

# BULLETIN

OF THE

# LEFT UNITY FORUM

NO-1

MARCH-79

*This Bulletin has the proposed function of co-ordinating the activities of various groups and individuals involved in efforts at building Left Unity and promote a dialogye between them, especially about their experiences of actual struggles in the cities and the countryside. Contributious are also invited which*

*discuss various problems confronting the Communist movement today. The frequency of this Bulletin is really dependent on the extent of such contributions, as also the financial support we get in the form of contributions and donations.*

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# An Introduction to the Left Unity Bulletin

This Bulletin starts off as both a summation of the first tentative moments of a specific ongoing campaign and as an anticipation of its future development. The question of building Left unity has neither been discovered by the publishers of this Bulletin nor will be resolved by them alone. In the workers' movement this can be said to be both the demand of the age and its quest. This is our first assumption, not only because we believe that in India the formation of a third front under the leadership of left parties in opposition to the Janata Congress and other right wing bourgeois parties would have to be formed in the near future. And that if this is not done, if also both the process of the formation of such a front and its activity, once it is formed cannot gather around it self not only the industrial working class, but the vast numbers of other intermediary strata—small peasants, workers in small scale units, sections of the urban middle classes, then not only the left but the interests of these exploited and oppressed sections will be crushed for some time to come. Hence, it is not just any kind of Left Unity this bulletin seeks to express and build. Left Unity cannot mean mere electoral unity, mere verbal agreements discussion or propaganda. It must lead up to the unity and cooperation among different sections of the basic revolutionary masses achieved in and through their day to day struggles against the existing social system. In this sense this Bulletin only expresses the logic of ongoing struggles and seeks to shape these efforts in a specific political direction, and within a given organizational form.

A tiny glimpse of this can be had in the initial activity of those who have started the organization of the Left Unity Forum as a specific project in Kanpur and Delhi. The Forum yet does not exist as systematic institution. Its activity to date has been mostly propagandistic in nature, although the response even this has elicited in the few months since the idea of organizing such a Forum was conceived shows the real possibilities inherent in this perspective. The Left Unity Conference organized in Kanpur 9th/10th December was attended

by almost 400 activists, organizers or official representatives of left groups, parties and mass organizations from different parts of the country. Another conference on a much smaller scale was organized in Shahdara in February. Various responses and enquiries have been received since then and numerous discussions on the subject of the Forum held between individuals. The approaches of different tendencies outlined in this first issue of the bulletin, show clearly that thinking about this is going on among many groups. This must lead to some form of activity as well. The question is to be able to coordinate and collectively shape this effort

Although the main activity of the Forum has been propagandistic, it has not only been that. Already the organizational form of the Preparatory Committee set up in Kanpur which includes both representatives of Parties, mass organizations and individuals shows that Associations based on consensus can begin to pool together the resources of the organized and unorganized Left. In the context of the fragmentation of the Left in India and the imminent need for unifying it, this is an interesting experiment. Also, the effect of the Left Unity campaign has been to create a more favorable climate for unity on mass issues, as could be seen at Kanpur at the time of the proposed Bank strike.

The process of building Left Unity on a long term basis can only mean ideological reunification of the Communist movement on a revolutionary basis, accomplished through struggle and debate. If it has to be true to its aim, this Bulletin in the long run will have to promote a process of thorough self clarification and it self participate in the process of settling old controversies and absorbing new experiences which can be seen happening in the Communist movement today. As such it must encourage participants in struggles to describe their experiences and help projects aimed at understanding them. Only then will the Bulletin genuinely help in organizing the Left Forum.



## THE NEED FOR LEFT UNITY and the Role of left Unity Forum

**Prof. Bipin Chandra**, Dean, School of Social Sciences

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

*(Prof. Bipin Chandra, a member of the Presidium of the Left Unity Conference, Kanpur, led the discussion on his draft Platform for Left unity presented by the Left Unity Forum, Kanpur)*

Left unity is needed at this time in order to create a new opening to left forces in the politics of our country. The people have to be given a new hope that things can and will change. Above all, a fresh political current, a fresh political upsurge has to be generated among the people.

Our people are at present faced with four dangers : (1) There is the danger of authoritarianism which may be imposed either from above by the government through parliament and bureaucracy or through a fascist movement. This danger arises from the crisis of the capitalist path of development. As the capitalist classes of the cities and villages meet with popular resistance to their policy of putting on the people the burdens of capitalist development as well as capitalist crises, their mind turns to the idea of extinguishing even the existing democratic rights through authoritarian measures. In particular, they want to impose 'discipline' upon the working class and the rural labourers.

However, this is not the only policy they work for. The existing party system is also found quite serviceable. As in the capitalist countries of Europe and North America, they hope to satisfy the people's urge for social and political change by providing for regular alternation of bourgeois political parties wedded to the maintenance of the existing social system. This system of two or more party 'ins' and 'outs' creates regular political excitement behind which the system of capitalist exploitation continues to function and grow. Once a people get used to this system, it becomes difficult for new political forces to grow. The radical political workers are constantly forced to choose between two or more 'evils' on the basis of choosing the lesser one. The tendency to become a radical 'tail' and integral part of essentially capitalist political forces begins to take root.

There is yet another danger. As the people find that change from Congress to Janata—which was suppo-

sed to herald 'total revolution' or at least 'anti-authoritarian' pro-people policies—has changed little, they tend to lose heart, to become cynical—SUB CHOR HAIN, all politics is corrupt—and to withdraw from politics, to become apolitical. Depolitisation is a major political weapon of any system of status quo.

Diversions of popular political energies into mutual political strife among the people on the basis of caste, religion, language and region is another serious danger.

To face all these political dangers, the people must be politically aroused, educated and mobilised. They must come politically alive and active. This task can not at present be performed by any one political party of the left. It requires the pooling of all the resources of the left parties, groups and individuals. Such pool-such unity, such a broad united front of the left-wing forces, of the working class, rural poor, urban petty bourgeoisie and radical, socially—conscious intellectuals, *alone* can create hope among the people, generate political enthusiasm, and create a fresh political current among them

It is the absence of this left unity that has produced a strange result : the people, in a massive act of political intervention, ended the domination of the Congress in March 1977, then quickly started showing the door to Janata, and yet they have made no massive turn to the left. The working class has shown great courage and initiative in defence of its trade union rights—but its political intervention is minimal. The rural poor and lower castes refuse to be pushed down, but are unable to evolve towards new politics. The intelligentsia has shown a certain capacity to see the old dangers of Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism and the new dangers of RSS fascism, especially in the ideological fields, but is unable to advance towards socialist or even radical ideological

and political positions. Above all, none of the three are able to break out of sectional political isolation. The ending of this political isolation and their emergence as a united political force of the left for social revolution requires the unity of the left.

## II

To create this unity, to create pressures towards this unity, is the specific task of the left unity forum. The left unity forum is not, as I understand it, an effort at creating a new political group. Its main purpose is to highlight the need for left unity and to bring the pressure of the left forces to bear upon left parties, groups, and individuals to persuade them to unite. It also aims at clarifying through mutual discussion the issues and concepts involved in left unity, and gradually to help

evolve a programme and framework for left unity.

The left unity forum does not urge the left parties, groups, etc; to give up their existing political understanding, etc. Let them propagate their views and advance their political work and organization. In fact, it urges frank and free discussion. But it also urges them to adopt a fraternal approach towards each other; though this approach does not bar criticism.

Let us politicise and activate our people in political motion. Left a people up in political arms, a politically mobilised people, decide later which party's or group's politics answer their needs better, meet with their approval, enable them to advance from capitalism to socialism. The task of left unity forum is to bring about this unity.

# MARXISTS AND THE LEFT UNITY FORUM

—Shri Prakash

As Marxists, we must be able to justify the necessity for the Left in India to come together today on the basis of a minimum programme from the standpoint of the interests of the working class as a whole. The inevitable goal of the Workers' movement is the International Communist Revolution, a revolution, which it can only accomplish when conscious of its global existence and irreconcilable opposition to Capital and the Nation State, the working class moves to abolish both. It is the task of marxists to hasten the implementation of *all those steps* which would develop this self-consciousness in a given historical situation.

In India today the principal question which confronts the Workers Movement is the DEFENCE of its established institutions—viz. the *Unions*. Without being able to successfully carry this out the working class movement cannot advance towards the seizure of political power. Why is this so? Although only the first signs of a capitalist onslaught have appeared—viz. the increased violent attacks and police firings on

industrial workers, the growing murderous attacks on agricultural labourers and poor peasants, the proposal to change drastically the legal status and rights of unions through the Industrial Relations Bill and to cut the wages of the organized industrial workers as proposed by the Bhootlingam Committee Report—these follow from the requirements of further capitalist development in India. In our opinion, if this is to take place capitalism should be able to (a) atomize the working class in order to discipline it (b) suppress its agitations to maintain the continuity of production and increase agricultural production on the basis of low wages and destitute labour. (c) Cut wages or prevent them from rising in order to maintain previous profit levels or compete favorably on the world market.

The causes behind the necessity are to be found in the post-1965 social developments in India and the capitalist world market. Increasingly not only the organized working class but other professional strata too have begun to form *National federations* or at least

at the time of struggles to act together. The best and for the state the most threatening example of this sort was the formation of the National Co-ordination Committee of Railwaymen's struggle (NCCRS) in 1974. Very recently a pointer of a similar sort has emerged in the formation of the National Campaign Committee of all unions against the Industrial Relations Bill and the holding of joint rally on 20th November. This increases the weight the Workers can exercise in negotiations with the government and capitalists. The necessity to frequently resort to repression follows from the fact that after 1965 there has been a substantial increase in the average number of workers involved in strikes, number of disputes, duration of strikes and numbers of manhours lost, if these are compared with the average for the 1950-65 period. In the country side too government propaganda, intensified pauperization and expropriation of poor peasants in the 1960's and the intervention of sections of the Left caused the self-consciousness of poor peasants and agricultural labourers to grow slowly. The rich peasantry, on the other hand, too got organized increasingly as an independent political force seeking to mobilize its own support both in order to bargain with the industrial bourgeoisie and the government and increasingly to suppress the rising temper of agricultural labourers and poor peasants especially those belonging to castes other than its own. The increased pace of the class struggle in the countryside is the resultant of these two factors. It must be noted that by and large in India, parties representing mainly the interests of the Bourgeoisie e. g. Cong (1) will not promote an ORGANIZATION of the rural poor.

The necessity to discipline the working class and the rural poor in particular also arises from the growing concern on the part of the Industrial bourgeoisie and the state to regulate, if not actually cut wages in several sectors. Today, this is to be seen in several areas-the long delay by the Jute, Textile and Engineering industries in West Bengal in renegotiating wage agreements which had lapsed for 2 years, the DA cut sought to be imposed on the bank employees, a similar attitude in relation to public Sector Industries on the part of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, the refusal to reenact Bonus as a minimum statutory payment, the proposal by the Bhootlingam Committee to fix minimum wages at Rs. 100-150-all of these are pointers to an attempt to regulate wage levels, some thing which would take on the form of

a virulent onslaught in case of a serious slump in the world or the home markets.

It must be noted, that these attempts are occurring inspite of the fact that since 1966 high rates of inflation and less than 100% neutralization has in particular decreased real wages even in the most organized sectors of the Trade Union Movement and the increasing component of fixed capital makes wages a lower proportion of both costs and value of output. There we can only tentatively suggest some reasons for this. The narrowness of the home market especially in modern manufacturers which have attracted most capital investments after 1965 forces them increasingly to rely on exports, As such every major capitalist country has at one stage or another relied on such a strategy to develop domestic capitalism. India however begins not only in conditions of intense competitiveness, but also of a slack if not yet an actual depression. This makes low pricing a necessity.

In its turn low pricing implies a wage restraint even in growing sectors in India for the following reasons. First of all although wages as a proportion of total costs and value of output are very low they are not as low as the more advanced technologies in the West. Secondly in India increases in agricultural productivity especially in foodgrains and raw material production have not manifested themselves in a corresponding decrease of prices. Rather the fact of large scale state intervention in the pricing of goods has resulted in the reverse phenomenon. Thirdly, the process of modernization enlarges the cost share of fixed charges. Given a particular scale of technology costs of fixed and circulating capital cannot be altered, whereas turnover time increases and rate of return on total capital seows down. Only the variable component of cost is open to alteration. Lastly an export oriented growth strategy permits wage cuts since the production market in most cases is no longer identical with the consumption market.

These reasons have to be explored in greater detail. However, they show us why the state in India is likely to follow a policy of containment in relation to the working class in the cities and the countryside. How is the working class movement to defend itself and more specifically answer this strategy with one designed to increase its own political weight and advance it towards social revolution.

Continued on page 25

# A PLATFORM FOR LEFT UNITY

(Adopted by the Left Unity Conference at Kanpur in December, 78)

## Editor's Note

*We print here the platform for Left Unity as approved by the Left Unity Conference held at Kanpur. This platform insists only on one condition for Left Unity; consistent opposition to bourgeois parties and bourgeois socio-economic system.*

*The other condition is, if called a condition, that this unity has to be primarily for the object of mobilizing the working class, the rural poor, and other oppressed sections of society on the basis of unity and democracy in their ranks, on a programme of struggle, economic, social as well as political.*

*The programmes listed here are tentative programmes of struggle and may be changed in any manner in the actual course of struggle. They will no doubt become more revolutionary as the struggle deepens and the subjective consciousness of the struggling masses develops. In their present form, they correspond to the present stage of struggle and the present consciousness of the masses.*

This platform was published in the following journals, whose participation in the debate is hereby acknowledged.

### English weeklies.

1. Clarity (Bombay) Nov. 4, 1978
2. Main stream (New Delhi) Dec. 2, 1978.

### Hindi fortnightly

1. Mazdoor Kisan Kranti (Kanpur) of November (I), 1978

### Hindi weeklies

1. Poorvi Sandesh (Gorakhpur) December 11, 1978
2. Himalaya Sandesh (Patna) December 17, 1978

Mazdoor Kisan Kranti has published also the report on the Left Unity Conference and several of the articles published.

It is clear by now that the Janata Party has failed as miserably in solving the basic problems of the Indian people as the Congress. In spite of utilising every resource for capitalist development including inflation and foreign debt, there has been relatively little industrial development in India, and the poverty of the Indian masses has increased during this period rather than decrease. The Janata Party's "export-oriented" and "rural oriented" policies cater to backward sections of the bourgeoisie and the traders, but they remain wedded to capitalism. They have the further drawback of shifting away from heavy industry, public sector and public distribution system. At the same time they give a boost to Big Business and multinationals (MNC). Nearly two years of the Janata rule has failed to give any indication that its policies could solve the unemployment problem.

In fact virtually all the potentialities of capitalist development in India, whether independent or dependent on foreign capital, have become exhausted in the face of international competition and limitations of the internal market. The North-South wranglings at UNCTAD conferences are enough proof of the difficulties experienced by the bourgeoisie of the backward developing nations. The world capitalism too is facing the most acute and prolonged period of stagflation resulting in unemployment, price-rise, fall in real wages and ruin of the middle classes. Of late, there has been a worldwide attempt to freeze wages and to suppress the working class unions. The pre-Emergency attempt to freeze wages in India and the suppression of the railway strike, followed by a total ban on strikes and agitations during the Emergency had the same object as Janata Party government's widespread shooting of workers or the "democratic" legislation of a comprehensive Industrial Relations Bill or the "democratic" discussion of a Boothalingam Committee on Wages, Prices and Incomes. Even the minimum wages conceded by employers are sought to be frozen in the name of an aridulously low national minimum wage.

Despite its division and disorientation, the working class has been resisting the attack of the bourgeoisie. As the capitalist crisis deepens and class struggle sharpens, the bourgeois leaders arm themselves with more draconian laws and stifle democracy more and more. The Congress imposed

**Members of Presidium  
in the  
Kanpur Left Unity Conference**

1. *Prof- Bipin Chandra*
2. *Com. Harbans Singh (CPI)*
2. *" Chitta Basu M.P. (FBI)*
4. *" Piyush Tirki MP (RSPI)*
5. *" Haripada Das (RCPI)*
6. *" Mahendra Singh(UP Trot)*
7. *" Gayatri Singh (CLIF-I)*
8. *" Sandip Pendse*
9. *Bharat Patankar (MKP)*
10. *Prof. Narindra Sharma(SUC)*
11. *" Sucha Singh Gill (PTF)*
12. *Sri Narendra Sharma, Journalist.*

**Participants in the Kanpur  
Left Unity Conference**

1. *Communist Party of India*
2. *Forward Bloc*
3. *Revolutionary Socialist Party of India*
4. *Revolutionary Communist Party of India.*
5. *Socialist Unity Centre of India.*
6. *Communist League of India, Indian Section  
of the Fourth International.*
7. *The U. P. Group of Trotskyists.*
8. *Delhi University Socialist Group.*
9. *Progressive Thinkers Forum*
10. *C. I. E. D. S., Bangalore,*
11. *Swadeshi Mill Mazdoor Samyukta Morcha,  
Kanpur*
12. *Maharashtra Kamgar Parishad,*
13. *Manushi Group of Women activists,  
and*

*Several leftist intellectuals, Professors  
Trade Unionists and Journalists.*

the Emergency rule which was the pattern of the bourgeois rule in backward countries in that period of world-wide stagnation (1974). In spite of its democratic pretensions, the Janata Party in the Lok Sabha voted for the retention of the provisions of Emergency and detention without trial. Even now Naxalite prisoners are being held and hanged and even put to death in the name of encounters. The entire course of events shows that the bourgeoisie are preparing for another Emergency by public mandate if possible or by fascist take-over if necessary. The danger is posed not only by the Cong (I) but also by RSS and other authoritarian elements in the Janata Party.

So whether to change the direction of the national economic development away from the capitalist path of mass poverty and unemployment to the socialist path of full employment, living wage, rapid industrialisation through nationalization or to defend the working class and other exploited people, the wage-earners and consumers, from the capitalist onslaught, or to meet the threat of another Emergency and to save democracy for the toiling people, it is necessary for us to oust bourgeois parties from state power and instal the working class and its allies, the mass of non-kulak peasantry. This requires a united and determined effort by all the left parties and groups owing allegiance to the working class in the first instance; for only the organized strength of the working class supported by the mass of non-kulak peasantry, the radical sections of the urban middle classes and the intelligentsia can put a stop to the present national drift towards capitalist crisis and authoritarianism.

Left Unity is the need of the hour.

We, the participants in this conference who represent the revolutionary intelligentsia and unattached leftists, trade unionists and left groups without any illusion in bourgeois parties, hereby take the first step to bring together all the left parties and groups, so far as possible, to a meeting point and to have a dialogue. While this dialogue proceeds, we consider it necessary also to provide trade union and political leadership to the working class and other exploited people struggling against capitalism.

The Left Unity Forum proposes to make such a beginning. It will work for trade union unity at all levels and for united action of the working class on common issues at the plant level e. g., wage-revision, bonus, nationalisation of sick and closed units and of the large industrial houses responsible for their sickness, etc. The Forum will prepare the working class also for political struggles such as for trade union rights and political rights, a living national wage, bonus, nationaliza-



tion of foreign companies and MNC, public distribution system and full employment through reduction of working hours and creation of additional jobs.

It will prepare the working class also for its defence against employers' goons and fascists.

It will work for the organisation of the rural working masses, the khet majoors and small peasants, and all other unorganized sections of the working class to give a new dimension to the working class movement.

The Forum will continue to propagate the idea of left unity and mobilize public opinion for it through meetings, seminars and conferences as well as through literature. At the same time it will engage in action in support of working class struggles and movements for the emancipation of their exploited and oppressed people. On the political plane, it proposes to popularise specific political programmes, put forth alternatives to the capitalist path of development which fix direct responsibility on the state for the social and economic development of the country. It will also try to build agitations and movements on the basis of such programmes.

This Left Unity Conference called by the Kanpur Forum has drafted a tentative list of such programmes which may be added to or amended in the light of further discussion and experience of struggle.

1. For the deletion of the provisions of Emergency and preventive detention from the constitution, and release of all political prisoners. For the defence of all civil liberties including academic freedom and freedom of the Press-

2. For the inclusion of right to work, education and medical services in the Constitution as Fundamental Rights.

3. For autonomy to states, for equal status to all national languages.

4. For nationalization of all closed and sick mills and of the industrial empire of the large industrial houses responsible for the sickness of their units.

5. For effective participation of workers in the management of public sector undertakings at the plant level and of their central trade unions at the industrial and national levels.

6. For nationalization of MNC and Big Business and extension of Public Sector and its undertakings.

7. For the take-over of wholesale trade and for effective and extensive public distribution system.

8. For nationalization of education and its orientation to inculcate the outlook / values of secularism, democracy and

## Messages received

### well-wishers

**Mohit Sen (CPI)**

I was glad to get your letter and the enclosed material on the Left Unity Forum. It is an interesting and worthwhile endeavour.

**S P Dang (CPI)**

Needless to say that the greatest need of the hour is to work for a viable left and democratic front in the country.

**Anadi Das (RCPI)**

We feel that the unity of the revolutionary forces is the task of the day.

**M. Rashid (Communist League Kerala)**

I wish all success to the conference.

**Sailen Banerji Communist League,  
(West Bengal)**

I wish your efforts be realized.

**Prof. Nirmal Azad : Marxist Study**

**Centre, Patiala**

M.S.C. broadly agrees with the views/ contents of the pamphlet circulated by you.

**Prof Babubhai Desai: Socialist Study**

**Centre, Surat**

All of us have welcomed the proposed Conference. We fully support the move, Actually that is what is needed.

**Com Subodh Meht of Bhavnagar  
Ex-member, National Committee, CPI**

**who has since resigned from CPI**

You deserve heartiest congratulations for organising Left Unity Forum—the need for which had been felt quite since long back.

We thank all those who wished success to the Left Unity Conference, organised by the Left Unity Forum, Kanpur



socialism. Education to be free and available to the poorest sections. For extension of education to the rural poor.

9. For national management of medical services to the urban and rural poor on the ESI pattern.

10. For national projects of urban and rural housing for the poor with all civic facilities, schools, hospitals and industries

11. For a national need-based wage, and full employment or employment-relief.

12. For full employment through working six hour shifts, public works projects, and expanded educational and health services.

13. For radical agrarian reforms, redistribution of land and cooperativization. For state farming on barren cultivable land.

14. For defence of workers, agricultural labour and small peasants, and their organisations against all attacks. For strengthening their mass organisations by forging unity and in-built leadership in them.

15. For end to social oppression and discrimination against Harijans and scheduled tribes. For their collective development through educational facilities and employment opportunities. For the abolition of caste system and social integration of the Harijans and scheduled tribes into the mainstream of society-

16. For total emancipation of women, and equality with men in law and social sphere. For end to all discriminatory laws and for framing a uniform civil code on marriage, divorce and inheritance for the people of all denominations. For action against torture of women and sex-offences against them. For educational and employment facilities to them, and for socialisation of domestic chores to enable women to participate in social activities outside home as men do.

17. For end to communalism, and social discrimination against minorities. For a ban on all religions, cultural and communal organisations preaching communal discord, and a ban on such preaching by mass media.

18. For an anti-imperialist working class foreign policy.

19. For a working class government allied with the mass of non-kulak peasantry.

## Resolution adopted by the Kanpur Left Unity Conference

This Conference organised by the KANPUR LEFT UNITY FORUM resolves to set up the Forum as a continuing institution with representatives of consenting political parties and groups, workers intellectuals, students and rural poor.

(a) to coordinate and implement the consensus programme evolved by the Conference primarily with a view to help mobilisation of the working class;

(b) to develop the activities of the Forum so that it promotes such unity and united action in the foreseeable future in the defence of the working population for the assertion of their basic and fundamental rights;

(c) to take initiative for holding similar conferences and setting up similar forums at other centres in the country;

(d) to help build United Left Front in opposition to bourgeois parties and capitalist socio-economic system; and,

(e) to run a LEFT UNITY BULLETIN for the promotion of the cause.

जनता पार्टी की पूंजीवादी नीतियों को समझने के लिये पढ़िये

## मजदूर किसान क्रांति

१९७७ के मुख्य लेख: बेकारी की समस्या और उसका हल, समाजवादी मोर्चा क्यों?, संसदीय कार्य-पुर हीसरे इंटरनेशनल का दस्तावेज भारत का समाजवादी आन्दोलन (समीक्षा), समाजवाद क्या है?

वार्षिक चन्दा ... १०)  
१९७७ व ७८ मार्च तक के पिछले २६ अंक ५)  
आपात कालिक ३० अंक ६)

पता:—राज नारायण आर्य ११७/२५६

गीता नगर, कानपुर-२४

# A NOTE ON LEFT UNITY

*(Prof. Saurin Bhattacharya is one of the vice-presidents of the All-India College Teachers Federation and a leader of the Revolutionary Socialist Party of India. At present, he is a member of the Rajya Sabha from West Bengal and the spokesman of the said party there. This note was prepared by him for the Conference and was read in his absence.)*

The capitalist crisis is deepening in India. The capitalist class itself is divided into two warring factions: One of them wields the state power. The other is trying to dislodge it from the seat of power. In such a situation the question of Left unity has assumed great urgency.

It is clear to the common man that neither of the two factions, organised in Janata and Congress (I) parties, can solve their problems. If he still votes for one or the other of the two parties, the reason is that there is no alternative before him. This alternative, however, is needed not only at the parliamentary level but also for struggle; for no other force seems to inspire confidence in the masses.

*When I speak of an alternative, I am not talking of a parliamentary alternative. I speak of seizure of power. Though the bourgeoisie are divided into two parties, there is no reason to suppose that the hold of this class on the state apparatus has weakened in any way. The truth is rather that the two parties thus share the power between them and that both of them are equally under the thumb of the capitalists as a whole. The Common Man is rather more exploited in this way and the Parliament is prevented effectively from fighting against the common man's exploitation.*

The political system of the parliament being in the grip of the bourgeoisie, no effort to change the present socio-economic system can succeed. The Constitution too is a slave of the capitalist system. If the Constitution is changed, bourgeoisie can still subvert it for they can and will still use the state apparatus for repression. An example of how far can the bourgeoisie go in this direction was seen in the double Emergency imposed by Mrs. Gandhi. The bourgeoisie could go to the utmost limit. We have only one course open to us: to lead the oppressed sections of society in their fight against the rule of the exploiters and the system of exploitation. Left unity that takes us even a bit along this road is worth

all our pains. All true leftists should do their best to attain it.

There are too many obstacles in the way of such Left unity. The chief obstacle relates to organisation. It cannot be denied that in spite of the formation of Left governments in West Bengal and Tripura, those forces which could be even broadly called Left are very small and insignificant. The objective situation, however, gives us a different picture. The working people will very gladly seize any alternative which can take them out of the hopeless situation in which they find themselves today after 31 years of bourgeois rule.

*It is true that there is as yet no national awakening or rise in the subjective consciousness of the people. So the question before us is, how to make up this deficiency. This subjective awakening can not be achieved in a single day. It is a long process. Even then, a programme which is based on the basic issues faced by the people can mobilise the largest sections of masses in a short time and can create a situation in which the deficiency of organisation and of the subjective consciousness will be greatly and speedily made up. In other words, if the Left Unity Forum takes up the right slogans for mass struggle, the deficiency of our organisation will be greatly made up by the initiative of the great mass of the people.*

This does not mean that we believe in spontaneity. Our slogans themselves indicate what type of organisation we want. For example, I can mention the slogan raised by the RSP before the Emergency and even during the Emergency: to form action committees against exploitation in factories and offices, schools, colleges and universities. This slogan was given by the RSP to enable us to complete the unfinished tasks of the bourgeois revolution and advance towards the Socialist revolution. These tasks will be completed only by workers, landless peasants and the lower middle class. No section of the bourgeoisie can have a place in this mobilisation.

The tasks of the national democratic revolution could not be completed during the last 31 years under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, for that class has its very definite limitations. Had there been no such limitations, these tasks would have been completed

during these long years. So this task is to be completed by the working class and its allies: the landless and poor peasants and the lower middle class. They shall fulfil these tasks in their march towards the socialist revolution.



## THE UNITY OF THE LEFT

*(Presented by Prof. Sucha Singh Gill on behalf of The Progressive Thinkers. Forum Patiala at Left Unity Conference held on. Dec. 9, & 10, 1978 at Kanpur.)*

The term left is used to cover a person working for the overthrow of bourgeois rule with the weapon of class struggle for the establishment of workers' state. Left unity is to be a unity between all such persons.

At present, there is a sharp division in the left movement. It has led to the formation of more than a dozen communist parties and groups. As a result of this, the movement of the working people has also been divided into many fragments. The working people are in the process of losing many gains which they achieved in the past due to their glorious struggles. On account of this division of the left, the working people are unable even to protect themselves against the offensive of the reactionary forces. Consequently, the left movement has, instead of advancing, gone a step backward.

The left movement has become so weak now that at the national level the struggle is entirely between various bourgeois parties. The Left being fragmented, it is merely a tail of one or the other bourgeois party. In fact the left forces have gone into the background and have lost many strong centres of the working class movement. The victories of the left forces in the 1977 assembly elections in West Bengal and Tripura are exceptions and were largely due to negative votes.

### PROBLEMS:

All the left parties and groups agree on the need for left unity. Still there is more and more of disunity. The following two are basic difficulties in its way:

(1) Left parties and groups plead not only for the unity of the left but of the left and democratic forces.

It is on the identification of the democratic forces that they differ with each other. As a result of this, they form alliance with forces of different shades and interests. The alliance with democratic elements gets the first place, while the left forces continue to stand in opposite camps. This was the factor that divided the left in the past and it, is still dividing it.

(2) The alliance of the left with the so-called democratic elements is not made on class basis. It is made with different parties. With the result that in the name of democratic forces, the left parties forged alliance with one or the other party of the ruling classes. This is the result of petty bourgeois opportunism of the leadership. One section of the left leadership has restricted its struggle to securing of more seats in the parliament. The other section has totally boycotted the parliament and the elections.

### FORM OF LEFT UNITY:

In the formation of left unity, the first priority should be given to the unity of left elements. Democratic elements and unity with them should get the second place. With the unity of the left, it will be easy to identify the democratic elements.

The left unity can not be forged on the basis of negotiations. Real Unity can be achieved only in action. The first step in this direction can be unity in building mass movements. All the left forces should concentrate on developing the struggles of the toiling masses. The emphasis on building of mass struggles will create a basis for bringing various elements of the left close to each other. In the first stage there should be co-

operation between the different elements on the question of the struggle of the toiling masses. The alliance of the left forces will be formed in the second phase. The formation of alliance of the left forces will depend on their co-operation in the common cause. Both the co-operation and alliance of the left forces will be formed for and in the struggle of the working classes.

In this process all parties and groups should unite as equals. The Big Brother attitude should be given up in the interest of common cause. The process of uniting the left does not mean that the left forces should abandon the debate among themselves on their points of difference.

The debate should be open and public but on non-antagonistic basis. The differences among themselves should not become antagonistic.

Left unity is not possible if initiated from above, because leadership at the top is dominated by petty-bourgeois elements. For this, pressure from below should be created and leadership be forced to co-operate in the common cause. The left unity conferences like the present one will be successful if they are able to initiate a process of mass pressure on the leadership of various left organisations for forging left unity.

## UNITY OF REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

*(This is the speech read by Com. Haripada Das of the Revolutionary Communist Party of India at the Left Unity Conference.)*

Friends & Comrades,

I am glad to participate in the convention organised by Left Unity Forum which has been described as the need of the hour.

The Congress, the representative of vested interests since the transfer of state power from British Imperialism, failed to realise full employment, abolition of poverty and economic emancipation for the toiling masses and down-trodden strata of the society. What they achieved; and they claimed it to be the progress of the nation, resulted only in making the rich richer, the poor poorer. And this has been done by the native bourgeoisie in collaboration with imperialist bourgeoisie, and always seeking a compromise with landed aristocracy. Their sole purpose was to cure the dying capitalism of its disease or decay. But they failed.

Neither the bourgeoisie nor their faithful old servant Congress could solve a single problem of the overwhelming majority. Mass discontent grew. In the period between 1967 and 1969 the Congress went into the background in different states and non-Congress democratic forces came to power. This was the time to lead the discontented

millions in the struggle for socialism; But the leadership which would do it was not strong enough to win over the people. The people were led by parties and fronts comprised of bourgeois democratic elements and so called lefts in West Bengal and Kerala, while in other states alternative bourgeois parties came to power in a constitutional way holding a rosy picture of a better social order for the people.

Their failure to ameliorate the living conditions of the people within the framework of the existing social order and their narrowly conceived bourgeois and petty bourgeois aspirations resulting in severe conflicts paved the way of consolidating the Congress again although in a newer form. The Nava Congress or the ruling Congress under the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi won power in the states again in 1972 with a catchy slogan of abolition of unemployment and poverty.

*The socialist pretensions of the Congress, however, were soon exposed in the face of the developing crisis of 1974. So the inner conflict sharpened on the question of sharing booties*

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*The socialist pretensions of the Congress, however, were soon exposed in the face of the developing crisis of 1974. So the inner conflict sharpened on the question of sharing booties*

*in an atmosphere of stagflation in the international market. This was what led Mrs Gandhi to promulgate Emergency to defend the interests of the bourgeois class as a whole.*

The native bourgeoisie have gone to the side of reaction out and out, for capitalist development is not possible in India except to the extent of fluctuation normal within the capitalist system. The native bourgeoisie are unable to find a favourable internal market. So they are busy investing their finance capital abroad in industrially backward countries.

The Indian bourgeoisie claim that in the matter of economic development, India is in the tenth position in the world. But the U.N.O. claims that it is yet a developing country. Sick and closed mills, and unemployment and casual unemployment of workers are the signs of capitalist decay, not of capitalist development. In fact, no development is at all possible in India in the capitalist way.

The declaration of Emergency saved the bourgeoisie in India by clamping down a ban on agitations and strikes of workers. The people, however, did not like to lose their democratic rights which they had achieved through struggle. This will of the people and the toiling masses to defend their rights could have culminated in a struggle for socialism, if there had been a true proletarian party to lead them. Such a party was absent. So the desire of the deprived bourgeoisie prevailed. It was concretised in the formation of the Janata party, which emerged as the alternative force.

Janata Party utilised the will of the common people for democracy in the Lok Sabha elections of 1977 and came to power with some catchy slogans like the repeal of the 42nd amendment to the Constitution, the end of dictatorship, freedom of press, restoration of civil liberties and right to employment. It was in this way that the people were hoodwinked. In fact the victory in the Lok Sabha elections belonged to the people, and not to the Janata Party. The claim of the Janata Party that they restored democracy is false and deceitful. Their falseness is proved in the 2 years of their rule in which there have been firings and lathi charges on mass movements. They have also tried to freeze wages and

suppress workers' unions by bringing the Industrial Relations Bill.

Their export-oriented and rural-oriented policy is shifting emphasis away from heavy industries and public distribution system. They are encouraging the multinational corporations. No election promise has been fulfilled by the Janata Party and none will be ever fulfilled. They are paving the way for a second Emergency.

In West Bengal and Tripura CPM-led governments are in power. They claim to have formed popular governments. But the real picture is not so. People have experienced the Congress rule and the rule of Mrs. Gandhi. They have also experienced the rule of the United Front Government. From their experience they have rejected the Congress rule and given a chance to the CPM to fulfil its promise of a thorough change of the social order through good administration.

In their 1½ years of rule, however, the Left Front Government has encouraged the development of the party but not the development of the toiling masses. Its anti-working class role can be seen in the capture of trade unions through its leading party. In the Panchayat elections, all those people who had a bitter hatred of communism and had been so long exploiters of people, got CPM tickets and thus captured zila parishads, Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats.

The overwhelming majority of the CPM in the legislature and in the cabinet has converted other partners of the Front into lackeys. They cannot even protest openly against the anti-people activities of the CPM, such as interference in the autonomy of colleges and universities, selectivity in releasing political prisoners, lathi charge on Haldia workers. In the rural area, the Government is implementing the operation "Barga" which is a non-implemented programme of the Congress and which cannot play a progressive role. It encourages the proprietary instinct of the landlords and also the landless by a compromise.

The CPM and the CPI put forward the slogan of left and democratic unity on the ground that the native bourgeoisie can play a progressive role. This is not right. Those parties which believe in making a socialist revolution such as RSP and the Forward Bloc, can not

change the nature of this Front, for they have no right to criticise and do not have any say in policy making. If they still utter words of socialist revolution they have become mere constitutionalists. So the left front formed by the CPM, RSP and FB is in no way different from a Left and democratic Front which includes native bourgeoisie.

Left unity is of course the need of the hour. But what should be the spirit of the Left unity? I suggest the following points for consideration by the house.

(1) Utilization of the contradiction within

capitalism but no compromise or agreement with any section of them.

(2) To fight the capitalist system and the capitalist state.

(3) To consolidate anti-capitalist forces viz. the toilers of rural and urban areas by forming revolutionary committees. It may be termed Mazdoor Chashi (Kisan) Panchayat. Or some other proper name can be given.

(4) To carry on the struggle for socialism by means of the said Panchayat for the seizure of state power.

## AN APPEAL FOR LEFT AND DEMOCRATIC UNITY

*This is taken from bulletin number two of Delhi University Socialist Group which was distributed at the Conference.*

The mandate to Janata Party after the Emergency nightmare, though, a strong assertion of the people's political will, was not really an indication of their political choice. The expression of their commitment to democratic values was indeed positive and unambiguous, but not their choice of the party to safeguard those values. In the northern states, the people voted for the Janata because no left and democratic alternative was available. In fact, wherever the left was able to make its presence felt, it received massive support, indicating clearly the people's preference for a left alternative—an alternative which in the existing circumstances could emerge only through left and democratic unity.

And this unity of the left and democratic forces is today the crying need of the hour, more than ever before. History has thrown a meaningful challenge to us and expects us to rise to the occasion. It therefore enjoins on all progressive forces to heed the call of the times and spare no efforts to achieve this unity. The expression of the desire for unity has not been wanting; the spoken words have been many, but what has informed practice unfortunately has been hesitation and mutual distrust. It is time we translated words into practice; the political situation calls for immediate and decisive action. Would the left in our country heed this call?

The Janata Party's concern for civil liberties has proved to be skin-deep: hundreds of political prisoners

are still in jail, new repressive laws are being put on the statute book, assault on the rural poor is on the increase, the workers are being mercilessly butchered and the academic freedom is violated. The right wing and communal elements within the Janata are busy undermining the secular ideals we hold dear.

The resulting discontent among the people is being cleverly exploited by an unrepentant Indira Gandhi who is storming back to the centre of Indian politics, holding ominous portends for our democracy. Her none too familiar demagoguery, alluring slogans and false promises are weaning the rural poor to her side. Nostalgic about 'Emergency discipline and stability', the capitalist class might once again pledge its support to her or alternately 'persuade' the Janata party to ensure discipline by more ruthless repression or by another emergency itself. The middle classes, harassed by the criminal elements and suffering from the lack of security in their daily life, might tolerate or even welcome this shift to dictatorship masked as an effort at law and order and strong government.

We believe that it is a crucial juncture in the history of our country, a situation which calls for the united action of all left and democratic elements—all who believe that authoritarianism is inherent in the present bankrupt path of capitalist development and all who cherish democracy, civil liberties and individual freedom. In other words, the need of the hour



is a united front embracing all left and democratic forces.

The initiative for this has to be taken obviously by the communist parties and groups. Given the existing organisation of the parties and their differences in the past, we are conscious that it is not an easy task, but nevertheless not an impossible task, if our perspective for future is clear and definite. The past need not necessarily be buried nor differences discarded; the very concept of united front implies differences. In spite of all existing differences, it should be possible for all left and democratic elements to come together today on a single platform. If only we begin at the beginning—united political work among the masses, thus bringing them into genuine democratic and left politics so that they are not misled by the false left slogans of the right parties, whether the Janata, the Congress or the Congress (I).

WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT IT IS BOTH AN OPPORTUNE AND A CRUCIAL MOMENT IN OUR HISTORY FOR LEFT AND DEMOCRATIC UNITY—OPPORTUNE BECAUSE THE PEOPLE DEMAND IT AND CRUCIAL BECAUSE HISTORY MAY NOT OFFER SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY AGAIN.

In March 1977, the people of India broke loose from the strong hegemony, or political domination over their minds, of the Congress party. The hegemony of the Janata has not

lasted even one year. Hitherto, the people have looked upon the left as the toughest fighters for their causes; but not as the alternative leadership for manning the government. Now, the people are hungering for a third alternative, a real alternative.

*The people must be given hope that such an alternative is possible, that an effective political instrument for the realisation of their hopes is being forged—otherwise, the people will be either overcome by political apathy, resignation and cynicism, condemning all politics and thus paving the way for authoritarianism and dictatorship, or they will shift their hopes to one or the other party representing capitalist-landlord-rich peasant domination disguised under demagogic programmes. Both on the national and regional planes, the static and status-quo oriented two-party system will come into effective practice. There also exists the serious danger of communal, casteist, and regionalist-localist forces raising their heads. The pent-up anger and frustration of the masses can be cleverly turned against members of other religions, castes, regions and localities.*

We, therefore, appeal to all left parties, groups and individuals to come together to fight against authoritarian tendencies and to create a democratic society devoid of all forms of exploitation.

## THE OBJECT OF LEFT UNITY

*(This article is based on the speech made by Gayatri Singh in the Left Unity Conference held under the auspices of the Left Unity Forum, Kanpur. She was one of the members of the presidium. She is a member of the Central Secretariat of the Communist League, Indian Section of the Fourth International) She is an activist in the Women's Movement and edits Stree Sangharsha from Bombay. Besides, she works among workers.)*

This Left Unity Conference is only a step in the direction of Left Unity. It will not be enough for the building of the third force. Yet we can identify the issues on which we can unitedly participate in mass struggles.

The chief necessary condition for Left Unity is

that we should not form any alliance with any bourgeois party. We do not want to underestimate the threat of dictatorship. But we also know that it was on this ground that the CPI supported the Congress, and the Congress imposed Emergency on us in the name of fighting against Fascism. Communist Party Marxist, (CPM) is

cooperating with the Janata Party. and Janata Party is trying to save the provisions of Emergency by holding Mrs. Gandhi personally responsible for the "misuse" of those provisions. Obviously then Janata Party also is making itself ready to impose Emergency on the country. It has not yet released all political prisoners. It is going to bind workers with an Industrial Relations Bill which is like imposition of Emergency on workers. Obviously none of them is democratic and the threat of authoritarianism comes from both.

Yet the two major Leftist parties are seeking "democratic forces" inside the Congress and Janata Party. On the ground of allying with those "democratic" forces, they begin to ally with the whole party. This policy is wrong. The only correct policy is to identify democratic forces in the working masses on programmes of struggle. This is the policy that the Left Unity Forum has adopted.

I work among women. We have formed an independent organisation of women in which all those are invited without discrimination or distinction of political views, who are ready to discuss women's problems with an open mind and to work for the solution of their problems unitedly, We discuss all the aspects of women's life : economic, social, political and cultural.

All the existing-women's organisations are affiliated with one political party or the other. Our object in this attempt at Left unity is to stop this disintegration and division of mass organisations. We want not only that all the women's organisations should become one at the national level but also in homes and localities, workshops, offices and factories. They should build a united movement of women which may grapple with their problems, struggle for their rights and defend those rights when won. Only the Left unity can make it possible for all women to forget their partisan differences and to work for women from one platform and with one will.

Similarly a united effort is necessary for the defence of the rights won by the workers so far. Today the Janata government is attacking their basic rights.

It is going to take away their right to strike. It wants to smash their organisations. It is encouraging employers to engage goons to attack union activists. It has already hatched a conspiracy to reduce even their minimum subsistence wages. To defend themselves against these attacks of the government and the employers the workers will have to build their united organisation. Unfortunately political parties have divided the organisation of the working class. Through Left unity we want to end this organisational rivalry between the leaders and activists of different political parties, so that the present division of the working class may end and all the activists belonging to different political ideologies may come together on one platform and defend the interests of the working class. Only when they are united, can they do something for the organisation of the still unorganised sections of the working class; especially the agricultural workers.

The-working class is the leader of all the oppressed and exploited classes. The bourgeoisie want to isolate it from other sections of the oppressed classes and then crush it. The bourgeoisie become a majority by winning other sections of the oppressed masses. The working class will have to break through this encirclement. It will have to come forward and extend a helping hand in the struggle of all the oppressed sections of the society. It will have to seize the leadership of all the oppressed sections from the bourgeoisie and take it into its own hands. Only then can it give leadership to the nation. Only then can it face the bourgeoisie.

We have made some attempts at workers' unity in the past some months. We have formed united committees in Swadeshi and Kailash Mills Kanpur. In Bombay too such committees have been formed. We are trying to make these committees last and form such committees elsewhere too.

The aim of the Left Unity should not be parliamentary. The direction of our work should be towards the unity of the working class and victory of their struggles. Only then will the Left unity have any meaning. Only then can it save the working class from the present crisis of leadership and make it a revolutionary force.

# LEFT UNITY & REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS

—An Intervention By Rohini Banaji

(This plea was made by Com. Rohini Banaji for the formation of an Association of Communist Tendencies as opposed to the resolution "to set up the Forum as a continuing institution with representatives of consenting political parties, groups, workers, intellectuals, students and rural poor." This plea, as can be seen below, rejects the first kind of unity, that is, the unity between parties and unions. Forum proposes unity both from above and from below. Hence it invites parties and unions as well as their ranks and unattached individual leftists, intellectuals and mass workers to join the Forum and build the united Left Front.

*The Conference passed the resolution and thus gave its verdict in favour of combining all the three kinds of unity: unity between unions and parties, unity and extension of mass united fronts and unity of groups and individuals who have either opted out of their parties or who have still not opted for any party. The Conference has no intention of appealing to militants over the heads of their parties and unions; it has rather appealed to them to work for Left unity through their parties and unions and for policies advocated by the Conference.*

*There is no difference between the Forum and the Association on "uncompromising opposition to all sections and all strategies of the ruling class." The Forum too proposes "to help build united Left Front in opposition to bourgeois parties and capitalist socio-economic system." Both agree that "the programme of such an organisation can emerge only through the actual struggle of the proletariat." The difference is that the Forum has, on the basis of analysis and experience of its organisers, proposed a tentative programme of struggle in social, economic and political fields, which may be the basis of the initial mobilisation of the working and exploited masses, while the Association has not only not proposed any such programme, but even overlooked or rejected the programme proposed by the*

*Forum. In stead it has formulated certain principles for the formulation of such a programme, about which there can be no controversy between the Forum and the Association. In fact, our programme may be said to be based on those principles.*

*We have summarised the statement of principles for lack of space. ...Editor.)*

## The Text of the Intervention

We have come to the Conference to discuss left unity. But so far it has not become very clear what this means. Three different kinds of unity have been confused together, and it is important to distinguish them clearly.

1. The first type of unity is the unity of the bureaucracies of the left trade unions and parties. These organisations originated in a period of capitalist development and expansion, and were adapted both organisationally and ideologically to working within the framework of capitalist society. Thus they adopted such methods as legal trade unionism and parliamentary struggles. So long as the class struggle does not challenge capitalist relations of production, these organisations have a role to play and the working class can make gains by means of them. But we should be clear that the maximum they are capable of is a left reformist government, that is a left BOURGEOIS

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Government. This would be better than a right reactionary government, but it would still be a bourgeois government, subject to the laws of capitalist society. It was this kind of government which in Germany murdered Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, smashed the revolutionary leadership of the proletariat and prepared the way for Fascism. Building such a left unity cannot be a perspective for revolutionaries.

2. The second type of unity is the unity of class-conscious proletariat. This is the condition of the communist revolution and the aim of communist activity. But how can it be brought about? class consciousness develops unevenly within the working class. At present many tendencies exist within the proletariat including some very backward ones. This is the case with mass united fronts which arise today, such as the Mazdoor Samyukta Morcha. Although they represent a significant step forward as compared with trade unions-in terms of mass democracy and self-activity of the workers-they also lack a definite orientation and direction. Therefore, they are open to bureaucratisation and take-over by opportunist or even reactionary elements. It is therefore an important task of communists to work within such mass fronts in order to convert them into the organisational form of the revolutionary unity of the class-conscious proletariat.

3. The third type of unity is the unity of revolutionary communists within the working class movement. On this unity can build the revolutionary unity of the proletariat as a whole, shape it and provide it with a revolutionary strategy. The principles of the organisational form of this communist unity are laid out in the Communist Manifesto. There it is stated that communists do not form an organisation separate from and opposed to other working class organisations. This principle is based on the presupposition that communists-that is, those who accept the historical necessity of the communist revolution and are committed to bringing it about in practice-arise within the proletariat and out of its own struggles. To begin with, these struggles take a corporate or sectional form - i. e. they arise within a particular unit, a particular industry or a particular area. The task of communists is not to oppose these struggles but to synthesize them and bring together their various demands in a single programme.

It is because of this presupposition that the

organisation for which Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto took the form of a Communist League. The Communist League was a Communist Party because it was an organisation based on a scientific understanding of capitalist society and committed to bringing about the communist revolution. But it did not adopt a sectarian attitude to other working class organisations existing at that time. Communists in the League could also belong not only to mass organisations like trade unions, but even to other working class parties like the Blanquists in France and the Revolutionary Chartists in England.

It is this third kind of unity, the unity of revolutionary communists, that we should be discussing.

Today, not only in India but also internationally, there exist a vast number of such revolutionary communist tendencies within the working class movement. They have been formed out of past struggles, and exist in different unions and different localities. Some belong to existing working class parties but many do not. We believe that the immediate task of communists is to bring about the unity of such revolutionary tendencies. Initially this unity will take the form of an Association of Communist Tendencies based on an immediate strategy of uncompromising opposition to all sections & all strategies of the ruling class. Its final form can only be the Communist League, which anticipates and builds the revolutionary unity of the class conscious proletariat.

The programme of such an organisation of Communists can only emerge through the actual struggles of the proletariat, and must be worked out by the communist militants themselves. At present, we can only outline the principles on which such a programme will be based.

(Below we give a summary of the principles.-Ed)

1. The emancipation of the proletariat is the act of the proletariat itself through self-activity, self organisation, self-education and self-defence. We fight for the independent, creative activity of the proletariat, the organisation of the entire proletariat and the defence of the proletariat.

2. The struggle for workers' control over production both within the workplace and within the society as a whole.

3. A joint struggle by employed and unemployed workers fighting for a full stop to intensification of work, lighter workload and full employment.

. For a shorter working day, for a fuller development of workers, for the abolition of child labour and free education to all children.

5. The abolition of the division between the town

and the country on the basis of modern large-scale production managed by the producers.

6. Abolition of the sexual division of labour and the family in its present form, the socialisation of house work and childcare and an end to the oppression of woman.

7. International solidarity of the working class.

## THE QUESTION OF LEFT UNITY

—Sandip Pendse

India is facing an unprecedented crisis. It is in the main a political crisis. The unity of the ruling bloc is completely evaporated, and this is in many respects an irrevocable position. Different sections of the ruling class are in total antagonism to each other. It is no longer possible to protect the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole or even of all its partners in the ruling bloc. It is the crisis of the bourgeois path and the system as a whole, not a failure of this or that section or this that policy only.

The political solution to a crisis of such political dimensions for the bourgeoisie is the inauguration of an exceptional form of state i.e. a repressive, authoritarian regime which has the restoration of order as its prime task. However, even a repressive regime cannot function, except for extremely brief periods, without a mantle or a shroud of legitimacy. This is twofold. It has to have an appearance of inevitability in the given situation. Additionally and almost by virtue of this appearance of inevitability, it has to have a popular acceptance, active or passive.

It means that even a repressive authoritarian exceptional regime can last only in the absence of the emergence of a viable alternative popular form of rule, in other words in the face of an utter failure of left forces. If the authoritarian danger has to be averted, the left has to be strengthened. Since no single party is in a position of decisive strength and leadership unity of the Left becomes an unavoidable necessity to prevent the decapitation of all left and revolutionary forces.

It is necessary at this juncture to shed self-complacency and to take stock of the weaknesses of the

revolutionary forces in India. The working class with its militancy, experience of struggle and state of organisation is no doubt a strong force. However, it is not a decisive political force yet. Large sections of it remain outside the fold even of primary class organisation. Chief among them is the agricultural proletariat. Secondly, the current militancy of the working class, for all its significance and the class challenge it is posing at the production points to the bourgeoisie, remains essentially corporatist. It is definitely expanding and deepening its self-organisation and self-activity, but an important lacuna remains in that it has not yet emerged as a socially and politically hegemonic class.

This in essence means two things. First, it is not yet engaged in initiating organisations of the unorganised sectors. Secondly, it is not yet articulating the aspirations and demands of the other oppressed sections, e.g. poor peasantry, the Dalits, the Adivasis, the unemployed, in organic synthesis with its own demands. It can yet be fragmented, and separately and sectorally repressed. This happened in the Railway strike, in Baladilla and even in Swadeshi. Further, the other oppressed sections may be swayed by a right wing populist movement with a toilerist phraseology—a strategy which is certainly being aimed at by Mrs Gandhi.

Along with the polarisation in the political sphere, the society itself is heading for a polarisation. Today, we have a situation of rising struggles, more or less spontaneous, of the oppressed masses who are in the main unorganised. Though these spontaneous struggles and, upsurges are broadly anti-regime and anti-status they do not have a class outlook or orientation. This is because there are no pre-existing class organisa-

tions at the back of these uprisings which may form their fabric and backbone. In such a situation, the articulation of the demands and aspirations of these movements is altogether on a different line and is potentially non-revolutionary, if not altogether counterrevolutionary. Such movements and upsurges have to be articulated on a class terrain and led by the Left. It matters little which trend of the Left leads them, for what is necessary is the left wing ideology in general, which may give it a class orientation.

It may be noted that the Left is also under as much attack as the working class. This is but to be expected, given the overall political situation and the bourgeois imperative to find the means to overcome its economic difficulties. In an authoritarian regime, an attempt is made to centralise and stify the repression. In a weak regime, however both state and private repressions exist side by side, with the latter being more demonstrative and vicious. The working class needs to defend the gains made so far as well as to defend itself from physical attacks. Preparations have to be made also against a much more generalised and brutal form of repression which is not too far away in the future.

*It hardly needs to be stressed that this defence will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, in the current stage of disunity and fragmentation of the left forces as well as of the working class. It is more so, if we aim at protecting not only individual activists in isolation from the masses but the entire class, its organisations and its movements.*

The virtual political untouchability between the several camps of the Left has generally prevented unity efforts from becoming anything more than formal or ritualistic gestures.

*It should be noted, however, that the differences within the Left, so crucially important to parties and groups, are not mass realities. As yet, the broad masses in movement have not experienced these differences as of any moment in actual struggle. However, deep and fundamental and correct, these differences cannot continue to exist only at the level of analyses and documents. They can acquire a revolutionary reality only when they become issues vitally related to struggle.*

These differences can be fought out or resolved only on the terrain of class struggle in the form of lines appli-

cable to mass movements. The test of theory is in the practice. So we can justifiably say that unity is the pre-condition for the resolution of these differences. So we can call upon every party, formation or group which explicitly calls for a revolutionary transformation of the society or for socialism and bases itself on the working class, to participate in the united Left Forum.

This is not a call to abandon or to suspend all criticism of parties and groups. Theoretical and ideological discussions should go on. They are a necessary factor in the development of revolution, its theory and practice. However, it should not be pursued in a sectarian manner, but on the terrain of mass struggles. It is necessary to realise that decisions do not lie in brilliant arguments among theoreticians and members of polit-bureaus but with the working class which is itself in upsurge.

The left wing elements outside the major parties hesitate to invite the CPI and the CPM to a left unity front. They should remember that today the CPI and the CPM have the largest mass bases. The social base of these parties is the working class organised on class lines. Because of it, they are responsive to the pressure from the working class, howsoever limited that response may be. The day this responsive attitude ends these parties will disintegrate. This fore, agitating workers on and for particular positions exercises control over these parties.

*From the foregoing it is clear that adoption of an independent working class position in terms of struggle is the only and sufficient condition necessary for Left Unity. No element of the bourgeoisie can find any place in this United Forum. Nor can the Forum itself bow to the bourgeoisie in any manner or fashion.*

*We thank the Newsmen's Newsweekly*

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The danger of authoritarianism is of course present and it is the task of the Left Front to fight it. However, it is not a non-class or supra-class phenomenon. It has a class character. It is engendered by a situation of deepening crisis and increasing mass struggles. It is an attribute of the propertied sections of the society, the bourgeoisie and the landowners in their entirety. They assume the authoritarian form of rule in order to suppress the mass of the people. No segment of the bourgeoisie can avoid a dictatorial suppression of the working masses, declared or undeclared. Hence no section of the bourgeoisie can play any strategic role in the preservation of democracy. The struggle against authoritarianism consists in denying it a popular support by organising all toilers and taking them on to the path of struggle.

Apart from this insistence on an independent working class position on the basic issues, there can be no precondition for Left Unity.

### Tasks of the Left Front

There is not much to discuss about the demands and issues to be taken up by the Left Front. These can be evolved with relative ease if the premises of unity and the perspectives of its concrete historical tasks are clear. They can be easily determined on the basis of an analysis of the state of class struggle and the social situation.

Apart from such programming of struggle, the Left Front should set itself the following organisational tasks :-

### Mobilisation

(a) The organisations of the working class need to be extended and deepened. The unorganised sections have to be organised on class lines. The agricultural proletariat is the major section which has to be brought in the fold of organisation. In most areas its primary demands and rights have to be won.

(b) Fragmentation has to be overcome in the organised sectors. Democratically functioning trade union councils at plant and area level, have to be constituted to struggle for common demands (eg. anti victimisation, anti intensification along with others.) A further non-sectarian attitude is here necessary to bring the workers outside the left TUs also into this

unity, wherever possible.] Coordinated left will have to press in these joint councils for principled unity and struggles.

(c) The workers experience themselves as merely cogs in a productive system. They are in fact alienated from the production process. They have to be organised not only in TUs, operating only at the production point and within the framework of the system, but as live human beings with social and cultural aspects and aspirations. Organisations have to deal with every aspect of their life-on a class basis.

(d) Organisations of class allies, other oppressed and exploited sections will have to be aided where they exist and initiated where they do not. Working class leadership has to be evolved, exhibited and asserted practically and concretely.

### 2. Struggles

(a) The working class is in constant confrontation struggling for its immediate demands. These struggles will have to be promoted and led in a way which increases assertion of class power.

(b) The struggles will also have to be generalised. Plant level struggles should, by making common causes, evolve to area or industry level struggles. Common issues should be taken up at a general level only.

(c) Struggles have two aims. Winning a demand, a particular right or concession is one of them. The other is that they are moments to realise class identities, class power i.e. important steps in the revolutionary self learning process. They have to be conducted and constituted to fulfil both the aims. Not only issues but forms of struggle and method of their conduct have to be developed with both the aims in mind, particularly the latter.

(d) Causes of other oppressed sections of the society will have to be embraced and struggles launched. The aspirations of the other sections as well as of the workers themselves in other identities (eg. slum dwellers, dalits, women etc.) will have to be synthesized with the class attitudes and aspirations of the working class.

# THE LEFT FRONT & THE UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS

—Bharat Patankar

*(This article is based on excerpts from the last section of a recently published book, The Left front and the Democratic Movement, priced at Rs. 1.50, by Gom. Bharat Babuji Patankar of Kasegaon, Distt. Sangli, Maharashtra. He represented the Maharashtra Kamgar Parishad in the Left Unity Conference, Kanpur.)*

Today, when the policy of the bourgeois parties towards the exploited classes has become quite clear, when the capitalist class has become engulfed in a serious political crisis, when the exploited and downtrodden masses have begun to build class unity by themselves acting on their own, the immediate issue before all Marxists is to build a strong nationwide movement of the exploited and downtrodden people with the united participation and effort of all conscious Left elements.

This is the main task before the Leftists today for which we need Left Unity.

If we look at the struggles of the working class and agricultural labourers that took place in the later period of Emergency and in the last two years after the Emergency, two things stand out clearly. One, that the struggles of the workers and agricultural labourers went on in spite of Emergency and in spite of the police firings of the Janata regime. Workers and agricultural labourers had begun to tear the Emergency to its shreds during the Emergency itself and their struggles burst with an explosive force soon after. The general strike of workers in 35 textile mills in Bombay took place in the final days of Emergency. Even the workers of Kanpur Atherton Mills and Lakshmiratan Cotton Mills launched movements for the take-over of their closed mills. Such struggles have continued all over the country after the Emergency.

The other feature of these struggles is that they are doing so without waiting for the trade unions to give them the lead; in fact when their traditional trade unions had refused to take the lead and launch any struggle, they elected their own mill committees and went ahead. Workers fought long-drawn battles in the mills of Kanpur and Bombay through their own elected committees without waiting for their "unions". Workers have made demonstration of such a class unity again

and again in places like Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Kanpur, Pune and Bombay.

This upsurge of the workers was an opportune moment for the Left parties to come together and give a general anti-government character to the movement. They did not do so.

Rather, they tried to limit these struggles, ignoring most of the struggles completely while selecting a few of them to give a limited heat. Even that "heat" was counterbalanced by their legalistic methods of fighting against things like retrenchment and speed-up. The limitations thus placed on the workers' movement by parties was transcended here and there by workers who set aside their established trade union leaders and came forward themselves.

Every trade union centre has been making statements against things like the Bhoothlingam Commission and calling for a massive strike. But nothing is ever done on a united basis. Workers themselves have to establish unity and oppose firings and repression. No political medium is being formed to bring about class unity. The main obstacle to this is that all major trade union centres are controlled by political parties and these latter are unable to agree among themselves. The difference between them is about which bourgeois party or parties should be the main object of attack and which of them should be considered democratic parties.

Action committees have sometimes been formed by leftist parties and the unions controlled by them, and then these action committees have carried on agitations through respective trade union centres. No effort has ever been made to draw in trade union militants from the bottom or to prepare any broad organisational form that may help the elements of the Left ideology to do united action from the bottom and give scope to



*the creative ability of the vanguard sections of the exploited masses. If the exploited classes themselves throw up any such organisational forms, the leaders of left parties and unions prefer to ignore them and isolate them from their activists.*

Leaders of leftist parties themselves are responsible for this state of affairs. Various party organisations and trade union organisations are welded tightly together. The strategic decisions of a trade union organisation are always taken by the members of higher committees, who are generally activists or leaders of the same party. The ordinary workers of the militant vanguard activists at the factory level do not participate in making these decisions. Thus trade union organisations have become mere appendages to political parties and they are never allowed to go beyond the limits imposed by their patron parties for them.

The practice of the Communist Parties of holding trade unions in the grip of the party acts as the main obstacle to the building of the revolutionary movement of the exploited. By and large, the participation of the unions of the Communist Parties is necessary for the launching of any general struggle. The Communist Parties use only their unions to build the class unity of workers, and this is done from the central headquarters of the central trade union organisations. The class unity that the working class itself builds from time to time is not taken note of. It seems that the idea that the movement of the exploited classes also is a part of the objective situation and that there are things worth learning from it, has never been allowed by the Communist Parties to enter into the heads of their leaders. For them, the workers' movement is always simply confirming the truth of their party's analysis.

They measure everything by the criteria: our party, its political growth, the growth of our trade unions, number of seats our party can win, etc. This remains the approach of the leaders of the big leftist parties, even though they complain that the workers' movement is weak and say that there should be a left and democratic unity.

If we closely examine the class unity that the workers have built, for example, the samyukta Morcha built by Swadeshi workers of Kanpur in the context of police firing on them, or the demonstration of such

unity by workers in the Bombay-Pune region, we can easily see that they can be made the basis or the starting points for the unity of the communists of all kinds. The unity built through central trade union organisations is destroyed as soon as such fronts have served their specific purpose. The parties themselves come forward to show their "meaninglessness" after the specific event. But the class unity built by the workers themselves from the bottom cannot be and is not destroyed so soon, even when the parties which held them divided want that unity to be broken.

The working class and other exploited classes have already started destroying the walls built around them. But those walls will arise again and again unless a conscious policy is adopted to destroy them.

Those who yearn to create a broad movement of the exploited classes (and not just a front of political parties), who feel that they should be immersed in the depths of the masses, and not simply remain at the top with leaders and office-bearers of a union, those who feel the creation of such a united workers movement from the bottom is the primary task of the revolutionary movement in the first stage, must base themselves on the organisational form of class unity built up by workers from the bottom, and extend them sideways and upwards. This, in short, is the task of the left unity we have to build.

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# S.U.C. ON LEFT UNITY

*Socialist Unity Centre of India deliberated on the question of left unity sometime in January this year in the context of the move initiated by the Left Unity Forum and forwarded its views to the Forum for the collective consideration of all its supporters We reproduce it for our readers—ED.*

The last general election brought about a notable, though not fundamental, change in the political situation with the defeat of the ruling Congress at the Centre and in many other States.

The defeat of Congress, the erstwhile dependable political party of the ruling bourgeoisie, and the victory of its other alternative, the Janata Party only enabled the ruling class to fulfil its cherished design of introducing 'two-party Parliamentary System' in our country.

During the last General Election, and in the face of the unprecedented outbursts of mass anger against Mrs. Gandhi's regime, the ruling class backed and projected its other alternative, Janata Party. to divert the mass discontent, lest it should take an anti-capitalist turn. But it does not in any way mean that the ruling class had rejected Mrs. Gandhi and her party.

Rather, right from the end of the last election it is taking every opportunity to refurbish the image of Mrs. Gandhi. And finally, taking the advantage of the growing mass discontent against the Janata mis-rule, as well as, of the absence of a genuine left alternative in the country, the ruling bourgeoisie brought her back to the Parliament with the sole motive of giving a stable shape to the 'Two-party Parliamentary System.'

But because of the mounting crisis and instability of each of the bourgeois parties due to infights, group squabbles etc. on the one hand and the growing mass discontent against them on the other, the ruling class cannot bank on any particular party for long. This is why it is lending both political and financial backing to more than one party and putting those parties to test and trial in different states and at the centre. And the social democratic forces, which claim themselves to be Marxist-Leninist but play compromising role between labour and capital are also striving hard to appear as the third alternative of the bourgeoisie - and thus emerging as potential danger.

The introduction of the 'Two-party Parliamentary System' has brought about a notable change in the political situation of our country. A serious confusion, regarding this 'Two-party System, is prevailing not only because of the bourgeois propaganda in its favour, but also because of the role of the known big left parties. But whoever wants to develop struggle of the exploited masses of our country and lead those struggles to logical goal, must have a correct appraisal of this 'Two-party System.

Military dictatorship is not the only form of fascism. It may be expressed through parliamentary forms also - either through one party autocratic rule or through two-party system. But out of all the forms, the two-party system is the best suited to serve the interest of the crisis ridden capitalism of to-day. Its aim is to stem the growing tide of the revolutionary movements and to give a fresh lease of life to the dying capitalism by creating parliamentary illusions as well as by confining the legitimate democratic mass movements within the narrow bounds of parliamentary politics and legalism. In our country, the ruling class has been able to introduce 'two party Parliamentary System' because of the absence of a true left alternative which alone, by organising and giving a left direction to the anti-congress grievances of the people, could frustrate the bourgeois conspiracy of installing 'Two-party System'. And also to-day, a true left alternative alone, by organising the growing mass discontents against the Janata mis-rule and giving it a left direction, can resist the re-emergence of the authoritarian forces and forestall the 'Two-party System. Such a true left alternative could not develop so long because of the typical opportunist politics of the CPI and the CPI (M) who in their bid to find a comfortable place in the bourgeois parliamentary politics aligned themselves with the Congress and the Janata Party respectively.

So, the present complicated and critical socio-economic and political situation of our country, when the ruling class is mounting attacks on both the rural and industrial working people on the one hand and on

the other trying to arrest the democratic mass movements within the narrow bounds of parliamentarism and legalism and at the same time crushing the legitimate mass movements on the point of lathi and bullets, and instead of restoring, curbing the civil liberties and democratic rights gradually, calls for emergence of a United Front of the genuine left and democratic parties and forces. And this left and democratic front alone, if can be developed as the instrument of struggle, can act as the true-left alternative to serve the real interest of the toiling people.

In this connection, we like to point out a widespread confusion regarding the very character of the left and democratic forces. Some may think that any individual, group or party, taking anti-government stand on certain issues at a given time and condition, ipso facto, becomes left and democratic. But it is not correct. In our opinion, it is demanded of one to be left and democratic to :

(I) take a clear and positive stand against capitalism and move in alliance with the revolutionary forces in the democratic movement of the masses;

(II) be anti-imperialist and oppose any foreign infiltration in our economic, political, social and cultural life and support all anti-imperialist movements and liberation struggles abroad;

(III) remain free from anti-communist bias and prejudices.

In the present day political perspective, no party can be even democratic, if it takes anti-communist stand on any issue national or international.

Apart from this general guidelines that broadly set forth the criteria for determining which parties or forces are left and democratic and which are not, it must be clearly understood that at this present juncture a front can be truly left and democratic only when it fights not only against all the branded bourgeois parties but also against all communal, provincial, parochial and regional trends and forces. If any body visualises these parties and forces as the constituents of the Left and Democratic Front, then that will be anything but a true left alternative of the toiling people.

It is not that in the past, no left and democratic front took shape in our country. Several times, in the past, it did take shape. But those fronts could not work for long. In our considered opinion, these fronts failed in the past firstly because the approach of most of the constituents regarding the front was wrong and secondly because never a correct methodology, either

in evolving or in conducting the front, had been followed.

Therefore, when we are serious in giving shape to such a front, we must develop a correct approach regarding the front and strictly follow a correct methodology to evolve it from the very outset.

Firstly, the front should not be viewed as a temporary alliance or an 'issue based front' to achieve some pragmatic ends. The 'issue based front' opens the flood-gate of unprincipled and opportunist alliance with any party irrespective of its character and politics, and thus obstructs the very process of emergence of a true Left and Democratic Front. The front should be viewed as a political front which works for the whole phase of the democratic movement. Naturally, the front must have a definite left politics, both on national and international questions, a clear anticapitalist aims and objects and must be developed on a well defined code of conduct and norms of behavior as well as on a minimum common agreed programme.

Secondly, the front should not be viewed as a platform for election manipulation or parliamentary manoeuvre. It should be viewed as the instrument of struggle of the toiling people. Naturally, its principles; policies, aims and objects, code of conduct, the programme, all should be formulated in the interest of the united movement of the toiling people. So, in course of the democratic movement, if election comes in between, then, it should be viewed as incidental, and be fought as a part of the struggles of the masses. Otherwise, all slogans of democratic movements will virtually be reduced to mere verbiages and the front to an election platform.

On the basis of the above said approach, we propose the following methods :

1. Initiative for building the front may come from any quarter. But when the process starts, caution and care should be taken so that in no way any statement, or move creates any sort of reservation or prejudice in any quarter obstructing its process of joining the front. Rather, conscious attempts should be made to create a proper atmosphere that all left and democratic parties or forces, whichever wants to join the front, can happily come and take initiative with others.

2. In evolving such a left and democratic front, collective initiative should develop from the very beginning both in formulating policies, principles, code of conduct, programme etc. and in organising the workers, peasants and other toiling people in their struggles.

3. At the very outset, the aims and objects, principles, policies and the programme should be formulated concretely. The code of conduct and norms of behaviour in regard to the functioning of the front also should be formulated in concrete terms.

4. When different political parties agree to form a United front with a view to launch united democratic mass movements against the common enemy, that is the ruling capitalist class on the basis of a common minimum agreed programme, they do it in spite of their ideological differences and approaches. So the front should be developed on the principle of "Unity-struggle-unity," that is, on the practice of conducting ideological struggles among the constituents of the front and at the same time maintaining firm unity in their fight against the common enemy. Such a struggle not only helps resolving the differences of the constituents of the front and brings about ideological clarity and hence higher consciousness of the people, but also helps to develop people's movement to higher levels.

5. The front should sincerely strive to build the united struggle of the masses on the edifice of a higher cultural standard. And for this, conscious attempts should be made to develop higher ethical values and norms of behaviour in the masses.

6. To develop higher ethical values and norms of behaviour in the masses, the front's member-parties should reflect higher values in their own behaviours and arduously adhere to the code of conduct.

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Continued from page 4

In order to know the main thrust of such a strategy, we must understand that the bourgeois political parties would have to follow a DUAL STRATEGY of using state force and relying on popular mandate, if not armed fascist force to carry out a policy of repression. We must

understand that the emergency was an attempt at regulating the anarchy of capitalist society including the conflict between kulak, speculative and Big Industrial Capital in favor of the latter. This was done mainly by relying on state force, in a style which can be termed bureaucratic Bonapartism i.e. one in which the element of immediate populist-support was missing. The reaction against the emergency showed clearly that such a strategy *openly* in favour of Big Industrial Capital will antagonize the largest mass of society.

As a consequence each bourgeois political faction today is first of all concerned with building up a popular basis of *Active* support and until this can be done advocates a *graduated* policy of repression except in states and situations where it sees itself as being entirely dominant or compelled to act immediately. The best example of this is the JanaSangh, which is the most anti-communist and anti-worker organization. Its first priority has been to use the state machinery and the Janata party to expand itself and the RSS. Similarly with the Charan Singh faction of the BLD. So also the Cong (I). The two characteristic features of this transformation are the centralization of political factions under dominant personalities and the attempt to win over the support of the middle and poor peasants either mainly on a CASTE basis (Charan Singh Faction) or partly on a legal reformist basis (Cong. I). Conservative sections of the urban middle class are the main support of the Jana Sangh, RSS: and others are most likely to follow this faction in times of crises. A policy of shifting alliances between these different factions is going to be the hall mark of the coming period until one or a combination of them can dominate on the national scale.

How can the workers' movement answer this strategy? Firstly by adopting a policy of political co-ordination between *Left wing unions leading step by step to their merger, then by laying the basis for the creation of a single national organization for the entire working class under the control of communist elements.* Left here is understood to mean all those parties groups and individuals who recognize the inevitability of the workers' revolution as being product of the conditions of bourgeois society and are prepared to struggle for it *consciously* even though they might insist that the working class has to pass through

various 'stages' to get to communism. The necessity for consolidating the Left wing unions arises from the fact, that this alone will enable them to launch campaigns of protest, solidarity etc. against the state on a scale which would attract the unorganized sections of the urban working class and the rural poor to the most militant among the existing mass organizations of the Left. Since this varies from area to area the unity of the Left cannot mean the *monolithic* expansion of only one of its constituents.

The Left wing unions are so tightly integrated into their respective parties, that it is *utopian* to think of any meaningful *systematic* and sustained political co-ordination between them without some form of unity between their political counterparts. Hence the need to actively work for bringing together all the left groups and parties within a Forum which can emphasize upon the role of union activists and members of the Left groups the

(a) for: Immediately moving to organize small and tiny sector workers.

(b) to have agitations of much greater intensity against IR Bill/communalism/and other such national political issues; build up volunteer force to ward off physical attacks.

(c) to take up solidarity movements against oppression of Harijans etc., help victimized workers and think of ways and means of mobilizing the resources of the poor and for organizing them.

(d) drawing sections of the middle classes with special emphasis on attracting working class and middle class women to a broad programme of reforms designed

to alleviate their situation, a set of demands which would clearly demarcate the Left from existing bourgeois strategies of development, and create an atmosphere in which the Left group with the correct strategy, tactics and adequate organizational resources in the short run can expand most rapidly, in a given area or sector of the workers' movement.

The platform produced by the Left Unity Forum, Kanpur has begun this process. It does propose the outlines of a programme which can provide a minimum basis for the Left to jointly oppose the Janta, Congress and other rightwing bourgeois parties. It is of course clear, that this Programme is here presented only in an abstract form and would have to be concretized both in the context of local situations (eg where exactly do the different slogans of land to the tiller and cooperativization apply) and as *general propositions* (what is meant by the non kulak peasantry on a national scale. It is also clear that this programme does not call for the abolition of the bourgeois relation of production, but only moves along that road in so far as it promotes the growth of the regulation and control of capital and strengthens the position and fighting capacity of the working class. Workers should support it only in this critical manner. The task of working out a revolutionary programme in the workers' conditions has to proceed alongside. How does the formation of the Forum hasten this very process by helping to pool the experiences of different groups and providing an organizational form which moves the workers towards building their social unity will be discussed in the next part of this contribution.

To be continued in Part II

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