

Food Policy Of The U.F. Government And The Role Of C. P. I.(M)

The U.F. Committee of West Bengal at its meeting on 21st September '67 finally adopted the food policy of the state for the coming year by a majority of votes i.e. eight in favour and five against. Our suggestion to introduce all-out State-trading in food grains covering both retail and wholesale trading and to completely ban the private trading was defeated in the committee. The policy as adopted, which was particularly insisted upon by C.P.I.(M) and C.P.I., envisages only wholesale State-trading and excludes retail trade from the purview of the state control thus allowing private trade to continue, although on retail basis, which we consider to be the root of all evil.

Since we are in the United Front and the U.F. ministry, we are duty bound to carry out any decision adopted in the committee for the greater interest of the democratic struggle of the people. Still, we cannot but express our deep concern about the disaster that the policy is going meet with. So we not only recorded our note of dissent in the meeting but also reserved the right to explain to the people the fallacy and the weakness of the accepted policy since we think that it is ultimately the people who, if thoroughly convinced and properly organised, can set up organised pressure on the U.F. Government to bring about a change towards improvement in the policy, however belated.

In the U.F. meeting one most top-ranking leader and a minister of C.P.I.(M) is reported to have said that the proposal for all-out State-trading is theoretically correct but practically not feasible. Another prominent leader of the same party is stated to have remarked that the programme of all-out State-trading is a socialist programme and hence cannot be applied in a capitalist country like ours. In

the recent Central Committee resolution of C.P.I.(M) it has been stated in connection with the food problem of Kerala that "Our party representatives in the United Front have been putting forward from time to time only such proposals as are likely to be immediately accepted by other partners. This was seen in the fact that they did not raise the question of State monopoly trade in food grains and put

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forward concrete proposals to implement it for a long time. Neither did the party independently campaign for it."

We fail to understand which one, among the above three statements, represents the correct position of C.P.I.(M) in this regard. If we accept the resolution of the C.C. of C.P.I. (M) to be most authentic stand of the party, which we think we should, then the question arises: why did not the representatives of this party put forward the same proposal of State monopoly trade in food grains in West Bengal knowing fully well that their support could have even altered the decision of the U.F.? Why did not they strengthen our hands in the committee when we were

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fighting with the proposal of all-out State-trading of food grains in West Bengal? Were not the leaders of C.P.I.(M) in the know of it that parties like R.C.P., M.F.B. and B.P. had the possibility of supporting our proposal in the event of C.P.I.(M) giving its seal of approval to it? What interest then prompted these leaders not to support the policy of all-out State-trading banning the private trade completely—is it difficult to understand.

In fact, the protagonists of the wholesale State-trading were vociferously opposed to our proposal of all-out State trading mainly on two grounds. In the first place, they deem it impractical on the plea of

An Apology

We are sorry for the delay in publishing this issue of "Proletarian Era." The recent crisis about the fate of the U. F. Government, which has passed off at least for the time being and about which we will comment upon in the next issue, was mainly responsible for this delay.—Editor

lack of requisite machinery. Secondly, these people apprehend that the introduction of all-out State-trading in food grains would evoke much resistance from the small and middle peasants and could even turn them hostile to U.F., which, in their opinion, would prove unwise. We consider both of these two arguments to be highly fallacious. Because, if any minister becomes thoroughly convinced of the fact that the all-out State-trading in food grains is

the only solution and anything short of it would prove disastrous then it becomes his bounden duty to remove any obstacle in its path, fight out this deficiency of machinery on war-footing and not to make it a plea for escape. It becomes also his duty to call upon the people at large to mobilise themselves in organised manner so that the administrative bureaucracy is compelled to yield before the wave of mass struggle in support of this demand. Besides, the excuse of lack of machinery, considering the question concretely in the specific context of our discussion, does not stand the test of logic. The officers of the food department of West Bengal have already expressed their opinion that, granting all-out attempt from the concerned quarters, the introduction of all-out State-trading may not be too difficult to implement. One is at a loss to understand why these political circles are repeatedly making a plea of the inadequacy of machinery when one observes that the procurement apparatus necessary for collecting levy under the newly adopted system, if slightly augmented, can easily meet up the demand of the machinery for all out State-trading.

The point about alienation of the small and middle peasants from the U.F. Government and their forging an alliance with the big farmers to the detriment of peoples interest is not only novel but

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Legitimacy And The Law

By: P. K. Mookherjee

Not unexpectedly, the question of legitimacy and the law has attracted the attention of many and there have been some interesting sword-crossings on this issue. Out of this melee, confusion has emerged, which is precisely what a section of the press dominated by the vested interests was hoping for. In fact, their utterances appeared to have been calculated to make confusion worse confounded. Obviously, statesmanship is playing the tune it has been taught to play.

Leaving all these calculated muddle thinking aside, the common-man and the uncommitted mass will do well to try an unvarnished analysis revealing the real nature of the problem. As Com. Shibdas Ghosh, General Secretary, Socialist Unity Centre of India, said on the maidan meeting of the 24th April, 1967. :

"Every student of ethics and jurisprudence knows that everything legal is not always justified and moral. Naturally everything illegal in the eye of the law is not necessarily unjustified, illegitimate and immoral."

The purpose of following this principle is to provide a guideline to the people and to those parties and leaders who believe in progressive mass movement in terms of the toiling million. Nothing perhaps would have been mightier which can be conceived under the present bourgeois democratic set up where injustice is perpetrated by the privileged class under the cover of 'law and order.'

There is always a tendency to consider issue as legitimate only when it is in conformity with the existing law. The ruling capitalist class in order to maintain the flow of their exploitation, hold back the promise of the movement and interpret them in such a way as to misguide and misrepresent the people to fulfil their greedy personal class motive.

The fact, however, is to be faced. The oppressed people should go on fighting ceaselessly against the oppression

of the privileged capitalist class and politicians who believe in progressive mass movement should also display their active support. Inadequacy or half-heartedness on their part will tantamount to arresting reforms conducive to democratic mass movement through parliament and therefore the cause of the toiling million will remain where it had been before.

A detailed answer to the question of jurisprudence which governs the judicial life, involves a review of the entire history of the movement, which is certainly beyond the scope of this article. However, the factors and the peculiar circumstances under which law and order structure develops in a given society can be discussed briefly.

A peep into the past reveals how newer sense of values and ideas stem out and social justice develops gradually for the benefit of the majority of the people. Ever since the class division of the society, the ruling class framed the law and order to achieve their ends. The ruling class which actually controls the material production also have their control on the spiritual production of the society. By spiritual production it means art, literature, laws, jurisprudence, science and values. Thus, the economic system being the base, law and order is the superstructure of that given base. The economic system which carries with it the entire superstructure has

given birth to antagonistic contradictions, between productive force and production relation, which is obviously being moulded to the advantage of the exploiting class. The toiling million seek to come out of this situation through constant struggle and aspiration. The progressive force of the society cannot but help the struggle of the toiling millions to bring about fundamental change of the society on the basis of new social sense of justice which is fast developing due to the basic antagonism of the society in spite of the strangulation of the reactionary forces. The ruling exploiting class always takes its guard under the cover of the existing law and order while the movement of the toiling masses tries to interpret the sense of justice in a new dimension—that it is never uniform or rigid or final, but is changeable together with the change or growth or development of the society.

Seen from this angle, the conflict between the two classes of the society is historically conditioned. In fact, mass upsurge through movements may well forebode law making—laws that are just and humane, ethical and legitimate and catering to the needs of the majority of the society.

During the time of the change-over from absolutism to bourgeois democratic revolution (B. D. R.), it was made plain that rulers cannot rule in the old way. So, one basic condition of revolution was there. The social justice perpetrated during the period of monarchy was in antagonism with the interest of the majority. Newer sense of values—liberty, equality and fraternity—was raised by the bourgeois humanist leaders against feudal exploitation of the society. The impact was severe. The era of absolutism was thus put to a halt. The then progressive bourgeoisie fought against the existing law and order. Thus the capitalist revolution or the bourgeois democratic revolution saw

the dawn of an era which promised greater good to the then society.

But it also succeeded only in giving temporary relief since it was eventually cut off from the vital currents of social good. As the object of the revolution was primarily conceived of the establishment of bourgeois class interest, the basic contradiction within the society remained unsolved. Though it is an undeniable fact that the whole current of the movement was progressive and revolutionary in character. With the passage of time, as we observe now, capitalism has reached the stage of monopoly capitalism and gave birth to finance capital i.e. imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism. Incidentally, one day progressive bourgeoisie, began to swing back from the masses and becoming less attached to liberty and freedom, but depending more on bureaucracy and militarism. Thus it has been robbed of its fulfilment. On the altar of individual or private vested interest, the interest of the toiling multitude were sacrificed mercilessly. So long as the social structure allows this, no kind of compromise, no social legislation within the bounds of jurisprudence will achieve the desired objective. The progressive ideals, which once replaced monarchy has now become a source of class exploitation for the common people. The working people, cannot find any improvement in their condition under the present bourgeois structure of the society. Instead of amelioration of the miseries, the distress has leaped up to a high degree. The social and ethical values which once the bourgeoisie vouchsafed are now being trampled upon by the privileged class and injustice towards the working class is increasing gradually.

In our country, an ineffectual ruling class bloated up a mis-gotten capitalist class, who are principally profiteering and speculative

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What Man Has Made Man Can Break And Can Make Again

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in nature. The motive of production in the country, under the capitalist system is to earn maximum profit to the utter disregard to the development of the society. This ugly content and character is acquiring newer dimensions day by day thereby putting a constant threat to the whole of the country's economy. The unpredictable possibilities of our economy is essentially a result of their greedy profiteering which has permitted even the Emperor Dollar to well-entrench in the country. So, the champions of the biggest democracy do not even hesitate to endanger the independence and sovereignty of our country! Can the people tolerate this state of affair for an indefinite period of time in the name of law and order? Will the political leaders, those who believe in progressive mass movement remain idle and act as a passive passenger at such a crucial juncture?

We believe not. As we have observed that law has been changed or interpreted differently whenever it was found to be ineffective to serve the purpose of the majority. Therefore, if the existing law goes against the interest of the exploited class, which is always the majority, there is no reason why every bit of it should be obeyed or honoured.

There is no moral obligation on the part of the working people to honour the existing law which has become an instrument in the hands of the despotic rulers. A simple example will explain how the people are duped by the existing law. In the field of employment, the guiding line of the employer-employee relation is based on master-servant relationship. As a result, an employer has got every right without showing any reason to retrench his staff, whereas an employee has got no right

to work. Even if he demands justice against this social molification he will get no redress.

Naturally, the question arises, what is the necessity of such a law which cannot give protection to the majority. And why should the people be condemned point blank to a breach of such a law, when it fails to uphold the banner of legitimacy and social justice?

The underlying reason is somewhere else. The arguments put forward that the breach will tarnish the name of the country and endanger its economy is in fact a tactical steering of the issue. Instead of meeting the necessary requirements of the majority, it aims to achieve the personal petty and limited interest of the minority in power. Therefore, this crude and selfish designs of the privileged class and their stooges try to frustrate any current popular movement of the working people on the plea of illegality. They forgot that law is not an eternal phenomenon. The society is subject to the law of change. The whole concept of social justice and social order changes yielding place to newer sense of justice and values. Thus we find, what man has made, man can break and can make again.

Even in this bourgeois regime, the law of Hindu marriage, which was in vogue from time immemorial has been modified according to the need of the society. This was possible only because it did not affect the bourgeois class interest. The ethical sense of the bourgeoisie also found favour of such a bill. But whenever the bourgeois class interest is involved directly or even indirectly, the ruling bourgeoisie turn their back and their reactionary ethical sense stands in the way for any amendment or change of

such a law.

In this context of present unrest in industry throughout the country in general and in the state of W. Bengal in particular, there is a cry that its economy is going to collapse if the industrial peace is not maintained properly as if it is the workers who are responsible and are endangering the industrial peace!

This has come to the fore as a result of the declaration of the labour policy of the U.F. Government through its Labour Minister Com. Subodh Banerjee (S.U.C.). The agents of the privileged class have been deliberately creating confusion in the mind of the people in general since the declaration of the progressive labour policy by the Labour Minister to the effect "that police will not interfere with the legitimate and democratic movements of the working class."

We will ask the people to ponder over the issue, instead of being swayed away by the ill-motivated propaganda of the bourgeois class and the vested interests.

The progressive labour policy of the U.F. Government has sought to recognize the inadequacy of the codified law, which serves the interest of the ruling capitalist class and the necessity to resolve the discontent and unrest of the working people by upholding the legitimate and democratic rights of the masses. In order to realize the real nature of the problem, one will have to give a cool close look into the issue.

The basis of our social order is capitalistic. The workers in a field produce grains but the benefit is derived by the landlord. In the field of the industry also the benefit of the production goes to the individuals or organisations who manage it. This has become the order of the day. But neither the

tiller of the soil nor the worker in an industry produce anything for their personal benefit. It ultimately goes to the society at large. Naturally, when the labour is social and the produce is also social, but the ownership is individual and/or group, the phenomenon becomes fallacious. The personal private right of expropriation, i.e. the right of the individual ownership, is the seed of all injustice. So long as this order will continue, the struggle for existence on the part of the working people cannot stop. The propaganda machinery of the bourgeoisie have meticulously avoided this basic question of social injustice in the name of 'law and order', which, by now, we realised, is based on their greedy economic foundation. If in this struggle, to bring good to the greater number, some temporary chaos or disorder crops up, one should not be flabbergasted. As a noted humanist (not Marxist), Romain Rolland pointed out, "When order is injustice, disorder is the beginning of justice."

A very common plea is put forward that as a result of this hindrance in the industrial peace, country will be deprived of its production and the economy will break down. But is it so?

The object of the working people's movement is never to put any obstruction in the field of production. On the contrary, it aims at to release production from the grip and tentacles of capitalist exploitation and to save production from the crisis which has been created, by the profit making motive of the capitalist class. The movement of the working people is not willing to spell disaster by breaking down its production system. It is the powerful capitalist class who intends to cause instability all round and precipitate chaos through these conflicts.

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Ban Private Trading In Food Grains

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also fantastic. When as a result of introduction of all-out State-trading in food grains it will be, in due course, possible to oust the black marketeers, hoarders, smugglers and the big rice dealers from this field, when these anti-social forces will lose their grip over this vital sector concerning peoples life and when it will be possible to ensure regular supply of rice to the common people at a reasonably low rate then it is very difficult to understand what interest will prompt the small and middle peasants to become hostile to the U.F. Government. The small and middle peasants, due to some misconception about the degree of success that this programme is going to meet with at the initial stage, may look at it with some suspicion. But whenever they will be able to feel and share the fruit of success of this programme they will definitely shower blessings upon the U.F. Government and extend unquestionable support to it. Since private trading in food grains is not going to be completely banned but rather the retail private trading is envisaged in the policy it is obvious, under the present circumstances, that the wholesalers will overnight convert themselves into innumerable retailers (what we have already experienced in the last few months), will offer high rates to the producers and create thousands of retail centres in fictitious names in close co-operation of the small and middle peasants who, for all practical purposes, are still today highly obligated in rural life to these jotedars. We can recall a similar ruse played by the jotedars in evading the provisions of the Land Reforms Act through the "benam" transfer of land among a large number of small holders. This machi-

nation on the part of the rural vested interests will not only frustrate the food policy of the U.F. Government and make it impossible to create a huge stock at its disposal but will also indirectly help to form a close alliance of small and middle peasants with the jotedars which the protagonists of the wholesale State-trading apparently intend to break. The confused, helpless small and middle peasants, due to their petty economic interest, will surely become victim of the magnificence of the rural moneybags and be made instrumental and used as pawn in the hands of the big jotedars, rice-dealers, black marketeers etc carrying out their private business in rice on retail basis which has been allowed a fresh lease of life even in the hand of the U.F. Government. Moreover those who indulge in tall talks about small and middle peasants have not taken one vital point into cognisance. It is clear that the Government has decided to procure the entire amount through levy and distress sale of the poor peasants. From our past experience it can be definitely asserted that since private retail trading will operate as before the big jotedars by virtue of their higher purchasing capacity, will purchase their requisite amount from the open market from the distress sale in order to fulfil their own quota of levy, as a result of which the Government will be deprived of a huge expected amount and unable to make the stock necessary for maintaining the rationing structure of the state. Thus these political circles under the garb of guarding the interest of small and middle peasants and under the bogey of practical difficulty will virtually act as a second fiddle to the jotedars and big rice dealers with the help of this food policy - knowingly or

unknowingly. It is, therefore, clear that if the real objective of these parties is to break the notorious tie of the jotedars with the poor, helpless small and middle peasants, to bring about a cleavage in their relationship then it is the programme of all-out State trading alone which can fetch that desired result.

Nobody can forget that the new food policy as announced was already in vogue during the last few months in so far as the question of wholesale State trading is concerned with the only important exception of levy system and some minor details. But still then it was not possible for the U.F. Government to check the

Mr. Nihar Mukherjee's Statement

Calcutta, September-28 '67

"We have been asked by a large number of members of the public as to the ailment from which Com. Subodh Banerjee, leader of our party and Labour Minister, Government of West Bengal has been suffering. Com. Banerjee was suspected to be suffering from an attack of Leukaemia. Accordingly he had been admitted into the Tropical Hospital and is under thorough Medical check-up and treatment under the Director of the Hospital, Dr. J. B. Chatterjee. He is gradually improving".

ominous effect of the unscrupulous traders causing serious hardship to the people.

About the possible connection between all-out State trading in food grains and socialism the less said the better. Who does not know, if he is not a highly confused intellectual, that all-out State trading in food grains as such has no bearing on capitalism or socialism. State-trading is possible both in capitalism and in socialism. So it is absolutely foolish to equate State-trading with socialism. Did not Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy nationalise a number of key industries? But we all know that this programme of nationalisation of industries ultimately led to

fascism but not socialism. Then again, is it not the most important slogan of many left parties including C.P.I.(M) and C.P.I. that the key industries of our country should be nationalised? Have we not repeated these demands times without number? But do these left parties raise the demand of nationalisation of industries with this understanding that it will mean socialism? These people very often fail to understand that the nature of ownership has nothing to do with capitalism or socialism. The character of economy depends on the nature of commerce and production and more specifically on the motive force of production and production relation.

We would request the left leaders to ponder over these questions seriously, review the whole matter again in the interest of the people and not to confuse the whole issue by their muddle headedness. The people of West Bengal except much from them and demand of them that they will steer the U.F. Government in a correct path and help getting over the present impasse.

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At the sametime they and their lackeys are very skillful to make the dialogue of 'law and order' meaningful for their class interest. By placing too much emphasis on the legal aspect and ignoring the human and moral aspect, they are projecting only a lop-sided view and a distorted picture of the issue.

Fortunately, such eye wash will be seen through by many and we are indeed indebted to the intellectual and Marxist leaders like Com. Shibdas Ghosh, for providing us timely guidance on such a vital issue. We will expect, all the progressive forces in the U.F. Govt. will give their careful consideration to his views for unleashing the legitimate and democratic movement of the toiling class even if it goes against the existing frame-work of the bourgeois constitution.

As for the people and the uncommitted mass now it is for them to judge whether this struggle should be continued or not? Should they sacrifice themselves in the name of 'law and order' or will try to get out of the impasse?

On The Proposed Reorganisation Of The State Of Assam

The Union Government of India has submitted a proposal for the reorganisation of the present State of Assam. The sum and substance of this proposal is that present Assam would be divided into two separate unit states, one comprising the hill districts and the other the rest of Assam. These two unit states will be as autonomous as any other existing State in India in all affairs excepting their common matters which will be administered by the Federal State composed of these two federating unit states. The common matters to be administered by the Federal State have not yet been defined. In short, the proposal if accepted would mean that Assam would then be a Federal State of two separate unit states. In the opinion of the Union Home Minister, Mr. Chavan, the proposed reorganisation of Assam will strengthen security, ensure more and rapid prosperity of the two geographical areas constituting the two federating unit states and intensify the feeling of co-operation and amity between the sections of the Assamese people inhabiting in the two areas. But we feel that this expectation of Mr. Chavan is unrealistic. The proposed reorganisation of Assam, in place of intensifying, will damage the spirit of co-operation and amity between different sections of the Assamese people and sow the seed of permanent distrust and disunity among them.

Process of development of Nations

How is it that different sections of the Assamese people, who so long lived together in the State of Assam, are now refusing to so live? Why are some sections of the hill-people in Assam now demanding a separate State for them? Why, in spite of so much fanfare by the Congress Governments and nationalist leaders for national integration, are separatist forces, tendencies and demands manifesting themselves more vividly in almost every corner of the country in the post-independence period? To get correct replies to these questions, one has to understand the history, law, and process of development of nation in general and the Indian nation in particular. Every student of social science knows that the formation of nation is a historically conditioned process. Nation too, like all other historical phenomena, is subject to the

law of change and has its beginning and end. The nations that we see today came into being at a definite epoch, at a definite stage of social formation in their respective countries, have been undergoing changes and at a some other definite epoch will go out of being when their role as nation will be exhausted due to changed social conditions according to the law of development of society. In the epoch of rising capitalism one or more than one nationality or tribe living in a territory emerged as a nation in the course of revolutionary struggle by the rising bourgeoisie against feudalism and or imperialism for accomplishing national democratic revolution and against the church for freeing the people from the bondage of religion and thereby democratising the society. After the accomplishment of the national democratic revolution, the more centralised the economy

(which is the basis of the society) became and as a reflection of it the superstructure of the basis, namely, the political, legal, religious, artistic, philosophical views and institutions corresponding to them also became more centralised, the more definite, distinct and homogeneous shape the nation assumed. In Europe, America and Japan nations developed in this way. The process of formation of nation in our country, however, is not identical with that in these countries. However, much some of the national jingoist historians in our country may claim to the contrary, it is an undenyng truth that in the pre-British-administration era India was never a political whole; India at that time was divided into a large number of separate independent principalities. At that time there being no centralised administration over the whole of India a common national market, the objective

By :

Subodh Banerjee

condition for the emergence of modern all-India national concept was absent and, consequently, that concept could not and did not, in fact, emerge. After the establishment of British rule, the imperialist rulers of our country in their own interests set up a centralised administration here and a common capitalist market to the extent possible at that time. As a result, the torn-to-pieces pre-British India emerged as a political whole and the objective condition for the birth of modern concept of India as a single political entity was created. Because of this centralised administration, emergence of a common capitalist all-India market, development of modern means of communication from one part of India to another, intercourse of trade and commerce on an all-India basis, acceptance of English as the common means of communication between different stable communities of people speaking different languages and, last but not least, in the course of India people's stru-

uggle for national independence against the British imperialists, the different nationalities in India were in the process of acquiring a common all-India psychological make-up and being merged together and developed as a nation. But this process of formation of nation of our country started in the second half of the nineteenth century when capitalism as a world social force had not only lost its revolutionary character but become a definite anti-revolutionary force as well. Besides, unlike in Western countries where capitalism grew and developed independently, capitalism in India grew and developed under the domination of foreign finance capital encircled by feudal relations. As a result, its development, in place of being natural as in Western countries, had become stunted and the role of the national bourgeois section of the Indian bourgeoisie leading the anti-imperialist national liberation movement instead of becoming revolutionary had become reformist oppositional. It is because of the character the national bourgeois section of the Indian capitalist class adopted the path of capturing power through compromise with imperialism and feudalism for which the tasks of social and cultural revolution necessary for democratising the society have remained unaccomplished. The result is that the Indian people speaking different languages and professing different religions in the course of conducting political movement against imperialism have become a nation politically but for failure on the part of the national bourgeoisie leading our national liberation movement to accomplish the tasks of social and cultural revolution for democratising the society the Indian people still today remain socially and culturally divided into diverse communities disunited by religion, caste, language, race, nationality, etc. The mutual distrust and disunity between the hill-people and the plain-

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Failure Of The Nationalist Leadership Sowed The Seed Of Present Distrust

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people of Assam is the outcome of this deficiency in the formation of Indian nation. Had the the leadership of our national liberation movement been in the hands of the revolutionary working class, it would have been possible to not only remove imperialist rule and exploitation for good from our country but also take the country along the non-capitalist and socialist path of development and solve the national, racial or communal question once for all, as it has been done in China, Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

Complete democratisation of society is possible only under Socialism

It has been discussed earlier that the process of formation of nation in so far as elimination of feudal disunity and religious inequalities is concerned has, in the main, been completed in the Western democracies. For this reason in these countries communal or religious differences should have very little influence on national life. But as in the present imperialist epoch capitalism has not the revolutionary role which it had in the epoch of rising capitalism, the bourgeoisie is now incapable of completing the tasks of democratising the society which it had started in the epoch of rising capitalism. So under capitalism some tasks of democratic revolution cannot but remain unaccomplished. National question is one of such unaccomplished tasks. In those capitalist countries where more than one nationality has merged and given birth to a nation, all the nationalities do not enjoy the same democratic rights. The dominant nationality oppresses all other nationalities there. Under capitalism, therefore, the people are subjected to not only economic exploitation but also national oppression. The race-riots that we are now witnessing in the Western capitalist countries are expression of this national

oppression of the national minority by the dominant nationality. The prosecution of the Negroes in the U.S.A. and anti-Black demonstration, riots and Emigration Law in Great-Britain, one time citadel of humanism and bourgeois democracy are the glaring instances of this national oppression. Besides, capitalism which in the epoch of rising capitalism tried to unify different communities of people in a given territory in the interest of formation of nation now in the epoch of imperialism is trying to disrupt the unity of the people for the sake of its own security against popular uprising. The more acute its crisis is becoming, resulting in more intense struggle by the working people against capitalist order, the more fascistic in nature capitalism is becoming and the more it is trying to fan the racial or religious sentiment of the people in order to misdirect the popular discontent and struggle against capitalism. For this reason also we are finding manifestations of racialism and race-riots in increasing number in the bourgeois democratic countries of the West. If in the bourgeois democratic countries of the West where the process of the formation of nation has been mainly completed such things happen then it can be easily imagined what influence on national life will religious, communal, linguistic or racial sentiment will exert in India where the process of formation of nation has not been completed and practically no task of democratising the society has been performed. Thus, so long as capitalism will exist there will remain not only economic exploitation of man by man but also the root cause of anti-people separatist feelings based on religion, cast, language or race and consequently, the ground of communal or racial riots. Only when the exploited masses of the people led by the revolution-

nary working class will capture state power, eliminate the the vestiges of capitalism and for complete victory of socialism accomplish fully the unaccomplished tasks of democratic revolution then people freed from all sorts of prejudice and enjoying real freedom will be able to rise above the feeling of communalism, casteism, linguism, bourgeois nationalism and racialism. The hill-people and plain-people of Assam have got to realise this stern reality.

Whether any movement backed by the masses is to be supported

It is true that a substantial section of the hill-people of Assam have generally supported the Central Government's proposal for the reorganisation of the present Assam State. On this ground some of the intellectuals belonging to the plain-people of Assam are lending support to it. Incidentally it may be mentioned that there is no hard and fast rule that any movement that has mass-backing is supportable. Only those demands and movements which help the growth and strengthening of militant unity of the people, raise their political consciousness and transform loose amorphous masses of the people into organised disciplined revolutionary force are supportable. Naturally, therefore, those demands and movements which in place of performing these tasks, disrupt the unity of the people, pollute their mind with narrow bourgeois nationalism, provincialism, communalism or any other disruptionist ideas and encourage them to work against genuine interests of the people (even for a short while) can never be supported even if there is huge mass support behind them; such movements are rather condemnable. Whether a particular movement is supportable or not is to be judged not by the amount of mass-support behind it but by its objective. Instances are

not rare in our country as well as other countries of reactionary forces and vested interests, taking advantage of the political immaturity of the people had utilised them in anti-people movements. It goes without saying that fascism is a dangerous enemy of the people. Nevertheless common men of Italy, Germany and Spain joined the fascist movement there to the detriment of the popular interests. The demand and movement for the establishment of Pakis'an in undivided India under the leadership of the Moslem League was a demand and movement to divide the nation solely on the basis of religion. From that point the demand and movement were, no doubt, undemocratic and anti-people. But this demand and movement got the support of majority of Muslim masses in our country. Even then they were not supportable. Thousands of common men participate in communal riots. Should riots then be supportable because of mass-support? Though a large section of the Assamese people joined the "Drive away the Bengalees" movement yet the movement was a reactionary one and, hence, not supportable. All these movements, in place of strengthening the unity of the people, have greatly damaged the unity, plunged them in the stinking ideas of provincialism, communalism, linguism etc. in place of raising the level of their political consciousness and turned them into pawns at the hands of reactionary forces and vested interests in place of organising them into a disciplined army of revolutionary forces. The recent movement for reorganisation of the Assam State is to be judged from this point of view even though this movement may have the support of hill-people of Assam. So judged the movement cannot be supported. We shall discuss at proper

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Any And Every Demand Of Self-determination Is Not Supportable

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place why it cannot be supported.

Question of right of self Determination

Some of the Assamese intellectuals are characterising the proposed reorganisation of Assam as the establishment of the right of self determination of the hill-people of Assam and on the ground that any struggle by the neglected oppressed community of people for establishment of their right of self determination is supportable, are supporting the hill-people's movement for reorganisation of Assam. This analysis of theirs is unscientific and erroneous. First of all, it must be realised that the right of self determination means the right of a dependent nation to establish itself as a sovereign one free from imperialist domination; the objective result of the establishment of this right is the attainment of independence of a dependent nation and establishment of a sovereign national State of the newly independent nation. Besides, in a sovereign national State comprising different nationalities, a minority nationality which possesses all the characteristics of a nation may raise the demand of right of self determination against national oppression by the dominant nationality. In such a case the objective result of the establishment of the right of self determination is the secession of a geographical area from the multi-national sovereign national State, emergence of the minority nationality demanding the right of self determination as a full-fledged nation and establishment of new sovereign national State. The establishment of the right of self determination of the hill-people of Assam then means the secession of the hill areas of Assam from the Indian State and the establishment of the seceded territory as a new sovereign national State.

The demand of the hill-people of Assam is not this nor will the proposed reorganisation of Assam lead to it. So the above analysis by the Assam intellectuals is historically and factually incorrect.

Now let us examine if their second analysis that the movement for the establishment of the right of self determination is always supportable is correct or not. There is no denying that all cases of struggle by dependent nation against imperialism for national independence, i.e., national liberation by the people of dependent countries are always supportable. But the movement by the neglected minority against national oppression by dominant nationality in a multi-national sovereign national state may not be supportable in every case. The movement by a minority nationality for the establishment of the right of self determination under the leadership of feudal lords closely connected with imperialism or narrow bourgeois nationalists, i.e., the movement for the secession of a territory from a multi-national sovereign national State under such leadership is not only not supportable but also to be opposed. For, the success of this movement will lead to the establishment of a separate State led by imperialist agents which will objectively mean virtual loss of independence of the seceded territory as a result of its being the play ground of imperialist intrigues; in the latter case it means the weakening of anti-capitalist revolutionary movement by the people of the seceded territory because of its being under the leadership of narrow bourgeois nationalism and detached from the main current of revolutionary movement. In this case also there is very likelihood, in the existing alignment of world social forces, of the seceded territory being converted into a playground of imperialist machinations. Moreover, in

the present era of socialist revolution the fragmentation of a sovereign independent national State into different sovereign national States, is inimical to the development of socialist revolution. So revolutionaries do not support movements for such secession. Thus, it is seen that Marxists-Leninists do not generally support the movement of a minority nationality in a multi-national sovereign national State for the establishment of the right of self determination i.e., the movement for secession of a part from the sovereign national State. There is, of course, exception to this general stand. Only in those cases where as the objective result of the success of movement for secession a working class State is established or struggle for the establishment of socialism is strengthened revolutionaries support the movement for secession. The observation of Comrade Lenin in this regard is worth recalling. In his famous book. The right of Nations to Self-determination, he said;

"The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations will call upon the proletariat to support its aspirations unconditionally on the plea that its demands are 'practical'. ** The proletariat is opposed to such practicalness. While recognizing equality and equal right to a national state, it attaches supreme value to the alliance of the proletarians of all nations and evaluates every national demand, every national separation, from the class angle of the class struggle of the workers. This call for practicalness is merely a call for the uncritical acceptance of bourgeois aspirations. We are told: by supporting the right to secession you are supporting the bourgeois nationalism of the oppressed nations. ** Our reply to this is, No. 'a practical solution of the question is important to the bourgeoisie. The important thing for the workers is to

distinguish the principles of two trends.** If the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation stands for its own bourgeois nationalism we are opposed. We fight against the privileges and violence of the oppressing nation, but we do not condone the strivings for privileges on the part of the oppressed nation." (Selected works; Two-volume Edition; Volume—2. pages 576-577, Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1946).

Demand for Autonomy

If the demand raised by the hill-people of Assam is not a demand for establishing the right of self determination (we have presently shown that it is not) then what is that? It may be called the demand for autonomy. Is there any ground for this demand? Yes; definitely there is. The State Government of Assam imposed Assamese language on the people speaking other languages, especially the hill tribes, as the sole official language of Assam in such a way that the non-Assamese speaking people strongly reacted to this forcible imposition and seeing in it a danger to their culture and way of life, the hill-people raised the demand for autonomy for them. Besides, in the matter of employment and service under the State Government, education, trade and commerce, development of hill area and so many other things the hill-people have legitimate grounds for indignation against the State Government of Assam. Further more, the hill-people are subjected to national oppression by the dominant nationality in Assam. So as a reaction to all these the hill-people have raised the demand for autonomy. Now the question is if this demand should be supported or not. It should be understood that it is one thing to support the just causes of indignation of the hill-people against the Assam Government while it is

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Preserve The Unity of Assam People Like The Apple Of The Eye

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quite a different thing to support their demand for autonomy and agree to the proposal of dismemberment of the present Assam State. It is known to all that in a capitalist society there exists antagonistic contradiction between different capitalists on the question of exploiting national resources and people of the country and market. This contradiction is not limited to individual capitalists alone. In a multi-national country antagonism exists on these questions between the bourgeoisie of minority nationality and of the dominant nationality. The tirade which the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of South India are carrying against their counterpart of North India is an expression of this antagonistic contradiction between the national bourgeoisie of the two regions. The vituperation by the small Bengalee and Assamese industrialists against the Marowari industrialists also expresses the same thing. On the other hand in a capitalist society the dominant nationality oppresses the minority nationality in the matter of language, culture, way of life, etc. for which the common men belonging to the minority nationality have a genuine grievance against the dominant nationality. The bourgeoisie belonging to minority tries to exploit this feeling of the people against the dominant nationality in its own interests. If the people of the minority nationality are not enough politically conscious then they fall a prey to the narrow bourgeois nationalist conspiracy and allow themselves to be exploited by the bourgeoisie belonging to the minority nationality to serve narrow bourgeois interests. In the game, which is now going on, relating to reorganisation of Assam the hill-people there are allowing themselves to be so utilised. An examination of the character of the leadership of this movement will substantiate the truth of this statement. Most of those who are leading hill-people's movement for reorganisation of Assam are careerist politicians, priests and retired Gov-

ernment officials, never found to participate in any mass movement, who rather were engaged in building up their career under the warm patronage of the imperialist rulers of our country in the pre-independence days. The hill-people ought to be cautious of this leadership.

Why this movement cannot be Supported

Now let us examine whether the proposal for reorganisation of Assam will further the cause of the people or damage it. In our considered view, this proposal is against the interests of the people for various reasons. Firstly, it would not have mattered if the hill area of Assam in the course of national liberation movement had developed naturally as a separate Province or State. But if after twenty years of independence and against the opposition by the plain-people of Assam this reorganisation takes place then the very existence of the unit State comprising the hill area of Assam will be a breeding ground of perpetual conflict between the two unit States as a result of which the unity of the people of the two unit States will be weakened and the struggle for the emancipation of the people from exploitation will be seriously damaged. Secondly, the demand for forming a unit State with the hill areas of Assam is not the democratic demand of establishing a state on the basis of language. For, the hill region is not inhabited by one homogeneous linguistic community only; different tribes speaking different languages live there, these tribes are again sub-divided into different sub-tribes. These sub-tribes moving under different headmen have different languages and/or dialects, different way of life and different culture. So even if a separate unit State is formed of the hill areas, there will remain the danger of suppression of the minority and backward tribes and sub-tribes by the dominant tribe or sub-tribe against which the people belonging to the oppressed tribes or sub-tribes will surely conduct movements. So the formation of a separate unit State comprising the hill areas of Assam will not solve the problem rather the process of

disintegration which will start with the reorganisation of the present Assam State will continue with still greater force. The seed of disintegration of the unit State will be inherent in its formation. Thirdly, the unit State will be so weak economically that it will be impossible for it to develop the area. Then what purpose and whose purpose will the reorganisation of Assam serve? **Unity of the people of the two areas is more important than**

Reorganisation

The hill-people of Assam should realise that for their unemployment and backwardness the plain-people are in no way responsible. The plain-people also are faced with these very problems. In fact, these problems are not limited to any particular State or region; they are all-India problems and the inevitable results of the capitalist social system in the country. On the success of capitalist order and establishment of socialism depends the permanent and proper solution of the other fundamental problems of the masses of the people. So those who think of solving these problems leaving aside the question of developing the struggle for establishing socialism, knowingly or unknowingly, propagate an idea which in the ultimate analysis serves the interests of the capitalist class. Such thinking not only does not help the solution of the fundamental problems of the people but also delays and hinders their real solution. The hill-people should further realise that their real friends are not the careerist leaders who are leading the movement for reorganisation of Assam but the toiling millions in the plain of Assam, the exploited masses of the people in the whole of India. If a Federal State is to be constituted through reorganisation of Assam then it has to be done by agreement between the people of the hill areas and of the plain. If that agreement is not possible then the idea of formation of a Federal State has to be dropped. Similarly, the plain-people should also understand that if in the interest of maintaining unity of the Assamese people it is necessary to accede to the demand of reorganisation of Assam, reorganisation shall be accepted gladly. For, the unity of the Assamese people is thousand times more precious than realisation or

rejection of the demand for reorganisation; since on this unity depends the success of the struggle for establishment of socialism. Nothing should be done which has the effect of weakening this struggle.

Without deviating from this main objective we are to find some other way which can, to some extent, solve the problems which the hill-people are facing. That way is definitely not the reorganisation of Assam. In the present situation a movement should be conducted for the realisation of the following demands namely:—(1) In the multi-lingual Assam no single language should be made the official language unless agreed upon by different linguistic communities; (2) Whatever may be the official language, people belonging to linguistic minorities should have the freedom to develop their culture through their respective mother tongues; (3) Equal opportunities should be given to all the languages and dialects for their rapid development and for that purpose State aids should be extended; no premium should be given to any one language for its development; (4) Effective measures should be taken for rapid industrialisation of Assam; (5) Special attention should be given to the development of the hill-area and for this purpose the Union Government will have to bear the expenses; (6) All kinds of help should be extended to develop cottage industries and necessary land reforms should be introduced for the upliftment of the economic condition of the hill-people; (7) Immediate steps should be taken for the spread of education in backward areas.

Last twenty years' experience teaches us that none of these demands can be realised without mighty mass movements against the State Government of Assam and the Central Government. Such movements must embrace in their fold the people of hill areas and the plain of Assam. United and militant movements by the people of both the regions are the only way of improving their condition. All other ways are disruptive methods.