

In 1969 the CPI(M-L) was formed and in May 1970 the 8th Congress of the Party was held when the programme, political and organisational report and Party constitution was adopted. This was an historic event in the history of the communist movement in India. It was a shattering blow to revisionism. The Congress put forward a new programme and tactics for the Indian revolution and, for the first time, raised the struggle against revisionism to the ideological level in the midst of armed struggle.

Since then the Party has suffered a setback. The principal activists were either shot or imprisoned, the liberated areas suppressed following which the Party disintegrated into numerous groups. Today there exists a fragmented M-L movement, each fragment searching for a correct line and the cause for the setback. Though most groups see the need for unity, they look at one another with suspicion. Communists throughout the country lie scattered and in disarray.

Today, then, what is the most urgent task facing these communists? It is of reforming the Party and building it along genuine Marxist-Leninist lines. What then should be the basis for unity? Lenin clarified this point as far back as 1904 in his famous book on the Party, *One step forward, Two steps back*, when he wrote, "Unity on questions of programme and tactics is an essential but by no means sufficient condition for Party unity, for the centralisation of Party work. The latter requires unity of organisation . . .". Lenin further said, "As long as we had no unity on the fundamental questions of programme and tactics, we bluntly admitted that we were living in a period of disunity and separate circles, we bluntly declared that before we could unite lines of demarcation must be drawn; we did not even talk of the forms of a joint organisation but exclusively discussed the new problems of fighting opportunism on programme and tactics. At present, as we all agree, this fight has already produced a sufficient degree of unity, as formulated in the Party programme and the Party resolutions on tactics; we had to take the next step, and by common consent, we did take it, working out the forms of a united organisation that would merge all the circles together."

Till today, the problem of "fighting opportunism on programme and tactics" in a scientific manner has not yet been undertaken by any group. Most groups have limited themselves to statements of attack on other groups and individuals while superficially touching on certain aspects of the problem. There has been little attempt to analyse the problem in depth and get at its root cause. Important programmatic issues such as defending the M-L Party line against distortions, which were bound to take place in a period of setback, was not undertaken. For example, little attempt was made even to establish the semi-feudal, semi-colonial nature of the Indian economy. Also, a tactical line based on an analysis of the existing situation has not been worked out, and the discussion has stayed at the level of whether 'individual killing' is good or bad, or whether Charu (Mazumdar)\* was good or bad, and other such issues. All that has been done is assertion and re-assertion of 'known' truths but very little analysis to prove these truths. "Liberated Areas", "People's Army", "Agrarian Revolution", "Armed Struggle", "United Front" etc., such terms are used regularly, but what precisely should be done now, and how we

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can build-up to these is not considered. The task facing genuine M-L groups and individuals is just such clarity on what precisely needs to be done, just how it is to be done now based on an analysis which thoroughly establishes a programmatic and tactical line for the future. No doubt the ruling class will do its utmost to impede such a discussion from taking place, and has already done so by creating confusion over petty issues through the legal press (and probably, many other 'illegal' ways), but until this clarity is established it would be 'premature, as Lenin has said, to "even talk of the forms of joint organisation"'. Any unity, prior to such clarity, can only be short-lived unless followed by a sincere attempt to obtain clarity on major programmatic and tactical issues.

What, then, is to be done? To answer this it is necessary to consider our past experience. Though our history is rich with the struggles of the people against oppression and foreign domination, the Communist movement itself has been dominated by revisionism from the very beginning, the full implications of which are not understood by many of our Marxists-Leninists, and it is for this reason that we are not able to find a clear, precise explanation for the setback the movement has suffered and a way out of the existing turmoil.

What is the nature of this revisionism? Is it merely the political lines of the CPI and the CPM? Or can the difference between revisionism and communism be reduced to the difference between parliamentarism and armed struggle, or the peaceful road and violent upheaval? No, these are mere aspects, manifestations of revisionism – not its essence. Revisionism is bourgeois ideology within the working class movement. Lenin, while referring to the struggle that Marxism had had to wage against bourgeois ideology, said that "pre-Marxist socialism has been defeated. It is continuing the struggle, no longer on its own independent ground, but on the general ground of Marxism as revisionism" (from *Marxism and Revisionism*). So revisionism cannot be, and should not be reduced to a few tactical, or even strategical, differences on the line of the movement. It is nothing but bourgeois ideology and carries with it all the filth and muck that goes with the bourgeois world outlook. In India today, as revisionism has dominated the working class movement over such a long period, it has been able to corrupt the cadres of revisionist parties and infect even them with the bourgeois outlook. Besides peddling the peaceful road and parliamentarism, the leaders of the revisionist parties (being bourgeois themselves) inculcate bourgeois values and methods in their rank and file. Cadres are taught class compromise and not class struggle in both their political and personal lives. They are made into parrots – all creative and independent thinking is ruthlessly crushed and only leaders views are allowed to be expressed. Credit is given to speech-makers and vote-getters and not to staunch class comrades. Democratic functioning and attitudes are replaced by bureaucratic methods. Cadres are made to feel that the masses are fools and know nothing, but they know all (as the leaders have told them). Importance is given to petty issues rather than principal ones.

Such an environment built over 50 years has so infected the bloodstream of the communist movement in India that even people remotely connected with the revisionists have been affected with this bourgeois outlook. CPI(M-L) cadres, most of who have either come out of or were associated with revisionist parties, are bound to carry a lot of the traits of the parent body from which they broke. Though the new programme may be correct, unless the revisionist methods of work and thinking in our cadres are crushed and replaced by the dialectical materialist method, the movement will not progress, as implementation of the programme

however correct – will become impossible. Besides a correct programme and tactics, what is also required is just such a remoulding of all revolutionaries with the proletarian world outlook. It is only through this that a stable, firm and correct Communist Party can be built that can lead the masses of the Indian people in their struggle against feudalism and imperialism. In order to this, revisionism everywhere, must be organisationally isolated and ideologically crushed. It is only in the course of doing this that a genuine revolutionary party will gain strength and leadership over the masses.

How is this to be done? First and foremost, the level of the ideological discussion should be raised – petty issues should be pushed aside and central themes discussed. Groups and individuals should consistently raise their experience to an ideological level to see whether it is in conformity with the theory of Marxism-Leninism and so of value to the revolution. This will not only help guide our practice along correct channels but will also enrich our theory and give our knowledge of Marxism-Leninism a more living form. In doing so we should (1) Defend the M-L programme on the basis of a thorough analysis of the Indian state with the help of concrete economic data. Also a tactical line should be worked out based on the objective and subjective situation. (2) Make our main task mass work and the creation of mass organisations at the local level based on forms of struggle suited to the local conditions, with emphasis on ideological remoulding of existing cadres and potential new ones on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. This organisational work is an essential pre-requisite before discussion on (1) is initiated.

These are our views on the building of a revolutionary M-L party based on our experience and will certainly be enriched by that of others.