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Punjab:

## On the Handling of the Relation between Mass Organisations and the Party of the Working Class

(The following is a document written some time ago for its ranks and sympathisers by the Punjab State Committee. It presents, originally in Punjabi, the orientation and approach of our organisation to the handling of the relations of the proletarian party to the mass organisations of people in the course of revolutionary struggle. — Ed.)

### PREFACE :

From the inception of the communist revolutionary movement till today, sharp differences have cropped up on different occasions among communist revolutionaries on the role and importance of mass-organisations, their formation, their relationship with the Party, and the methods by which the Party should work in these organisations. These differences have led to sharp political struggle among communist revolutionaries.

At the initial stages of the movement, the "Left" adventurist sections in the communist revolutionary movement, described mass-organisations as "an obstacle in the way of the revolution", negating their revolutionary role and importance. They created hindrances in the way of those in the revolutionary

movement who upheld the correct trend regarding the formation and conduct of such organisations, condemning them as "revisionists", "economists" and "renegades of the armed struggle". Only after their erroneous line had been refuted and the importance of mass-organisations had been established through long ideological-political struggle and practice were they constrained to accept the necessity of such organisations and struggles. Even then they failed to adopt a correct concept of these organisations. They failed to adopt the appropriate approach towards methods of participating in them.

Even when these communist revolutionary sections started to take part in mass-organisations, they continued to prove themselves guilty of undermining the importance of these organisations and disrupting them owing to their faulty understanding and approach. One striking manifestation of the wrong approach was their confusing the Party with the mass-organisation. Those with 'left' adventurist politics conceived the mass-organisation as a party-platform. They would propagate party-politics from this platform, thus becoming instrumental in disrupting the mass-organisation by creating a din and chaos in it. They had to beat a retreat once again, after their line of thinking was refuted by political struggles conducted by communist revolutionaries representing the correct line as well as by actual practice.

The eruption of ideological-political controversies in the international communist revolutionary movement in earlier years, resulted again in the heating up of a sharp

ideological-political struggle. The communist revolutionary movement of India, too, underwent splintering and controversies. Along with other questions, the concept, role, and importance of the mass-organisations and their relationship with the Party once again became a point of dissensions. Even mass-organisations led by communist revolutionaries were branded "economist" and "bourgeois" organisations and declarations were made to dismantle them. In the name of developing communists from among those active in the mass-organisations, the mass-organisations were turned into the arenas of direct party-politics; efforts were even made to impose on these organisations that they should accept and propagate Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse Tung Thought. Blotting out the great achievements of the P.S.U. — the organisation that played, for years, a prominent role in the student and the revolutionary democratic movement of Punjab — and condemning it as a bourgeois organisation, open declaration was made to dismantle it and was brought into effect. It was replaced with the Communist Youth League which openly adhered to Party-politics.

Though, at present, this unruly trend has breathed its last in the practical movement, its political infection yet survives. Even now this erroneous trend raises its head on different occasions and in different forms. Therefore, to identify it and minimise its damage, clarity is still needed about the concept of mass-organisation, its way of functioning, and the party's methods of working in it.

This pamphlet does not claim to be thorough

and final on the discussion of the issue. It aims, however, at helping those fresh fighters in the revolutionary movement and mass-organisations who are not acquainted with the experience of the revolutionary movement of Punjab over the previous years. It deals with those points concerning the mutual relationship between the Party and the mass-organisations that had come up as issues of controversy in the revolutionary movement of Punjab, and are so, even today, in one form or the other.

#### THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF MASS-ORGANISATIONS :

The process of emergence, development and flourishing of the mass-organisations belongs to that period in social development, in which the capitalist system established itself after its victory over the feudal system. Even though during the pre-capitalist stage, smaller crude forms of mass-organisations were taking shape in an isolated manner, the process of their emergence and establishment as a widespread phenomenon, is characteristic only of the capitalist era. The reason for this is that the process of largescale capitalistic production created such objective conditions as were favourable for the workers/labourers to get united, threading themselves into an organisation, and moving along the path of class struggle against their exploitation and oppression. Prior to large-scale capitalistic production, production used to take place in smaller, localised, isolated, and almost self-reliant units; this prevented

different sections of the working people, involved in the production process, from coming closer to each other, uniting themselves as a class, and developing class consciousness. Large-scale capitalistic production, quite contrarily, permanently breaks all ties of the workers with the old society, particular location, and particular exploiter: it unites them, makes them prone to thinking, and puts them into a condition that enables them take to organised struggle.

Comrade Lenin has described, in very simple terms, the conditions which prepare the workers for uniting themselves and which develop in them the potentiality and the ability to organise themselves. These are: "(1) the large factory, with machine production that requires regular work the whole year round, completely breaks the tie between the worker and the land and his farm, turning him into an absolute proletarian. The fact of each farming for himself on a patch of land divided the workers and gave each one of them a certain specific interest, separate from that of his fellow workers, and was thus an obstacle to organisation. The worker's break with the land destroys these obstacles. (2) Further, the joint work of hundreds and thousands of workers in itself accustoms the workers to discuss their needs jointly, to take joint action, and clearly shows them the identity of the position and interests of the entire mass of workers. (3) Finally, constant transfers of workers from factory to factory accustom them to compare the conditions and practices in different factories and enable them to convince themselves of the identical

nature of the exploitation in all factories, to acquire the experience of other workers in their clashes with the capitalists, and thus to enhance the solidarity of workers. Now it is because of these conditions, taken together, that the appearance of big factories has given rise to the organisation of the workers."

(Lenin: Collected Works, volume 2, page 103, 'Draft and Explanation of Programme for the S.D. Party'.)

These were the conditions, as described by Comrade Lenin in the quotation above, that gave birth to the organisation and movement of the working class. At first, organisations of workers, artisans and craftsmen started springing up against exploitation by the capitalist-masters and oppressive working conditions; they came to be known, because of their being built around a trade, as trade unions. With the development of capitalism came the development of the social services; and bourgeois consciousness flourished well. With this, the mass-organisations of employees, clerks, artists, students, the youth, etc, working in different fields of social services and departments, started to come into existence. With the expansion of bourgeois consciousness, the swing in the organised movement of these sections, and the impact of working class ideology, the backward sections of society, too, started getting drawn towards the organised movement; mass-organisations of peasants and agricultural workers, in the developed capitalist countries, started to take shape.

In colonial countries of the East, the development of capitalism was curtailed owing

to imperialist domination. Because of the lack of such development, or its weak socio-economic base, the bourgeois consciousness could not flourish well there. After the victory of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, this weak national bourgeoisie, out of fear of revolution, started shirking even to build up bourgeois democratic institutions and movement. In these circumstances, who was to take up the task of developing democratic consciousness?

That task now fell upon the proletariat and its Party. Thereafter, the communists of the backward countries confronted a two-fold task: first, the construction of these democratic institutions and organisations, and the second the imparting of communist consciousness to them. That is to say, the task of bringing about people's dictatorship through people's democratic consciousness and then converting it into socialism and communism.

In this way, the "Left" adventurist sections in the communist-movement, who in the concrete conditions of this country are turning away their faces from the task of constructing mass-organisations and of imparting people's democratic consciousness to them, by describing it as bourgeois trade unionism and economism, are refusing to shoulder the above-mentioned historical responsibility. In fact, they are committing the mistake of turning their faces away from the task of building the revolutionary movement itself.

#### WHAT IS A MASS-ORGANISATION? :

A group of organised people who, judged from the aspect of their standing in the given production system, or from the aspect of

occupation, objective interests, and working-conditions, are uniform, are said to comprise a mass-organisation. For instance, factory workers: All workers work in the factories owned by capitalists. None of them possesses his own means of production. All of them earn wages for their living by selling their labour power and depend upon these wages. Getting more wages is the common interest of them all. Ultimately, they want emancipation from this capitalist rule which is based upon exploitation and inequality. In this way, their struggle is also common. When, for the attainment of this purpose, they build a common organisation of workers, that is called a mass-organisation of workers. (The organisations formed against the exploitation by factory owners, and known as trade unions, form only one category of mass organisations.)

Like workers, employees, students, agricultural-workers, peasants, shopkeepers, soldiers, etc, also have their mass-organisations. Further, due to diversity in work-conditions and clash with different owners, there may be separate mass-organisations. As there are factory unions according to different trades and owners of factories, there can be separate mass-organisations (trade unions) belonging to different types of workers, such as railway-workers, shipyard-workers, post and telegraph workers and mine-workers. All such organisations constitute a part of the trade union movement of workers. Furthermore, different trade union organisations establish joint centres for common struggles, which are known as trade union federations or centres. These mass-organisations or trade unions fight

for the immediate and partial interests of their respective occupations, section or class, and are instrumental in the struggle for the protection of the interests of the workers and the betterment of their living conditions.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF MASS-ORGANISATIONS :

Although, for the working class and its party fighting for the overthrow of the social system based on exploitation, the importance of mass-organisations is not today a matter of serious controversy, yet, keeping in mind the diversionary trends that keep raising their heads, a brief exposition of it will not be out of place.

No revolution is possible without the massive participation of the revolutionary people. That is why, the Party of the working class quite conscientiously prepares the people for the cause of the revolution. It strives to draw them into the revolutionary movement. In order to carry out this task successfully, the Party always needs an instrument with the help of which it may be able to approach the maximum number of people, bring them into the organised movement and impart to them the preliminary understanding and experience which may enable them to grasp and absorb the revolutionary propaganda. Mass-organisations are exactly the instrument that greatly helps the Party in this task. These organisations play the role of a transmission-belt between the Party and the people that brings the people closer to the Party and connects them with it. It helps the Party approach a large number of

non-party masses outside of its fold. With its help, the Party kindles and influences various fields of class struggle. It makes the people pass through a process of their own experience, that sharpens and crystallises their obtaining understanding and lends more acuteness to their revolutionary ideas. Highlighting the importance of mass-organisations from this angle, Comrade Stalin writes:

"The overwhelming majority of these organisations are non-Party, and only some of them adhere directly to the Party, or constitute offshoots from it. All these organisations, under certain conditions, are absolutely necessary for the working class; for without them it would be impossible to consolidate the class positions of the proletariat in the diverse spheres of struggle; for without them it would be impossible to steel the proletariat as the force whose mission it is to replace the bourgeois order by the socialist order." ('Foundations of Leninism', page 105 of Problems of Leninism.)

These organisations being linked with the immediate needs, problems and aspirations of the people and with the struggle for their attainment and protection, represent the vast sections of the people. They include in them those sections, in large numbers, who still remain inaccessible to the Party of the working class, who are not yet prepared to accept the direct leadership of the Party. The mass-organisations become instrumental in drawing these people into mass struggles and imparting to them preliminary organisational and democratic awareness. They work as

nurseries for producing such primary fighters of the class struggles as the Party can develop into proletarian revolutionary fighters, by instilling in them the communist consciousness. In this way, these organisations work for preparing the seedlings for the revolution and a fertile ground for the expansion of the communist Party and movement. Owing to this role of theirs, they occupy an important place in the development and expansion of the revolutionary movement. Summing up the experience of the Russian revolution and the importance of the role played in it by the mass-organisations, Comrade Lenin writes:

"...The development of the proletariat did not, and could not, proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through reciprocal action between them and the Party of the working class. The proletariat's conquest of political power is a gigantic step forward for the proletariat as a class, and the Party must more than ever and in a new way, not only in the old, educate and guide the trade unions, at the same time bearing in mind that they are and will long remain an indispensable "school of communism" and a preparatory school that trains proletarians to exercise their dictatorship; an indispensable organisation of the workers for the gradual transfer of management of the whole economic life of the country to the working class (and not to the separate trades), and later to all the working people." (Lenin: Collected Works, volume 31, pages 50-51, 'Left-wing Communism'.)

From this quotation of Comrade Lenin's, it

is obvious that these mass-organisations are not only essential for the development of the proletarian and revolutionary movement before the revolution, but their importance also remains intact — rather, increases further — for the sake of maintaining and managing the proletarian State power after the revolution. Basing on the experience of the Chinese revolution, Comrade Mao described these mass-organisations as extremely important. Keeping in mind such invaluable importance of mass organisations, it is easy to understand where those who try to undermine the importance of mass-organisations by describing them as "obstacles in the way of revolution" or in some such direct or indirect manner, stand.

#### THE PARTY ORGANISATION :

The party of the proletariat is the highest organisation of the working class. It is equipped with the ideology and theory of the working class, is its political guide and vanguard. That is why, only the advanced and conscious sections of the working class can become its members. Based on professional revolutionaries committed to the outlook and historical mission of the working class, it is a compact proletarian formation. It represents the overall interests of the working class. It leads the revolutionary classes in overthrowing reactionary rule based on exploitation.

#### DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN MASS-ORGANISATIONS AND THE PARTY-ORGANISATION :

A revolutionary party of the working class and its mass organisations both are fighting

organisations of the working class; both are indispensable. But this does not imply that there is no distinction between the two or that they do not possess smaller or greater and distinct significance of their own. As a matter of fact, in spite of the aforesaid general similarity between them, they do have their specific characteristics. Both have their respective functions and spheres of work that differentiate their respective work-methods and functioning.

Before sorting out the question of the mutual relationship between the Party and mass-organisations, it is necessary to draw a clear line of demarcation between the two. To the extent this demarcation is clear-cut and distinct, the possibility would be minimised of confusing the two; to the same extent it will be possible in practice to properly determine and handle the relation between the two. It is necessary, therefore, for us to comprehend the central point that differentiates them and that determines their respective fields of work and their other characteristics.

#### CENTRAL POINT OF DIFFERENTIATION :

From the brief definitions of a mass-organisation and that of the Party organisation given above, it may easily be made out that the central point of differentiation between them is based on distinctness of their respective roles. That is to say, whereas a mass-organisation is an organisation for the partial struggle of the working class, the Party organisation is an organisation for its basic struggle. In other words, a mass-

organisation fights for the immediate interests, the partial demands, of a section or a class; whereas the Party fights for the attainment of its larger interests, for revolutionary transformation. (But, the partial forms part of the whole, the basic. The whole or the basic, at a given period, is reflected and realised through the partial. This dialectical relation between the partial and the basic is applicable to the relations between a mass-organisation and the Party organisation. That is, the struggle of the mass-organisation as the weapon of the struggle for the immediate and the partial demands forms a part of the overall struggle of the Party as a weapon of struggle for the ultimate and the basic demands, and this basic struggle advances, at a given time, through this partial struggle. So, inspite of the above-mentioned differentiation between the Party organisation and the mass-organisation, this differentiation is not an absolute one.)

It is the above-mentioned central point of differentiation between the mass-organisation and the Party organisation, that determines their other characteristics and differentiations. Let us try to sort out and comprehend them:

— Since the Party of the working class is an organisation for the basic struggle of the working class, only those sections can join it who can understand the importance of this struggle, are politically conscious, and are prepared to plunge themselves into this basic struggle. For assuming such a role, understanding the ideology and politics of the working class is very essential. It is on

account of this understanding that the Party of the working class becomes its political guide and an instrument of revolutionary transformation. That is why only the most advanced and conscious section of the working class, who understand the ideology and politics of this class, viz, the communists alone, can become members of the Party of the working class. And that is why, it acquires only a limited size. On the other hand, since a mass-organisation is an organisation for the struggle on the immediate and partial interests, which even a common worker is aware of or can be made aware of under the spontaneous thrust of the objective conditions, so even the most backward sections of the concerned class can join these organisations as its members. Even an ordinary and non-conscious striker can join them. That is why, a mass-organisation acquires the broadest possible size.

In the light of the above, if the Party of the working class is to play the role of a political guide, it is imperative for it to ensure its political-ideological quality. Therefore, when the leaders of the revisionist parties like CPI and CPM or some other Right opportunists, bestow on even an ordinary non-conscious striker the membership of the Party, they undermine this role of the Party as the political guide. On the contrary, when "Left" adventurist elements insist on imposing on the mass-organisations the ideology of the working class — Marxism-Leninism — and its politics, they close the doors of the mass organisations on those ordinary sections of the people who otherwise could become their



members. In any section or class, especially in the initial stages, there exist a vast majority of those sections who have their own different political views, or who are not willing as yet to accept and adopt the ideology of the working class. The imposition of the aforesaid conditions would mean debarring such sections of the people from joining the mass-organisations. And such a mass-organisation would fail to acquire mass-character and would not be able to become a fully broad-based organisation in the real sense of the term.

This is exactly what happens when the "Left" sections drag along the political-ideological issues pertaining to the Party on to the existing mass-organisations. When the mass-organisations with a lower level of consciousness are turned into arenas of such controversies, their own order gets violated. If this happens, the non-party sections and the sections having lower consciousness, getting fed up and feeling deprived and helpless, step aside from the mass-organisation. The mass-organisations are thus subjected to splintering and disarray, and are reduced to circle of pro-party sections alone. They are deprived of their mass-character and get isolated from the masses.

Therefore, if a mass-organisation were to become or remain a mass-organisation with the broadest possible base and with a mass character in the real sense of the term, it is essential that the Party understanding and standards should not be imposed on it in toto. In order to preserve the mass character of a mass-organisation, the Party's guidance should

be advanced by matching it to the level of the mass-organisation concerned, and by converting it into popular idiom and simple language. Instead of the Marxist-Leninist formulations and terminology prevalent in the Party, language of the masses and popular style should be used.

— Since a Party of the working class is to lead its basic and all round struggle, it is imperative for it to establish its leadership over all those fields and classes that are essential for the revolution. That is why, the sphere and field of its leadership is quite widespread and multifarious. It is spread over all spheres and all revolutionary classes. On the contrary, a mass organisation has a limited sphere. It needs only to establish its leadership over its own class or section.

In the light of the above, it is imperative for the Party of the working class to provide leadership, keeping in mind the interests of the entire revolutionary movement; and it should strive to include all the revolutionary sections/classes and fields into the field of its work and establish its hegemony over them. On the other hand, the leadership of a mass-organisation mainly keeps in mind the sphere sections under its influence, and is expected principally to concentrate on this sphere. It is for this very reason that the mass leaderships, devoid of the guidance of revolutionary politics, are at times swayed by narrow sectional sentiments.

— Being an organisation for the struggle on the basic demands, the immediate goal of the Party is revolution. In other words, the

minimum political programme of the Party is to overthrow the existing class rule based on exploitation and oppression, and to replace it with a rule in which the working people have say and predominance. The maximum programme of the Party is the attainment of the historical mission of the working class, ie, the building of the communist society by passing through a transition-period of socialist construction. In contrast to it a mass-organisation, being an organisation for partial struggle, has for immediate programme the struggle for attainment of partial demands (economic, democratic, political, etc) of that class or the section, whereas its highest goal is to convert itself, into a fighting contingent of the motive forces of the revolution by developing itself into a powerful mass-organisation of the concerned class or section, through the process of struggling for the attainment of these demands — and thus to play its due role in the revolution. In other words, it is expected to transform itself into a revolutionary mass-organisation.

In the light of the above, it is imperative for the Party of the working class that its target always remains this anti-people class rule. Utilising each and every evil, ugliness, and symptoms of deterioration of this system, it should always concentrate the attention of the people on the need and methods of overthrowing this class rule. While imparting revolutionary leadership it should keep in command the standpoint and interests of the overall revolutionary movement, and the overall revolutionary politics. Maintaining its mass character is an imperative need of the mass organisation and it is expected to

keep on introducing political elements just in accordance with this need.

— Being the highest organisation and political guide of the working class, the Party instead of putting forward its aims and positions in a diluted or vague manner, declares them un-dauntedly and unreservedly. From the very beginning, the Party marches forward blowing the bugle of a declared war to overthrow class rule, and does not conceal its intentions. It is expected to stand determinedly under the most difficult situations, and resolutely uphold its ideals, aims and policies even in those circumstances in which not much can be done at the practical level. The fundamental characteristic of the Party is that it defends and implements proletarian politics. In contrast with the Party, the mass-organisations act within the existing system. They are expected, generally, to move and take positions keeping in mind the objective conditions and their strength. Moving along the direction of converting themselves into the contingents of the revolutionary movement, they are expected to maintain and develop their mass character.

Keeping the above in mind, the revolutionary Party of the working class, which marches ahead with the declared slogan of overthrowing the existing system based on exploitation and oppression, and has a proclaimed animosity for it, can hold its own in this war only if it is a well-knit organisation with iron discipline, integrating theory with practice, and based on the most advanced and conscious sections of the working class. Moreover, it is imperative for it to adhere to an under-

Ground and secret work-style based on professional revolutionaries. Only then can it protect itself from the probable counter-revolutionary onslaughts of the State intended to destroy it. A loose and open party is doomed to live in perpetual danger. On the contrary, since a mass-organisation is not declaredly rebellious of the system, and since it ought to be a most broad-based organisation, it should generally be an open organisation. Being an organisation comprising sections with an ordinary and lower level of consciousness, it cannot adhere to as strict a discipline as the Party can. Rather, it would be a comparatively loose organisation.

#### THE RELATION BETWEEN A MASS-ORGANISATION AND THE PARTY-ORGANISATION :

In the preceding section the relation between the mass organisation and the Party has been discussed as being between the part and the whole — the relation a particular has with the general. As a partial or particular can be a part of the whole or the general only if despite a separate identity of its own there exists some sort of a thread in it which connects it with the general or the whole. The thread that connects a mass organisation and the Party is, seen from the view-point of the working class, the politics of the working class. The level or extent of that politics in a mass-organisation is different at different times. Part of the basic politics of the Party being realised through it at a given time corresponds to the level of this politics in that mass-organisation. It is because of this that both

organisations happen to be organisations of the working class. This is the reason why the Party of the working class does not accept the theory of neutrality of mass-organisations towards the politics of the working class. It does not recognise impartiality of the mass-organisations. Rather, being a protagonist of the standpoint of the working class, the Party stands for a close relation between a mass-organisation and the Party. It works with the assumption of bringing the mass-organisations under its influence and of establishing its leadership over them. It is the existence of this common element in them that renders the Party capable of channelling the mass-organisations working in varied fields — and co-ordinating their activities — in the same direction.

Notwithstanding this common factor of having more or less politics in them, the respective characteristics and separate identities of the mass-organisation and the Party remain intact. Thus unevenness of the politics, at a given time, characterises their separate identities. If this unevenness vanishes, the need for their separate existence, as two separate organisations, would also vanish.

Therefore, the question of handling the mutual relation between the Party and the mass organisation, is the question of properly handling the contradiction of the generality and the particularity of these two organisations. The Right opportunist sections, when they detach the mass organisation from the politics of the working class and refuse to be guided by this politics, are obliterating the

factor of the generality. The mass-organisations are thus reduced to just reformist outfits. On the contrary, when the "Left" adventurists try to impose the full Party-politics on the mass-organisations, and ignore the level and the specificity of their mass character, they efface the factor of the particularity. By doing so, the respective characteristics of the mass-organisation and the Party are effaced, and, in essence, the need of their separate existences is negated. Both of these approaches are defective.

#### THE QUESTION OF MASS-ORGANISATIONS AND THE LEADERSHIP OF THE PARTY :

As it has been stated above, the Party of the working class does not accept the neutrality of mass-organisation. On the contrary, the Party of the proletariat strives to establish its political-ideological hegemony over the mass-organisations. Its ultimate aim remains to bring these organisations under its direct leadership. Speaking about this, Comrade Lenin writes:

"The London congress, on the other hand, put forward a different principle, namely, closer alignment of the unions with the Party, even including, under certain conditions, their recognition as Party unions." (International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart, page 70, Collected Works, volume 13.)

For forging such close relations with the unions, the Party makes use of the following methods:

- (a) The method of introducing politics from without;
- (b) The method of influencing from within;
- (c) The method of forming a front organisation.

Let us discuss, in some detail, in the context of these methods of providing leadership by the Party, the question of mutual relation between a mass-organisation and the Party, its problems, and the methods of resolving these in a proper manner.

#### (A) The Method of Introducing Politics from Without :

The mass and trade union organisations cannot acquire revolutionary (communist) consciousness only through the experience of their own struggles. What at best may be acquired through these trade union struggles, is the trade union consciousness. And trade union consciousness is, in essence, simply a bourgeois democratic consciousness. Therefore, this consciousness for converting these organisations into fighting contingents of the revolutionary movement, has to be instilled in them by someone else. And this responsibility is fulfilled by the Party of the proletariat. The experience of the struggles of the trade unions themselves, provides a favourable objective condition for the assimilation of this consciousness.

When the Party, through its propaganda and agitation, introduces this politics from without, the relation between the Party and mass-organisation remains simple and distinct. Their separate identities remain intact. The platforms for their respective activities remain apart. And there is no interruption of

one into the other.

While providing leadership to mass-organisations from without, the Party of the working class does not find it difficult to retain a separate identity of its own as the champion of the overall interests of the working class. It provides its leadership from the standpoint of the overall revolutionary movement, from the standpoint of its overall politics. In order to comprehend it concretely, let us take the example of the struggling peasants and the leadership being provided to them by the Party. During the present struggle of the peasants, the Party, through its propaganda, provides them with a correct direction regarding the intentions of both of the contending sides — the peasants and the government, their reliable and vacillating allies and opponents, the favourable and unfavourable conditions, the probable moves of the enemy, and about the struggle itself. But at the same time, the Party also leads them from the standpoint of the overall revolutionary movement in connection with the making of common cause with those allies of the peasant movement who can stand up with it against the common enemy, making the peasant movement vigilant about the deception and allurements of the opportunist political forces, exposing the anti-peasant nature of the State structure and the need and the methods of destroying the prevalent system for the building up of the pro-people system. In this way, it maintains its separate identity as the champion of the basic interests of the working class movement.

On different occasions, the concerned mass organisations may adopt that part of the Party's propaganda that suits their given level and need. Through sustained and repeated propaganda by the Party, the image of the Party as being pro them grows among these sections, and the Party's leadership earns credibility. The mass-organisations start paying heed to the Party propaganda more attentively. They are drawn to it. And more advanced sections from among them even develop connections with the Party. Through a long-drawn process, the Party succeeds in establishing its trustworthy leadership over this section.

(B) The Method of Influencing from Within :

So far as the handling of the mutual relation of the mass-organisations and the Party is concerned, this is the most delicate and intricate field. A large part of the negative experience in confusing and improperly handling their mutual relation relates to this field. Otherwise also, in respect of the relations between the mass-organisation and the Party, it is the most widespread and significant field.

Why are complications created in the relations between the mass-organisations and the Party while providing leadership to the mass-organisations by influencing them from within? Let us try to understand it.

Numerous members, sympathisers or well-wishers of the Party work in these mass-organisations. They wholeheartedly contribute to building and strengthening these organisations. In the struggles launched by these

organisations, they play a prominent role. Being equipped with the ideology and politics of the working class and being determined fighters, a considerable number of them happen to be in the leadership of these mass-organisations at various levels. The Party influences these mass organisations with the help of such activists belonging to it, influences them, and exercises its leadership over them.

The Party-elements working in these mass-organisations have a dual membership, a dual identity. On the one hand, they are Party-activists and are supposed to act as an instrument of the leadership and politics of the Party. On the other hand, they are part of the mass-organisation and are supposed to act according to the mass-organisation. How should they act, at a given time? According to the mass-organisation or according to the Party? This dual identity of the Party activists working in mass-organisations becomes the root of the complications, causing confusion in the relations between a Party and a mass-organisation, and of erroneous practices in this regard. Handling these properly means handling this relationship properly.

A Party of the working class always seeks that maximum politics may be introduced into the mass-organisation; that the concerned mass-organisation should adopt this politics. The more political elements that the mass-organisation contains, the closer its relation would be with the Party. But how much of politics can be made part of the understanding of the large sections of the mass-organisation

— not of the leadership alone — as their own politics depends on the obtaining level of consciousness of the concerned mass-organisation at that time. A sensible and proficient leadership is expected while working in a mass-organisation to harmonise these two aspects — the political and the mass — so as to strike a balance between the two. It is expected to skilfully resolve the contradiction between its political content and its mass character.

#### WHAT IS THE CRITERION OF INTRODUCING POLITICS IN A MASS-ORGANISATION :

The criterion is this: introduce that much of politics as the sections comprising the mass-organisation are able to assimilate, and with which its mass character remains intact. The reason is this: whereas the essential characteristic of the Party is its being political, the essential characteristic of the mass-organisation is its mass character. If it loses its mass character it no longer retains its distinction from the Party or so to say, there is no sense in keeping its separate identity. Therefore, in case of a mass-organisation, the decisive factor that determines the objective limits, of the quantity and the quality of politics (to be introduced) is its mass character. Whatever the level of consciousness the mass-organisation may have at a given time, it is that that determines the quantum of politics to be converted into the understanding of that mass-organisation. To the extent this politics becomes the politics of that mass organisation, the mass organisation comes

under the leadership of the party's politics; or it may be said that the mass-organisation comes under the indirect leadership of the Party. In accordance with the disparity in the level of mass organisations, the political element may be varied, and more or less in quantity.

Speaking about the importance of the voluntary method of getting the Party leadership accepted by the mass-organisation, ie, of introducing political elements into it, Comrade Stalin writes:

"This does not mean, of course, that non-Party organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, etc. should be officially subordinated to the Party leadership. It only means that the members of the Party who belong to these organisations and are doubtlessly influential in them should do all they can to persuade these non-Party organisations to draw nearer to the Party of the proletariat in their work and voluntarily accept its political leadership." (Stalin: 'Foundations of Leninism', page 106 of Problems of Leninism, emphasis added.)

What is meant by getting the Party leadership accepted through a voluntary method? It means that the Party politics should not be imposed on them unwarrantedly and arbitrarily. Only that much of politics should be introduced as they may be prepared to accept and adopt. The violation of this voluntary method and democratic norm not only means that the mass-organisation would not be brought under the influence of the Party, but also that the very existence of the mass-organisation would be undermined.

#### THE QUESTION OF VOLUNTARY DEMOCRATIC METHOD :

This issue requires a more detailed discussion. Is it not a voluntary and democratic method to introduce as much of politics into a mass organisation as the leadership of the mass-organisation is able to understand and accept? Our answer is that, under certain conditions, it also amounts to imposition of the politics on the mass-organisation. Why? The reason is this that the leadership of a mass-organisation is the most developed stratum of it. There can be quite big a gap between the level of consciousness of the leadership and the average level of consciousness of the mass-organisation. This gap can be more glaring in case the Party-members form part of the leadership of the mass-organisation. Therefore, there is every likelihood that the amount of politics may well exceed the average level of consciousness of the mass-organisation. If this happens, then it will amount to imposition of their politics on the mass-organisation. Violation of this sort had often been an issue of controversy in the past practice in Punjab, and it may be so even today.

The meaning of introducing politics in a democratic and voluntary manner is that, this politics should be compatible with the average level of consciousness of the mass-organisation — with the level of consciousness of its vast sections. To ensure this, it is essential that, at the time of taking important decisions and especially on the occasions when new elements of politics are to be introduced, the activists of the organisation should also

be involved. In this respect, institutions like the general councils and such others can play an important role. Excess of politics, introduced by the mass leadership, overstepping this average level, may not be a violation of the democratic spirit in the formal sense, but, in essence, it would be undemocratic activity. It would be nothing less than the imposition of politics over the mass-organisation.

#### THE PARTY FIRST OR THE MASS ORGANISATION :

As the Party-activists working in the mass-organisation are at the same time members of the Party as well as of the mass-organisation, the question naturally arises: in case there is a divergence between the needs of the Party and those of the mass organisation, to whom should priority be given? To the Party or to the mass-organisation? A spontaneous response of any conscious person, no doubt, will be that the priority should be given to the Party. In our view, the question is irrelevant as well as misleading. It is irrelevant in the sense that the question of working in the mass-organisation is a question of definite pre-decision on the part of the Party. At the time of deciding to work in a mass organisation, and at the time of allocating its forces to the entire work and also to each of them, the Party is expected to take a conscious decision as to how much energy should be deployed in that mass-organisation. But once the Party sends them to the mass-organisation, they no longer have any distinct identity of their own for the general masses of that mass-organisation other than that of non-Party

activists. Thus, the Party activists working in the mass-organisation will have to abide by the decisions, norms and discipline of that mass-organisation in the same manner as non-Party members do. It is misleading in the sense that, though seemingly such a contradiction may exist, in the spirit of the matter it does not. The reason is that once the Party deploys its activists in the mass-work, it becomes its own need that the concerned mass-organisation works properly and may gradually come under the maximum influence of its politics. Judged from this angle, the need of the mass-organisation becomes the need of the Party itself. Thus the Party activists working in a mass-organisation, existing as the cadres of that mass organisation, no longer have any identity of theirs distinct from that of the other mass activists. If, however, the Party feels the shortage of the activists for its other activities, then it can withdraw some of its activists working in a mass organisation, as the need may be.

But, judged from another angle, the Party activists working in a mass-organisation may possess a dual identity. The Party activists working in a mass-organisation can act as Party-members, too, even within the sphere of that mass-organisation. Such an activity of theirs as Party activists should be, rather, a highly important and essential activity. But, in doing so, they should necessarily demarcate themselves from the mass organisation ie, they would be doing so not in the capacity of the activists of the mass-organisation, but in the capacity of being part of the Party. Thus, they will not do so



from the platform of the mass-organisation.

Therefore, in order to influence the mass organisation from within, the Party activists should necessarily act as a part of the mass-organisation, should abide by its separate existence and norms. They should introduce politics into it by making it compatible with its needs and level and by using an appropriate idiom, language and style.

#### WHEN MORE THAN ONE POLITICAL FORCE WORK IN ONE MASS-ORGANISATION :

When more than one political faction work in one structure of a mass-organisation then, along with the problem of handling the already existing contradiction, mentioned above while discussing the case of one political faction, i.e., the contradiction between the political level of a mass-organisation and its mass character, one more problem is expected to be solved, viz, the problem arising out of the contradiction between different politics and work-styles of the different political forces. The penetration of this latter contradiction into the realm of a mass-organisation makes things more complicated.

It is quite rightful and natural on the part of each of the political factions working in a mass-organisation to seek to extend the influence of its own politics, on the condition that such efforts do not violate the norms of the concerned mass-organisation. The question of political differences among different political forces and of resolving those differences belongs essentially to the realm of the Party (to be dealt accordingly). In case the differences between the different

political forces persist, it is also possible that these differences, that should be resolved at the party-plane, may however turn the different bodies of the mass-organisation into arenas of mutual polemics. This negative phenomenon was quite prevalent in the revolutionary democratic movement of Punjab, in the past.

The correct method of resolving this problem is that all the political forces working in a mass-organisation should avoid dragging their political differences pertaining to the Party-sphere into the mass-organisation. In a mass-organisation, only those differences can possibly be resolved which relate to the amount of politics that can reasonably be introduced in the mass-organisation without damaging its mass character. The political differences overstepping the level of consciousness of the mass-organisation, yet introduced into the mass-organisation, result in nothing but an uproar in them, pushing large sections out of the mass-organisations by making them dispirited. Therefore, all of the political forces working in the mass organisations must stick to the principle that only that amount of politics would be introduced into the mass-organisations that suits their level of consciousness and which may be assimilated by them without losing their mass character.

After reaching an agreement on this approach, comes the significance of democratic functioning. The dominant faction in the leadership of the mass organisation should ensure that it does not act, just on account of its dominating position, in such a manner

or does not take such decisions as are prejudicial to the real political interests of other political factions. Notwithstanding the majority position of the dominant faction, it should introduce only such political elements into the mass-organisation as accord well with the level of that organisation. Even about these elements, the other political factions working in it should be taken into confidence. It is imperative for the minority political factions, too, that falling prey to the tendency of trying to expedite too speedily the sway of their own politics they should not resort to unorganisational and unruly methods. Rather, they should strive to get their views accepted and to acquire a dominant position only through abiding by the accepted norms of the mass-organisation and through a principled struggle.

This is the only method by which the mass-organisations can be saved from becoming the arenas of political controversies and expansion of politics can be had.

(C) The Method of Forming a Front Organisation:

The meaning of turning a mass-organisation into a front organisation of the Party, is that it should openly identify itself with the Party. The mass-organisations working under the influence of the politics of the CPI and CPM can be said to belong to this category. (Apart from other reasons responsible for such an existence of mass-organisations under the influence of such politics, one is the compulsions of bourgeois-parliamentary politics, since at the time of elections the influence of these mass-organisations has to

be mobilized directly in favour of their respective Party candidates.)

The distinction of a front organisation from an ordinary mass-organisation lies in the fact that the mass sections comprising such an organisation accept direct leadership of the Party. Despite this positive aspect, it is imperative for the communists working in such a front organisation that, in order to properly handle the contradiction between its mass character and the political content, they should not impose the politics with advanced political content on these mass-organisations. Otherwise, it would be reduced to a platform of the Party supporters alone.

In a revolutionary movement, for long, especially during the initial phases, in which the Party of the proletariat is unable as yet to establish its leadership over the vast sections of the masses, the condition for running mass-organisations as front organisations does not exist. The reason is that by doing so, those sections who as yet do not accept the direct hegemony of the Party or have different views in respect of the over-all politics might get pushed away. This situation may go on for quite long. That is the reason why Comrade Lenin, even two or three years after the October Revolution in Russia, can be seen warning the Russian Bolsheviks against directly imposing the Party leadership over the mass-organisations:

"If we in Russia today, after two and a half years of unprecedented victories over the bourgeoisie of Russia and the Entente (the aggressor combine of imperialist forces

against Russia — Editor), were to make "recognition of the dictatorship" a condition of trade union membership, we would be doing a very foolish thing, damaging our influence among the masses, and helping the Mensheviks. The task devolving on communists is to convince the backward elements, to work among them, and not to fence themselves off from them with artificial and childishly 'Left' slogans." (Lenin: Collected Works, Volume 31, page 54, 'Left-Wing Communism')

Of course, under those conditions, when doing so would no longer be "fencing" ourselves "off" from the masses, ie, when the direct leadership of the Party would not be become a bar in joining the mass-organisations, and when, despite this factor, even the backward sections may be willing to join them, then it is all right for such mass organisations to exist as front organisations. At such times, the open acceptance of the leadership of the Party, may sometimes prove to be fruitful, instead of being harmful. The trust shown in the Party-leadership becomes instrumental in having trust in the mass-organisations. Surely, the qualitative level of the politics to be assimilated by these mass-organisations, at such times, would be quite high.

#### IN A NUTSHELL :

The question of handling the relation between the mass-organisations and the Party is an important policy matter for the communists. Its improper handling results in the alienation of the Party from the people and weakening of the mass-organisations.

Therefore, in order to handle it properly, it is imperative that there should be complete harmony between the mass and the political aspects of the mass-organisation and that the mass character should be kept in command.

From the Old Files :

## Toward Building a Working Class Movement in Orissa

(We are reproducing here a two decades-old note by a comrade, then working in the trade union field in Orissa. It is an appraisal-report of the trade union scene in Orissa at that time, of the weaknesses and strengths of the on-going industrial workers movement there, and it indicates the scope, orientation, and plan of work for building up the revolutionary working class movement in Orissa. Notwithstanding a few inaccurate formulations, that being quite understandable in view of the fact that the comrade was working practically on his own without the benefit of organised discussion (though he was under the influence of the nascent communist revolutionary movement and, for a brief period, loosely associated with the CPI(ML) organisation), it is a good piece of communist thinking. We hope that our readers/activists will find it not only of historical interest but also of practical relevance on account of the class-analytical method, the class-political approach and the agrarian revolutionary perspective of this appraisal-report. — Ed.)

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I am briefly pointing out my assessment of the trade union movement in the light of my experiences in this field for the last twelve

significant that all the police firings resorted to on the workers have been at Barbil, at Raygada, at Brajraj Nagar, Rajgangapur and twice at Birmitrapur. This proves that the class enemy thinks that these workers are dangerous.

Further, these workers remain in close proximity to and are the brothers of the rural proletariat and small peasants and have not much advanced culturally or educationally than the latter. They live in inaccessible jungle area and away from the class enemy's power concentration. The difficulty is that almost their entire struggle has been on the economic plane, and economism is the main trend in the CPI and CPM leadership in Orissa. The second difficulty is that, for the most part, they are illiterate and they forget the lessons of struggle due to such illiteracy and lack of persistent ideology. The third difficulty is that they are still under the influence of the priests, fathers and babas and do not have the perspective of a revolutionary upheaval. The fear of the superior force of the class enemy and fear of loss of job is still there in many of the workers even in the belt mentioned above. They have no faith in the present trade union leadership, whether INTUC, AITUC or HMS, but they are not sure if they can succeed averting the white terror. They have distantly and indistinctly understood the class position of the vanguard party, but they feel helpless and frustrated. Without the basis of scientific working class outlook sometimes desperateness, despair, and adventurism results. Sometimes they become easy prey

years. My references naturally will be with regard to the trade union movement in Orissa.

As it is well known, Orissa in spite of its industrial potentialities did not have and still has not large amount of industries. The first industrial workers in Orissa were in the railways and the mines. The workers were peasants from rural areas having a feudal tail, one brother in a joint family working in the industry, another of poor peasant or middle peasant stock tilling his or another's soil in the native village. Some roadway workers yearly go out from Orissa to work on contract basis outside during non-agricultural season. And Calcutta and its industrial belt, so also the Assam tea gardens (also tea gardens in Sylhet and Srimangal in East Bengal), have absorbed a large number of workers both Adibasi and non-Adibasi.

The early trade union activities prior to 1936 were confined to the fully feudal areas (where the feudatory state rulers directed under the British Raj held sway). They were Mayurbhanj, Gangpur (now Sundergarh district) and Talcher (now Dhenkanal district). The mines were the iron mines operated by Tatas (Mayurbhanj), limestone mines (Sundergarh) operated by Bird & Co, and coal mines operated by BNR and other private agencies. The workers were mostly Adivasis, had scarcely any agricultural background, and were non-skilled.

The Bengal Paper Mills and the Titagar Paper Mills took as lease extensive forest belt from the former feudatory states and they employed a large numbers of seasonal non-skilled workers.

Since 1936, industry has started in Orissa, giving rise to an industrial proletariat. Though the workers change their occupation through repression, retrenchment, and migration, yet a class of people called industrial workers has come into being and they have come to their second generation now.

Now Orissa has widely dispersed zones of industrial belt. Though the industries are not intensive they are extensive. One is the Sambalpur-Rourkela-Sundergarh-Barua and Tensa-Koida belt, comprising iron, manganese, dolomite asbestos, lead mines; the Rourkela Steel Plant, the Rajgangpur Cement Factory, refractories at Rajgangpur and Belpahar, paper mill (Brajrajnagar), Hira Cement Bargarh, and other minor engineering and textile industries at Jharsuguda, Kansbahal, Kalunga, Rourkela etc. The second is Joda-Barbil Jajpurroad area with belt of iron, manganese, chromite mines of Keonjhar and Cuttack districts and the ferro-manganese, Kalinga Iron Works of Joda-Barbil and the ferrochrome factory of Jajpur-road. The third is the Chaudwar belt Orissa Textiles, Titagar Paper, Kalinga Tubes. The fourth is the Talcher coal belt with the proposed fertiliser factory. The fifth is the Sunabeda MIG factory, the Machkund and Chitrakonda Hydroelectric belt, the Raya Gada JK Paper Mills, Jaypur Sugar and Ferromanganese and the proposed paper mill at Jayapur. Besides these belts, there is Jayasree Chemicals in Ganjam and salt belt of Ganjam district. Towards 1933-34 the CPI came into existence in Orissa through the peasant struggles and the movement of student youth. The party was then illegal and it was the

'national front' period of P.C. Joshi. The peasant movement was primarily the movement of middle peasants and most party recruits came from the rural and urban petty-bourgeoisie. The party did not have any contact with the industrial working class until after the second world war.

Even after the war, the party remained bogged down with bourgeois reformism until the Telangana period. The working class struggle remained steeped in economism. So when the Telangana period came, party activity was reduced to small peasant bases and the party lost all its trade unions. Even today, inside neither the CPI nor CPM of Orissa are there recruits from the industrial workers, and that is the main weakness of the movement.

During the days of the transfer of power into the hands of Indian big bourgeoisie and landlord combine, until now, there has been not one political action by the workers though there have been militant and powerful strikes. That is why the trade union office of unions has remained either Gandhian, or petty bourgeois. INTUC, H&S and recently through the same tactics though AITUC had made certain headway amongst electricity, aluminium and Barbil mines workers, it is failing due to revisionist politics as it fails to deliver the economic goods it had falsely and opportunistically promised the working class.

In Orissa (from experience) it is seen that the workers of the mines, and the non-skilled workers of the mines, and the non-skilled workers of factory and projects, and the casual labour, are the really oppressed and therefore the most revolutionary lot. It is

of petty bourgeois opportunism.

The party should not at this moment build separate unions. That period is long past. The period of co-existence and peaceful negotiation has already past. In the past the managements could afford to grant some concessions. Now they ruthlessly suppress with blood and iron. Therefore, it is necessary to build up party units in these areas. Order of reference --(1) Chitrakonda (2) Birmitrapur (3) Barbil (4) Belpahar (5) Brajrajnagar (6) Jajpur-road (7) Talcher (8) Rourkela. In Mayurbhanj though, the mining industry is finished yet there is a large timber and salwood worker population; and a small sized factory of salsed oil is being set up there.

There is a possibility of penetrating into electricity and transport. But wherever we operate, we must also work in the rural area in order to intensify the agrarian revolution because those must be our shelter; and if we can get some Adibasi comrades for the working class going to their own brothers in the rural area the fire of agrarian revolt will spread in no time. Needless to say, the pattern of T.U. organisation that the undivided CPI leaders borrowed from the CPs of the metropolitan West must not do. Orissa is a rural backward area, steeped in feudal relations. Its working class has a feudal and, in some places, slave society and tribal tail. Access by the class enemy's forces to even widely scattered mines areas and interspersed village hamlets is next to impossible. The revolutionary forces can very easily snipe at the enemy if they closely follow the established instructions.

A further matter to add is that, amongst the Adibasis, my experience is that women are more intelligent, sober, hard-working and responsible than men. This is probably due to the drink and gambling habits of the men. Women do not indulge in these generally.

In the working class of Orissa the question of non-violence does not arise. They do not believe in "shanti" or rule of law. They are afraid of the superior power of the enemy and are not conversant with how to protect themselves when repression starts. Sometimes, when they start winning, they get adventurist; and when they lose they generally get despondent and start blaming each other.

At the outset, it is not necessary to criticise the petty bourgeois leadership of the union. The workers do it themselves. Our duty is to tell them why is the leadership behaving in this particular way. The situation is such in Orissa that the T.U. leaders can be thrown out of office through one single election. But even if the workers insist, unless they have developed the working class outlook, we should not "capture" the unions, because the workers today yet feel that in this present semi-feudal semi-colonial India when the ruling class has resorted to white terror it is possible yet to at least partially fulfil their demands. Therefore, until we make the majority of the workers learn the politics of today we must patiently work amongst them.

In the past, the local T.U. leadership have been dismissed or discharged employees or party cadres specially deputed. They almost everywhere develop a sort of bureaucratic outlook and a love for the snug soft life. It is very

difficult to find any honest and revolutionary local leader from among them. We may initially take their help but they must be moulded. And moulding won't be easy.

Letter to Editor :

## Regarding Koraput Tribals

Dear Comrade,

You wanted my comments on your contribution of a report on "Struggle of Koraput Adivasis and Building of a Mass Organisation" which has come out in the latest Comrade (no. 6. July-Sept. 1990.) I studied it carefully and overall found the general content of your report well-oriented. But I do feel that there is something wanting, like editing the report in the following way:

- 1) There should be an introduction or preface giving the topographical position of Koraput district and the population ratio of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes vis-a-vis the non-tribal population, who are to be considered as "immigrants".
- 2) History of struggles in different parts of Koraput :

### Malkangiri sub-division :

(i) Alluri Sitaram Raju's tribal insurgency — from Chintapalli in Vizag district of A.P. to Malkangiri of Koraput district.

(ii) Peasant revolutionary movement during 1970-72 under the CFI(ML) leadership with the working class of Balimela Dam Workers' Union and the Korkonda Block Tribals leading the

Adivasi Sangha with Comrades Ram Chandra Madkani, Sonu Majhi, President of Adivasi Sangha. All the executive body members of the Balimela Dam Workers Union and the peasant leaders such as Comrade Ram Chandra Madkani and the late Sonu Majhi were arrested in what is well known as "Chitrakonda Conspiracy Case" in which all were convicted or sentenced to 4 1/2 years of imprisonment by Assistant Sessions Judge, Jeypore; on appeal, the High Court acquitted all, but with benefit of doubt.

The most notable aspect is that the first "gherao" in India took place in Chitrakonda. It was by the Union workers, and the gherao was of the Additional Chief Engineer and other engineers of the dam.

The close collaboration and comradeship of the union leadership and the alliance of the peasants in the liberation war of the peasants and workers.

The leading workers of the Union, under arrest and continued incarceration for about six years, were restored to their jobs with retrospective payment of back wages, of course at the intervention of Orissa High Court.

(iii) The Govinda Palli and Mathili rebellion of the Adivasis under the leadership of Lokhana Nayak.

### Nowrangpur sub-division :

(i) The Papadahandi spontaneous tribal revolt against the British Raj during freedom struggle.

(ii) Role of Maidalpur tribals in the freedom struggle.



(iii) Role of Dabugam and Nowrangpur in freedom struggle as well as Goti Andolan under the leadership of Comrades Purusottam Palli, Purna Chandra Gomango, and Harihar Patra.

Gunupur sub-division :

(i) The leading role of the tribals -- Bairi Gomango and his entire family of daughters and sons in Kujendri, taking the lead in freedom struggle.

(ii) Bairi Gomango implanted Congress flag on the T.G. Office when police lathi-charged him and the patriotic populace gathered.

(iii) 1950s -- Land hunger of the tribals of Gunupur sub-division -- deprived of their lands, they became wage labourers or bonded labourers.

Earth-shaking Bhoo-Satyagraha under the leadership of Sri Biswanath Patnaik, the Sarvodaya leader. The entire tahsil was converted into a battle field. Soura Sattang of Mattukilergrai, Dandasi Soura, Comrade Purna Chandra Gamango of Kammapadar, Narayan Gomango, Nilakanto Gomango, Gundu Gomango etc. of Kujendri.

Thus the history of struggles and the place of those struggles, showing this hoary tradition to be the proudest asset of the movements.

3) You have rightly quoted on page 75 of Comrade no.6, the first report of the Central Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission. But,

(i) Constitutional sanction for the emergence of the said Commission should have been explained.

(ii) Non-tribal and anti-tribal Central

and State Governments are the root causes for the emergence of Naga, Mizo, Bodo, and now the Jharkhand movements.

(iii) Vital issue of land -- Madras Act I of 1917: The then British Government declared all land transfers from tribals to non-tribals are illegal and void without the permission of the prescribed authority.

Orissa Governor replacing the same promulgated in 1956 Orissa Regulation II on the same lines as that of Madras Act I of 1917.

The Bhoo Satyagraha in Gunupur tahsil, as mentioned above, ended in compromise between the tribals and the non-tribal sahumars to the effect that two courts of Assistant Agents would be constituted and all land transfers contrary to the Madras Act I of 1917 would be arbitrated and, if so justified, lands would be delivered to tribals.

(iv) Vital issue of forests. Your analysis is all right, but for all details of struggles concerning podu, etc, and now plantations contrary to provisions of Forest Act.

A detailed brochure on Koraput tribal problems is to be prepared not by one, but by a band of dedicated workers of our line of thinking and outlook: an exclusive work for three comrades for about a year.

You focused on all the issues in Comrade. But my suggestion is for a broad-based standard work on Koraput tribals and their problems.

With revolutionary greetings,

Comradely,  
( - - - )

## Cherish the Legacy of the October Revolution -- II\*

The bourgeoisie of all lands and its reformist hangers-on ardently wish to wipe out the ideological legacy of the Great October Revolution from the minds of the exploited and oppressed people of the world. The collapse of the crisis-ridden, abnormal capitalist models of economy and State, which were being pursued in the U.S.S.R. and the East European countries under bourgeois-revisionist rule, and the reverting of these countries to the typical Western capitalist model, have provided a prize-pretext for bourgeois reactionaries the world over to give vent to their class hatred for proletarian rule and socialist society. In their propaganda blitzkrieg, they are presenting the Gorbachovite renegades as approvers against the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism, and Marxism-Leninism, in order to lend a semblance of credibility to their revilement of the glorious accomplishments of victorious proletarian revolutions.

Marxist-Leninists everywhere must rebut this bourgeois propaganda campaign. Expectedly, the anti-socialist propaganda deluge, let loose through all the channels of mass communication under bourgeois control, failed to

\* This article was written for Comrade No. VII, October-December 1990. We regret we could not include it in that issue.

make any noticeable dent in the ideological-political commitment of the communist revolutionary forces of India. It could not be otherwise, because the massiveness of the scale of this bourgeois propaganda is matched by the paltriness of its theoretical-ideological substance. As to its logic (if one is to search that rare element in the current bourgeois propaganda offensive which is more on the lines of a modern commercial advertisement campaign rather than of an argumentative construction against socialism), the whole campaign rests on the presupposition that, till recently, socialism held sway in the COMECON/Warsaw Pact countries and that the system collapsed under the strain of severe economic crises and popular revolts. That is, that socialist economy and planning led to the economic collapse and that the dictatorship of the proletariat led to popular disenchantment and revolts. On the false foundation of that presupposition are then piled together such trite lies and slanders against proletarian rule and outstanding communist leaders as have cropped up and gotten debunked umpteen times since the Great October Revolution.

One would think that communist revolutionaries of India, while rejecting this bourgeois propaganda trash with the contempt it deserves, would counter it, at the popular level, chiefly by exposing and demolishing with concrete facts and figures its false foundation — viz, the presupposition. Because, once its basic premise is effectively refuted, once this simple truth is effectively projected that the recent East European developments have nothing

to do with socialism, have no relevance to any appraisal whatsoever of the earlier socialist praxis under proletarian rule in these countries, the whole bourgeois propaganda gets reduced to the conventional counter-revolutionary howling of bourgeois jackals.

But, strangely, a section of communist revolutionary forces of India is getting engaged -- professedly for defending socialism and Marxism-Leninism against the current bourgeois propaganda offensive -- in analysing and debating the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the causes of capitalist restoration in the erstwhile socialist countries, and is ending up with verdicts of the alleged mistakes of Comrades Stalin and Mao. That is tantamount to affirming, in practice, the very link between the recent developments in revisionist countries and the past practices of socialism which needs to be refuted, and so lends credibility to the propaganda plank of the bourgeois.

It is unpleasant to opine that the comrades who are engaged in such an exercise have not thought over the question as to what the alleged shortcomings/mistakes of Stalin or Mao have to do with the recent turmoil in the revisionist countries and what is the relevance of their reviews of the available theory and practice of socialism to their professed task of countering the current bourgeois propaganda offensive and defending socialism and Marxism-Leninism. Yet that seems the only generous interpretation of the way they have chosen to respond to the challenge of the bourgeois propaganda.

Further, it is not clear as to which

target-group they have in mind, whom they wish to brace with their analyses and debates against the anti-socialist propaganda offensive of the bourgeoisie. That target-group can hardly be the masses of common people who, being subjected to the bourgeois disinformation campaign and deprived of access to information about the actual course of events and state of affairs in those distant lands, need most of all accurate, relevant, adequate information and unequivocal comments from communist revolutionaries. Should these analyses and debates be meant for developing clarity of understanding and unanimity of views concerning the theory and practice of socialism among communist revolutionary forces, the exercise is unexceptionable but for its ill-timing. It may, however, be observed that open debate is not the proper means even to the said end, because, the communist practice of open debate is meant for refuting ideological deviations and not for seeking unanimity of views between the contending sides. Any so-called friendly public debate, when communist revolutionaries allow themselves to become a party to it, on vital questions concerning theory and practice of socialism (that too under the conditions of a raging enemy propaganda offensive against socialism), serves only to add to the confusion in the minds of the common people, and in some cases, to transport the doubts and confusions of political individuals over to the revolutionary masses who are otherwise capable of sounder responses to the enemy propaganda. Because, first, it conceals the actual character of the conflict

of views behind its 'friendly' signboard, thus lowering the guard of revolutionary masses against hostile ideological tendencies; second it invariably projects a lot of loud-thinking and tentative stands of the participants on grave matters. Therefore, organised Marxist-Leninists who, as political representatives of the proletariat of India, are expected to provide reliable leadership to the democratic revolutionary movement of the Indian people, can ill afford to present themselves as partners in such a joint-venture.

Then, as the analyses and debates under reference cater neither to the specific needs of the common people nor to that of communist revolutionaries (due to the given context and the manner in which these are being carried out), there is obviously some other beneficiary whose demand and appreciation for such endeavours prompt the comrades to undertake these. One such beneficiary, for certain, is a fickle-minded section of intelligentsia, professing to be Marxist-Leninists or supporters of Marxist-Leninist movement, who, like slender reeds start swaying with every whiff of a cross-wind. Of course, the communist revolutionary movement should show due considerateness and helpful attitude towards those of them who strive to fight their own ideological drift. Nevertheless, the curiosities and anxieties of this section cannot be allowed to distort the sense of proportion and priority of concerns of the organised movement.

Should the current bourgeois propaganda offensive at all induce the communist

revolutionaries to draw lessons, let them draw these lessons rather from the line of attack of this bourgeois campaign than from the handling of concrete problems by the dictatorship of the proletariat in erstwhile socialist countries. The bourgeoisie is not attacking Stalin and Mao for their shortcomings or mistakes whatsoever but for their staunchness as proletarian revolutionaries and their excellent helmsmanship of the proletarian class rule that had made them the symbols of vigour of socialist revolution and the discomfiture of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is not attacking socialism for the deficiencies in its implemented models but for the terrific effectiveness of its cardinal element -- the dictatorship of the proletariat -- and the solidity of its principal guiding force -- the Party of the proletariat. And, that is how it should be.

The class enemy would naturally train its propaganda guns especially at what it most dreads, and hence most hates, in the world proletarian revolutionary movement, ie, the crucial strengths, the vital sinews of the Revolution -- the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Party, and the great revolutionary leaders. The class enemy's frenzied tirade should make the communist revolutionaries better appreciate these precious assets and prompt them to grasp, defend and promote the same ever more firmly. That should never become the cause or occasion for their looking back and reappraisal of their positions and practices. Only the criticism from the revolutionary masses, and from the persons having genuine concern for the advancement of

the revolutionary cause, should prompt communist revolutionaries to stop and ponder as to whether there has been a fault on their part and where it lies.

Today when the dictatorship of the proletariat nowhere materially exists, the international bourgeoisie and its reformist hangers-on are still letting no stone unturned to heap dirt upon it. They are not foolish enough to believe their own propaganda about the demise of socialism and not to be apprehensive about the impending re-emergence of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They are attacking the very concept and prospect of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In that sense, this issue belongs solely to the ideological warfare between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, at the present moment.

However, the bourgeois tirade against the Party has both ideological and immediate political implications. The bourgeoisie of all lands seems to have drawn its own lessons, from historical experience, about the crucial significance of the Party (of Leninist mould) for the fate of the proletarian revolutionary movement, both in the context of attaining and consolidating the proletarian State power as an instrument of socialist transformation of the old world and in the context of losing out to and confronting the counter-revolutionary bourgeois restoration. Hence its accentuated attack, in virulent as well as sly tones, on the concept of the Leninist Party; and the intensification of its direct and indirect encouragement to such opportunist tendencies all over the world as corrode the cutting edges of the communist

Party, especially the class-distinctive politics and the democratic-centralist organisation of the Party. That should prompt the communist revolutionaries of India in particular, not only to come out in spirited defence of the Party-concept but also to make them more attentive towards fostering these very Party attributes in their concrete practice of building up the Party. Their doing so would be the most fitting response to the current bourgeois propaganda offensive. That would be, on their part, a situation-specific and concrete way of cherishing the legacy of the Great October Revolution.