Left and democratic forces in general. It is necessary in this connection to recall the Jullundur Party Congress resolution: "The Left and democratic forces stand in the forefront of the fight against the forces of authoritarianism. They endeavour in all possible ways to organise the broadest possible resistance to the authoritarian danger, they lend their support to the platform for democratic reforms and advance which bring together all anti-authoritarian trends, even those that are opposed to the economic platform of the Left and democratic forces.

"Realising the terrible sufferings of the masses and the continuing danger of dictatorship, the Left and democratic forces direct their fire against the monopolists, big capitalists

and landlords and against the increasing influence of foreign capital.

"By putting forward a political and economic programme, distinct and sharply opposed to the platform and practice of bourgeois-landlord parties, by leading the masses to realise it, the Left and democratic forces enable them to move away from the bourgeois-landlord parties and increasingly rally round an alternative leadership." The Left-oriented Governments by their existence and the measures they take to defend the interests of the people—measures which distinguish them from all bourgeois-landlord parties—act as the spearhead of the Left and democratic forces. Their continued existence, despite the desperate efforts of the ruling party to topple them, is not only an outstanding achievement of our Party and the Left and democratic forces; it is an important element which accentuates the crisis, contributes to the instability of the ruling party and increases the strength of the anti-authoritarian forces. The defence of these Governments against Congress (I) machinations is the primary responsibility of the democratic forces and the working class if the conspiracy of the dictatorial forces is to be defeated.

The authoritarian party is preparing its attacks on these outposts, uttering slanders, abuse, charges of breakdown of law and order, holding out blackmailing threats and using Central Ministers to fan the agitation against the Left-oriented Ministries. But, at the same time, Opposition parties, democratic forces consider it necessary to ward off these attacks, they realise that these are attacks on democracy and that they jeopardise the democratic existence of all political opposition parties and constitute a prelude to a general onslaught of the forces of dictatorship against the people.

If immediately after the 1977 elections, the Janata Party and its Government were considered to be the main bulwark against one-party dictatorship, today that role, in the minds of large sections, is played by the Left Front and Left Democratic Front Ministries.

Indira Gandhi seeks to isolate the Left-oriented Ministries from this broad support before attacking it. It will be an

impermissible error if the Left-oriented Ministries and Left forces neglect the task of mobilising wider support all over India through their policies, pronouncements and actions for the common man, through their direct appeal to these forces to support them.

The wider support is, besides, practical and easy of achievement because the other opposition parties and forces also need the existence of the Left-oriented Governments in their struggle against the authoritarian party.

The struggle against the forces of authoritarianism now takes place in changed circumstances. In the present situation the Left occupies a key position all over India, though it is a weak force, because wide sections of the people want other opposition parties to ally with it. Reactionaries in these parties are fighting against this urge; and the big bourgeois Press is building up the BJP as the alternative to the Congress(I).

This imposes great responsibilities on the Left forces which have to act as the spearhead of the struggle against dictatorship and, therefore, to lead the fight for broad resistance in collaboration with all forces opposed to authoritarianism. Any mistake here will let down the struggle and pass on the initiative to disruptive forces.

FOREIGN POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

The Indira Gandhi Government's understanding of the international situation and its foreign policy are more realistic than that of other bourgeois parties. This has already been pointed out.

There is rapid worsening of the international situation and the danger of military confrontation can no longer be ignored.

The Party must note this and should know that it cannot discharge its responsibility without rousing the people to the danger of war and taking an active interest in the defence of peace.

The Reagan Administration has intensified the drive against detente initiated by the previous U.S. Administration. This is endangering world peace, threatening the security and peace of the countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and America.

The people of Europe face the threat of a military confrontation involving the use of nuclear weapons and neutron bombs. The nations inhabiting the West Asian region are faced with direct American intervention. Israel, with the aid of the Pentagon, is carrying on a regular war against Lebanon. And the same Zionist force, under the direct instructions of the USA, raided Iraq to destroy its nuclear reactor. U.S. imperialism, though it has received a rebuff in Iran, is intent on firmly planting its feet in the oil region and is making Pakistan its military base under the excuse of helping the Afghan "freedom-fighters". The Soviet help to Afghanistan's progressive forces to ward off imperialist attacks is made the excuse to militarise the region.

The report of the External Affairs Ministry, placed before the Lok Sabha in March, notes the U.S. plans for a rapid development force of 110,000 personnel for use primarily in the Indian Ocean. The Diego Garcia base situated in the Indian Ocean makes it possible to carry on operations against the littoral States. It is a standing danger to India and all littoral States.

But the danger to India does not end there. The USA is bent on feverishly arming Pakistan's military rulers to create a constant threat of war between the two countries. The Pakistani dictator, unable to seize any issue to befool the people, is using the Afghanistan card, acting as the anti-Soviet spearhead of the USA, and is bent upon stockpiling arms to be used against India. The people of Pakistan are being poisoned by virulent anti-India, anti-Hindu propaganda, so that they can be used as cannon-fodder any time. The Pakistani media are openly speculating on war between the two countries. When the Afghan crisis started and Zia-ul Haq demanded military help from the USA, Agha Shahi was forthright in saying that the help was needed to protect Pakistan against India.

The USA is playing the Pakistan card to create the danger of war and danger to the security of India and to pressurise India to shift its foreign policy, especially its stand on Afghanistan.

These are pressures to weaken the Indo-Soviet Treaty of

Friendship and Cooperation and the Government's policy of non-alignment. They are supplemented by other measures like refusal to supply uranium to the Tarapore nuclear plant, threat to cut off economic aid to countries not toeing the U. S. line and so on.

These arms-twisting tactics coupled with the anti-Soviet, pro-American stand of bourgeois opposition parties like the BJP, demand utmost vigilance on the part of the Party to fight back the offensive. A compromise by the Government is possible if the economic situation gets out of hand and rescue operations depend on U. S. loans.

The Indo-Pakistan talks outlined the gravity of the situation as they showed the firm resolve of Pakistan's rulers to ally with the USA.

As the P. B. statement put it, "One of the main issues bedevilling the relations between the two countries is the Pakistan military dictator's decision to stockpile arms with the help of U. S. imperialism. The Indian Foreign Minister's visit and talks have not led to any change in the decision of Pakistan's ruling clique. It is this collaboration of Pakistan's ruling classes with U. S. imperialism since the early fifties that has been responsible for the continuing abnormal situation in the sub-continent."

Under these circumstances, the statement that each country has the right to buy arms for its defence constitutes an endorsement of Zia-ul Haq's reliance on the worst enemy of freedom—U. S. imperialism. What does the Government of India accept thereby? That Pakistan has justified fears about Indian aggression? Or does it seek to purchase Islamic goodwill by accepting the existence of a Soviet threat to Pakistan? There seems to be more in the phrase than meets the eye, and it seems to masquerade an opportunist concession.

These developments directly affect the course of the democratic struggle in our country, and also call upon the Party to wage a relentless fight against the opportunism of certain bourgeois parties who objectively or knowingly toe the American line. They also call upon the Party as a whole to give more vigorous attention to the question of foreign policy

and not leave the initiative to the ruling party. Neither the authoritarian ruling party nor the Opposition parties can be trusted with the task of effectively counteracting the imperialist manoeuvres. It is known that the ruling party is afraid of taking a forthright position of opposition to and exposure of imperialism on several issues and thereby softens people's vigilance.

INTERNATIONAL COMPLICATION—CHINESE POLICY

The division in the international Communist movement, its incapacity to take a common stand on vital issues of confrontation between the Socialist and imperialist worlds, enhances the gravity of the situation and demands utmost vigilance on our Party's part.

It is known that a large number of Communist Parties, including the Communist Party of China, have taken a hostile stand on Soviet counteraction in Afghanistan, describing it as Soviet expansionism or aggression. The same is their attitude towards the Vietnamese action in Kampuchea. Now, for many months, counter-revolutionaries are attempting to destabilise Socialism in Poland. The situation demands unity of the entire international Communist movement to ward off the attack of counter-revolution against a Socialist country. But some Communist Parties, the CPC and others, take an entirely different stand and do not support Soviet help to save the situation.

This outlook is now complicating the situation in India, giving a boost to the pro-American lobby in the country and creating obstacles to the fight against imperialist conspiracies.

The Prime Minister of China, during his recent visit to Pakistan, promised help to Afghan counter-revolutionaries operating from Pakistani soil and encouraged the Pakistani Government to support them. Above all, he fully supported the Pakistani military regime's demand for military aid from the USA as being necessary to defend the integrity and freedom of Pakistan.

Our Party denounces American military aid to Pakistan's military rulers as part of the U.S. game to play Asians against Asians, as part of its conspiracy against our freedom. People's

China takes a diametrically opposite stand. Our country which has experienced three regular wars with Pakistan cannot be complacent on this issue.

A victim of the theory of social-imperialism, of the understanding that the USSR is more dangerous than the USA, the Government of People's China pursues the policy of isolating the USSR in the region and seeks to weaken the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. For our Party, on the other hand, the protection and strengthening of this treaty is a must if U.S. conspiracies are to be fought and the country's independence is to be protected.

While fighting these present-day aberrations of Chinese foreign policy, our Party does not forget that China is a Socialist country, that having gone through huge inner-convulsions, the leadership of the Party there has taken a number of correct steps to rectify the internal situation.

We earnestly hope that these steps strengthening the internal Socialist system will lead to a correct world perception and foreign policy based on the abiding interests of the Socialist camp. There is no doubt that strengthening of the Socialist system in China and its needs will lead People's China to take its place as a front-rank fighter against world imperialism in cooperation with other Socialist countries.

Our Party has always called for friendly relations between the two countries, we continued to demand it even during the days of the India-China conflict. We welcome all steps towards normalisation of relations.

In the meantime, we must note the damage that is being done to our fight here. A number of "China friends" in India—Naxalites and others—are busy peddling the idea of social-imperialism to spread anti-Soviet propaganda. A number of intellectuals toe this line and present it as part of a Left, revolutionary outlook. The line is presented as having the support of a great Asian nation—People's China.

Our Party, in the present situation, cannot carry on a fight against the U.S. conspiracies, its game of making Asians fight Asians, and defend non-alignment and friendship with the

Socialist camp, without exposing and fighting Chinese policy in the sub-continent as outlined above and educating our cadres about it.

ZIAUR RAHMAN'S ASSASSINATION

The murder of Bangladesh President and military dictator Ziaur Rahman cannot be without its connection with the international conspirators against freedom and democracy. It is not possible to state precisely whose hand it was that struck against the Bangladesh President.

Certain factors, however, must be borne in mind. The Pakistani rulers had never reconciled themselves to the liberation of Bangladesh and would do everything in their power to restore Bangladesh to the sphere of Pakistan's influence. They urgently desire that the two should act in unison against India. At the same time, they have to reckon with the strong anti-Pakistani feeling among the Bangladesh people. Unless this is done away with or the army is effectively made pro-Pakistani, the objective cannot be achieved. Whether the Bangladesh developments were directly managed by foreign agents or not, they do seem to be influenced by a clash between elements in favour of Pakistan and those opposed to it.

In the recent Bangladesh developments, anti-Pakistani freedom sentiments seem to be coupled with anti-India hostility. Mujibur Rahman himself had to resort to an anti-India appeal to keep himself in power, and yet he was branded and felled as pro-India.

Those who destroyed Mujib were junior officers in the army and Zia was the only senior officer with them. They, in their turn, were defeated by senior officers who committed the fatal blunder of presenting themselves as defenders of Mujib. They were denounced as Indian agents and overthrown by the army ranks who had fought in the liberation army. They again reposed faith in Ziaur Rahman who soon consolidated himself and called back the officers who had been chased away by the soldiery.

It is known that, in these years, a conflict grew between the officers who were repatriated from Pakistan and those like Zia and Manzoor who were freedom-fighters. At the time of Zia's murder only Zia and Manzoor represented, among the

Generals, the freedom-fighters. Both are now eliminated at one stroke and the army is now at the mercy of Pakistani repatriates. The composition of the army ranks also has changed with new recruitment.

Some recent developments may also have something to do with the murder. It is reported by *The Statesman* that Zia was getting closer to the Soviet Union, that Romania had offered Bangladesh a soft loan of 500 million dollars and that Zia was also showing signs of friendship towards progressive Islamic countries.

All this may indicate that, notwithstanding his anti-Indian hostility, Zia was perhaps getting inconvenient for forces of international reaction. It also means that those who planned the murder of the two Generals have also anti-India objectives. India will certainly be in a bad plight if Zia's murder leads to the ascendancy of pro-Pakistan elements in the army and the Government of Bangladesh.

The fight against imperialist manoeuvres, for a policy based on anti-imperialism, is obstructed and sabotaged by the internal policies of the Indira Gandhi Government. Enthusiasm cannot be created for national unity, for defending the country, under a Government which barbarously suppresses the people and their rights. All warnings and statements coming from such a source are treated as tricks of a selfish Government with no credibility.

CONCLUSION—IMMEDIATE TASKS

All this calls upon our Party to intervene in the complicated situation in a decisive way combining the fight against the new challenges with the fight against the authoritarian forces. The challenge of divisive forces, of imperialism to our country's freedom, the opportunism of bourgeois parties—all demand a determined struggle for a broad forum of resistance to forces of authoritarianism, while fighting opportunist tendencies in the ranks of the people.

The failure of bourgeois opposition parties in the recent election is, apart from other causes, due to the failure to develop alternative policies and impress the masses with them.

The sober elements in these parties must grasp this truth if the common struggle is to be facilitated. It cannot be said that the democratic parties whom we have mentioned in the Jullundur resolution have discharged their responsibilities. The leadership of the Akali Party went along with us in the mass movement in Punjab and contributed its strength to the Kisan March. That was very good. But recently, some Akali leaders have shown vulnerability to such slogans as Khalistan, Amritsar is a holy city, etc. The DMK continues to be an appendage of the Congress(I) in its political fight against the AIADMK. The AIADMK leader concentrates on his fight with the DMK and does not show much desire to take consistent anti-authoritarian positions. At the same time, reacting to the attacks being made on the AIADMK Government by Central Congress (I) leaders and Ministers, as also to preserve the image of a fighter for States' autonomy, the AIADMK takes an anti-Centre stand on certain issues. The AIADMK Government recently proposed an anti-labour Bill, which has been referred to a Select Committee. It seems the Government is prepared to extend cooperation to the Central Government's spirit enquiry commission which is an instance of wanton interference in the State's autonomy, while at the same time wanting the Commission appointed by it to continue its own enquiry.

The initiative of the Left forces is, therefore, urgently necessary to push forward the movement. The Left-oriented Ministries and their achievements form the foundation of the Left initiative for broader mobilisation. The bursting mass discontent and struggles form the dominant weapons of organising widespread resistance and forging resistance understanding at all levels.

The discontent of the peasants and agricultural workers, the anger against price-rise, the resistance of workers, the fights of students and youth and professionals and, finally, the growing upsurge of the women's movement in diverse forms, express people's resistance to the effects of the crisis and the economic situation. Along with this, explosive outbursts of popular anger take place against the breakdown of law and order, lack of security for the common man.

To lead all these struggles decisively, in unity with as broad forces as possible, to orientate them all in an anti-authoritarian direction, is the task before us.

The situation also provides opportunities for a broad mobilisation on two vital questions—the Judiciary and the Presidential form of Government. The Party and the Left forces must now take a lead in mobilising political parties and the people on these issues.

Immediately, there is every possibility of such mobilisation on the issue of fair elections and electoral reforms following the experience of rigging and misuse of official power in the recent by-elections in U.P. and Bihar—especially in Garhwal.

As has been seen, the task is now complicated by the assault of the divisive forces. Only our Party leading the Left and secular forces can fight back this offensive. The reactionary stand of bourgeois opposition parties on the reservation issue in Gujarat is a warning of things to come. The Party has to educate its own ranks and masses on the question of untouchability and reservation. Simultaneously, we have to fight the secessionist challenges encouraged by imperialism. Our Party in Assam is heroically fighting this battle with consistency and courage. But it cannot be said that the Party everywhere is aware of this challenge, nor of the challenge in the tribal areas. Party journals and agitation must tune themselves to this responsibility. The entire Party and our mass media have to be educated about the new dangerous role of RSS chauvinism and Islamic fundamentalism and new efforts to win over the Muslim masses.

And, finally, the challenge of imperialism to our foreign policy, the pressures to weaken the relations with the Socialist camp through arming Pakistan's military clique, have to be taken seriously, because there is a concentrated propaganda from parties like the BJP which act as the vociferous anti-Soviet, pro-U.S. lobby. The internal pressure against non-alignment was never so great. This, as has been pointed out, is complicated by the stand of the People's Republic of China

with its open support to the pouring of U.S. arms into Pakistan.

The task of getting these various threads together and weaving them into resistance against the authoritarian forces, without relaxing the battle against imperialism, is a difficult task which only our Party can discharge. Many Left parties themselves are bound to waver on this or that issue. But leading the mass discontent, defending the Left-oriented Governments, and working for the broadest mobilisation against attacks on the Judiciary, against the move for a Presidential form of Government, against authoritarianism, our Party must discharge its responsibility. In the measure it firmly adheres to a principled stand on these various issues, it will strengthen Left unity and enhance the capacity of the Left forces to organise widespread resistance to the authoritarian party.