

## CPI(M) Programme & Policies have been Proved Correct 8th Congress Reasserts Them\*

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All the "forecasts" made by political "pundits" regarding the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) have proved false.

They had "forecast" that the struggle between the Party and the "Naxalites" would lead to a break-up of the Party, but the Party Congress turned out to be one of complete unity of the Party!

They had "forecast" that the expulsions of individuals in some and groups in other States would undermine the mass base of the Party which would remain as nothing but a "splinter group". The Eighth Congress, however, showed that not only is this far from true, but that the removal of Left sectarianism has only cleaned and further strengthened the Party, just as the removal of right reformism and revisionism earlier had cleaned and strengthened the Party!!

They had "forecast" that there would be a scramble for power among the leaders of the Party. They had cooked up their own "stories" regarding the alleged contenders for power. All this turned out to be false: Elections to all the leading bodies of the Party were unanimous!!!

Having thus been proved false prophets, the political "pundits", now resort to a new trick. They tell the people that the Party leadership has "come closer" to the right reformists and revisionists with whom the Party made a complete break over four years ago! From this "discovery" they go on to make a new "forecast"—that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the revisionists would before long become united into one party!

### **"Discovery" About Eighth Congress**

They try to prove this "forecast" by referring to the announcement made by Comrade A. K. Gopalan at the time of the Party Congress that the Kerala State leadership of the Party would shortly initiate bilateral talks with the revisionists.

In pointing this out as "evidence", they suppress the truth that Comrade Gopalan referred not only to the revisionists but to all constituents of the United Front. The Kerala State leadership of the Party was going to have bilateral talks with all the constituents of the United Front in order to iron out mutual differences and further strengthen the United Front.

If they had noted this, they would have to come to either of two conclusions: That all the constituents of the United Front would give up their separate identities to form a single united party of opposition to the Congress; or that the bilateral talks between our Party and the revisionists were only a continuation of what has actually taken place in the past. For, it is well-known that, even after the break between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, our Party has had innumerable bilateral and joint talks with the revisionists as well as with other non Congress Parties.

It is, however, significant that among the political "pundits" who made this "discovery" are the revisionist leaders themselves. Their General Secretary C. Rajeswara Rao writes in *New Age* that "the gap between the political-ideological positions of the CPI and the CPI(M) have further narrowed down". Further down in the hierarchy of the Party, the middle leadership has started assuring their followers that, before long, the Marxists would "come back to the parent body"!

The revisionists, however, are not alone in this: They are joined by the so-called "extremists" as well.

The "extremist" leader of Kerala, K.P.R. Gopalan, for instance, reacted to the Eighth Congress of our Party by declaring that the Eighth Congress went back on all the positions taken at the Seventh Congress! He and his colleagues are at one with C. Rajeswara Rao and his colleagues in "forecasting" the early coming together of our Party and the revisionists!!

### **New Version of Old Slander**

To complete the picture, it may be added that no less a leader of the Congress than the Union Law Minister, Govinda Menon, hailed the Political Resolution and other decisions of the Eighth Congress of the Party and said that if these were sincerely implemented, there would not be any trouble in Kerala!

How is it that all our political opponents who have for so long denounced us for our "adventurism", "dogmatism", lack of "patriotism", and so on, have now begun to sing a new song? Is it because there is something in our resolution and our decisions which are capable of the interpretation that they put on our present stand? These are questions which every class-conscious worker and peasant who is a friend of the Party would legitimately ask.

Before answering that question in detail let us make a general observation: Our political opponents are here giving a new version of their old slander against us. They have so far been so distorting and misinterpreting our position as to make us appear as "anarchists". That trick having failed—our Party having proved that it is not a group of anarchists but an organised party of the working class leading all other sections of the working people—they now want to so distort our stand as to make it appear that we have been corrupted by the crumbs of office thrown to any party that enters the arena of bourgeois parliamentary politics.

### **Why This Attack From All?**

A careful examination of all the resolutions and documents of the Seventh and Eighth Congresses of our Party, together with the resolutions and documents of the Central Committee between the two Congresses, would show that our Party has consistently refused to be either a group of anarchists or a party that plays the bourgeois parliamentary game; in fact, ours is a party which bases itself firmly on the soil of mass struggle and uses the parliamentary institutions (including ministries wherever they are

formed) as effective means through which the militant struggle of the working people is strengthened. This is why our Party has become the common target of attack by the Congress leaders at one end and the so-called "extremists" at the other, with the revisionists in between.

An analysis of the main basic issues on which our Party differed from the revisionists on the one end and the "extremists" on the other would substantiate the correctness of the observations made above. We would, therefore, try in the following pages to take each of these issues one by one; see where we and the revisionists stood once and stand now.

### **India-China Conflict**

Let us take the question of the India-China border conflict. This, it may be recalled, was the issue on which a furious struggle took place within the united Communist Party ever since 1959 when the issue cropped up. The revisionists took up the so-called "patriotic" stand that the communists should "swim with the current" of nationalism. They wanted the Party to join the chorus of anti-China campaign, make that campaign the basis of "patriotic unity". They conspired with the main organs of the bourgeois Press against those of us who refused to take this stand, carried on a public campaign that we were "Chinese agents".

They hoped that this "national patriotic" campaign would isolate us in the country and within the Party itself. It was this stand of the revisionists that culminated in the notorious resolution of the leadership of the united Communist Party (October 1962) which welcomed the imperialist military "aid" to India in furtherance of its "national defence".

The revisionist leaders owe it to themselves, owe an explanation to us whom they persistently denounced as "Chinese agents", owe it to the people of the country whom they have been trying to convince that the Communist Party split on this issue of "patriotism" versus "Chinese agency". They should explain where they stand now on this issue.

### **Change in Government Position**

The decade that has elapsed since the issue of the India China border conflict came to the forefront has seen many changes in the stand taken by the ruling Congress party and the Government itself. No more do we hear the slogan of so organising the armed forces of the country as to "throw the Chinese out" of the Himalayan heights where they have "encroached upon and seized several thousands of square kilometres of our national territory". No more do we hear even the less militant slogan, "we will talk with the Chinese if only they accept the Colombo proposals". Prime Minister Indira Gandhi herself has openly proclaimed her readiness to open talks with the Chinese without making it a prior condition that they should accept the Colombo proposals.

We, for our part, are happy that such a change has taken place. It was such an attitude that we have always been pleading for; it was for such a plea that we were denounced throughout the country as "traitors" and, on the basis of such denunciation, hunted and jailed. We are, however, afraid that, like the unimaginative bourgeois statesmen and politicians that they are, the leaders of the ruling Congress party and the Government have been rather late in correcting this mistake. If the late Prime Minister Pandit Nehru had taken the stand (which his daughter has now taken) at the time when the Colombo proposals were made, it would have yielded results. It is, however, good that, even though late, the leaders of the Congress and the Central Government have been forced to change their stand on this issue.

### **Where Do The Revisionists Stand?**

It is against this background that one would like the revisionist leaders to answer whether they consider themselves to have been correct in taking what was called the "national-patriotic" stand on the India-China border question in 1959, 1962 and later. We, for our part, are firmly convinced that the whole course of development since 1959 has completely proved the correctness of our stand. We are of the view that the anti-China campaign which became the centre of politics of all other parties except ours has had disastrous consequences for the country. It has done immense

harm to the country economically and politically, without any gain in any field. The country would have gained a lot if only its leaders and statesmen had accepted our advice that the question of India-China border is one to be settled not through the military means of using force but through the political means of mutual discussion and settlement. The course of history would have been different if only Nehru had reacted realistically to the proposals made by Chou En lai when he visited India in 1960.

We would, of course, be happy if the revisionists learn from the lessons of history, admit that they were wrong on this issue and come closer to us. There is, however, no question of our going closer to them on an issue on which history has proved them completely wrong, completely bankrupt.

### **Attitude to Other Parties**

Let us now take another issue which came to the forefront in the inner Party struggle which led to the break-up of the old united Communist Party, to the formation of two parties each of which claims to be the real Communist Party of India. We mean the issue of how to assess the character of the ruling Congress party on the one hand and such Opposition parties as the Jana Sangh, Swatantra, Akali, Muslim League, etc., on the other.

It was, for long, an article of faith with the revisionists that the Congress should be included in the "forces of democracy and progress", as opposed to the Jana Sangh, Swatantra, etc., which are reactionary parties.

"Isolate and defeat the forces of the right, forge alliance with the forces of progress and democracy"—such was the line of the revisionists according to them. A long and bitter struggle was waged in the united Communist Party between the revisionists who took this stand and those of us who took a more realistic stand of greater flexibility in the struggle against the Congress regime which, being the organ of power wielded by the big landlords and big bourgeois classes of the country, was the main class enemy to be fought and defeated.

### **Confrontation of Two Lines**

The conflict between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism on this issue was clearly revealed in the classic electoral battle in Kerala in 1965. Being the first confrontation between the two political stands after Marxism-Leninism and revisionism broke from each other, the Kerala election posed the issue in an unambiguous manner. The Marxist-Leninists took the position that the main point was to inflict a crushing defeat on the Congress for which it was necessary, above all, to strengthen the forces of Left democracy, socialism and communism; having ensured such a unity and strengthening of the Left and democratic forces, however, it was necessary to make as many adjustments as possible with other non-Congress forces which would help the reduction of the Congress strength to the minimum and increase the strength of the Left and democratic opposition to the maximum.

With such an electoral strategy, we came to electoral adjustments with the Muslim League. The official candidates of this party were all fought (and some of them defeated) by our Party but we came to such adjustments as would ensure that, in constituencies where mutual fights might result in Congress victory, we and they would support agreed common candidates. This was denounced by the revisionists as "opportunistic". They wanted us to make a complete break with the Muslim League and, on our refusal to do so, they themselves broke with us. They carried on a raging and tearing campaign against the "communist-communalist alliance"—a campaign which understandably was supported by the Congress itself.

### **Swing to Opportunism**

The revisionist leaders owe it to themselves, owe it to us whom they denounced as "opportunists", owe it to the people that they explain where they stand on this issue today. We all know, of course, that they have changed their *practice*. In Kerala itself, they are now part of the United Front in which the Muslim League is an equal partner. In other States, too, they participated in coalition Governments in which parties like the Jana Sangh, Swatantra and the Akalis had even greater roles to play than the revisionists. There

is, therefore, no question of their looking upon the Congress as a progressive, democratic party in contrast to the parties like the Jana Sangh, Swatantra, etc.

Having thus changed themselves in *practice* is it not necessary for them to answer whether their *strategical concept* has changed or whether they have made an "opportunistic" change in the practice in order to get into the ministries. In other words, do they or do they not, adhere to their earlier denunciation of the electoral adjustments made by us with the Muslim League in Kerala in 1965? We would be happy if they correct themselves now and on the basis of such a correction come closer to us. It is, however, plain that there is no question of our abandoning the position taken by us then and going closer to them.

In order that the picture may be complete, it is necessary to mention that, just as in 1965, so now, we consider the strengthening of the forces of Left democracy, socialism and communism as the basic consideration. Alliances and adjustments with other non-Congress forces is, and should be, subordinated to the requirements of such a strengthening of revolutionary forces. That is why we, who are prepared to have an electoral alliance with the Muslim League in 1965, we who had also United Fronts with the Muslim League in Kerala and the Bangla Congress in West Bengal in 1967, were not prepared to join the coalition Governments with the Jana Sangh and Swatantra in Bihar, U.P. and Punjab. We were and are, still of the view that in such States where the revolutionary forces are relatively weaker, our Party should not become associated with the functioning of the non-Congress Governments in which the major role would be played by the Jana Sangh, Swatantra, etc.

The revisionists, however, swung from one extreme to the other: From the 1965 "no truck", they swung to "coalition at all costs". One does not know whether the experience of the Ministries in 1967-1968 has taught them any new lesson in this respect. We would, of course, be happy if they have learnt such lessons and would refuse to repeat the earlier experiment of going into Ministries in these States, and thus come closer to us on this issue. We, however, do not intend to give up our stand, go closer to them on this issue. We firmly believe that this is the only correct path to be followed by us.

### **Estimate of non-Congress Governments**

The third question on which differences cropped up between the revisionists and us was: How to assess the role of non-Congress Governments that came into existence in some States after the Fourth General Elections—are they Governments with real (though limited) powers; or are they just positions of vantage from which the revolutionary forces can mount attacks on the bourgeois-landlord regime?

The Central Committee of our Party set its face firmly against any attempt to equate Governmental power in Indian States with real state power. "The essence of state power", we pointed out in the resolution on post-election "Situation and Tasks", "lies in the army, police, bureaucracy, judiciary and jails, and all this machinery belongs to the bourgeois-landlord state. In class outlook, composition and in several other respects it is not an instrument that is suitable even for the implementation of a consistently democratic administration—let alone any class policies decisively directed against the vested interests. A good and an essential part of state power resides in the Union Centre and the Congress Central Government and whatever small share of power the State Governments possess under the provisions of the country's Constitution, will have to be exercised within the confines of this overall Central power. Naturally, under these circumstances, to speak of real political power for the State Governments, that, too, non-Congress Governments comprising of different Opposition parties, is unreal and devoid of substance".

### **Our Class Understanding**

Explaining how "the entire state apparatus, bureaucracy, judiciary and police even at the States' level as now constituted is definitely class-oriented with a definite bias to the well-to do and propertied classes" the Central Committee went on:

"It is regrettable that this reality is not fully understood by several Opposition parties, let alone the colossal ignorance that the mass of our people are left in on this crucial question.

"Sometimes several among the members of the Communist Party, too, failed to grasp it fully. Unless all the democratic Opposition parties and the United Front Governments comprising these parties make earnest and conscious efforts through concerted action and propaganda to dispel this ignorance among the wide masses of our people, it would become a handy weapon in the hands of the ruling bourgeois-landlord party to discredit the Opposition democratic parties by holding them responsible for not solving any of the burning problems of the people, a thing which they cannot just venture to undertake within the framework of the present set-up".

As opposed to this class understanding of the real character of the State Governments (even though they are composed of Left-democratic, socialist and communist parties) is the understanding put forward by the revisionists. The essence of their understanding is that what are called "structural reforms" are possible even within the limits of the Indian Constitution. Here, for instance, is the assessment made by Unni Raja in an article published in *Peace, Freedom and Socialism* (October-November 1968):

"The aim of the leadership of the Indian National Congress and other reactionary forces was clear: To create a situation in the State that would provide an alibi for the Central Government rulers to intervene and dismiss the U.F. Government in Kerala.

"How to meet this situation? There is only one way to defeat the nefarious game of the reactionaries, i.e., to win over and rally the masses still more closely behind the U.F. and its Government. For this, the most important thing is to implement with speed and determination the commonly accepted election programme of the United Front, so that the people are able to get some relief, however limited, from the U.F. Government and feel that this Government is something different from and better than the Congress rule".

### **Revisionist Call For "Structural Reforms"**

The author wants us all to "reject and combat the sectarian dogmatic view that non-Congress democratic State Governments can achieve little under the present set-up in India. A programme of structural reforms possible within the limited powers of State

Governments should be worked out and speedily implemented". This, according to him, is the surest way to "win over large sections of the politically uncommitted people who voted for the U.F. in the General Election" and to "consolidate and stabilize its influence over these sections on the basis of actual performance by its Government".

The essence of the strategy, in other words, is to use the "real, though limited power" to get substantial relief to the people through which more and more people can be won over and more power can be wrested. Those who have evolved this strategy miss the fact that the smallest attempt to bring about even the barest minimum of what are called "structural reforms" puts the non-Congress State Governments in direct conflict with the Central Government on the one hand and with the internal forces of reaction within the State on the other.

### **Struggle Against The Centre**

This is exactly what happened in 1957-59. The two measures of "structural reforms"—the Land Reforms Bill and the Education Bill—led to such a bitter conflict that the State Government was dismissed and the two measures of "structural reforms" were very much watered down. If this was the position in 1957-59, all the more is it so a decade later. Our Central Committee pointed out:

"The defeat of the Congress and the coming into existence of several Opposition parties' Governments in States have roused big hopes and expectations among our people. But a closer examination of the political power that rests with the States and the scope of relief these State Governments can offer to their people reveal the extreme limitations. Judging from the enormity of the problems facing the people today, it appears that the record of the Communist Government of Kerala in 1957-59 in the matter of giving relief to the masses becomes enviable. With the deepening economic crisis and the acute food crisis that have enveloped the entire economy, with depleted resources and limited powers for the States and with the running of the Kerala and West Bengal Governments together with several other political

parties who do not see eye to eye with us on the several pressing issues, our Party is faced with an extremely difficult and formidable task".

Does it mean that we accept defeat and clear out of the administration? On the contrary, the Central Committee holds, "the fortunes of the entire Party at the present stage of development, are closely linked with the successful running of these ministries and the role our Party plays in them". This, however, cannot be done unless the Party "mobilizes ever wider popular support to these programmes and exposes every obstacle placed in their way and all attempts to torpedo them by the Central Congress Government as well as its party's agencies working in the respective Legislatures."

The conclusion is then drawn: Our Ministers without either entertaining undue illusions about giving relief in a big way or courting despair that nothing can be done in the present set-up should always bear in mind that they, as the Party's representatives, should strive to tender our bona fides to the people. Any failure on this score compromises the Party's political line in the eyes of the people, adversely affects the independent mobilization of the people and their activities, and all this in turn will not help us to resist and overcome the vacillations, wobblings and some times, even possible backsliding of some democratic parties in the U.Fs and their respective Governments. In a word, the U.F. Governments that we are now having are to be treated and understood as the instrument of struggle in the hands of our people, more than as Governments that actually possess adequate power that can materially and substantially give relief to the people".

### **"Gradualism" Had Been Rejected**

It may be mentioned in this connection that just over a decade ago, in October 1958, the National Council of the then united Communist Party of India had made the following critical assessment in relation to the first non-Congress Government of Kerala: "a concept grew in our Party which can be described as the concept of gradualism, the concept of a path of more or less smooth advance, the concept that by doing more and more good

for the people we shall be able to achieve progressively greater consolidation and increasingly isolate our opponents and that with their growing isolation their resistance would decrease. It was thought that conflicts among parties opposing the Kerala Government were so sharp and their internal contradictions so deep that they would not be able to unite. This led to a sense of complacency".

It is this same "concept of gradualism" that in 1967-68 assumed the form of "structural reforms as the only way of defeating the reactionary game".

Our Party, for its part, does not deny the need for giving as much relief as is possible under the circumstances to the people, particularly the basic masses of toilers. We, however, wish to point out that the extent of such relief being extremely limited, both because of the class character of the state as well as due to the ever-deepening crisis of the capitalist path, we should educate the people on these limitations; we should point out to them that between their (and our) aspirations and the actual realization of these aspirations lies the bourgeois-landlord regime at the Centre; a mobilization of the people against the Central bourgeois-landlord regime is thus the essence of our work; the relief that is provided within the limitations is only a by-product of this mobilization of popular forces.

The revisionists, on the other hand, hold that it is futile to appeal to the people to fight the Centre. Such an appeal to them will be useful only if it follows the "structural reforms" brought about by the non-Congress democratic Governments in the State.

### **Behind The Conflict In Kerala**

This conflict of (Marxist-Leninist and Revisionist) policies was fully revealed in the very first few weeks of the formation of the non-Congress Government in Kerala and that on the issue of food. Our Party firmly and loyally adhered the Marxist-Leninist concept that there could be no solution of the food problem in Kerala unless the Central Congress Government was forced to fulfil its commitment to supply Kerala's needs. This, it may be mentioned,

is a position which had, in fact, been accepted by all the constituents of the United Front when they agreed on the common minimum programme. That programme stated:

"A difficult problem which any Government in Kerala has to face is that of food. The reason why it has assumed such serious proportions lies in the wrong policies of the Central Government. Although highly deficit in foodgrains production, Kerala is earning for the country as a whole large amounts of extremely useful foreign exchange. It is, therefore, the duty of the Central Government to provide the people of Kerala food at reasonable prices".

### **Opposition to Anti-Centre Struggle**

Any sensible person can see that it is not any new policy adopted by the Government of Kerala or its effective implementation that will solve Kerala's food or other problems. What is required is a complete change in the policies of the Central Government. It is, therefore, the basic task of all the democratic and Left parties to fight for thorough change in Central policies.

This, however, was not accepted by the revisionists. Paying lip service to the idea of the Centre's responsibility, they nevertheless went on emphasizing the need for new policies to be adopted by the State Government; they also asked for more vigorous and effective implementation of these policies. Leaving aside for a moment the fact that the main target of their food campaign was an attack on our Party and its Food and Chief Ministers, leaving aside also the fact that they swung between two extremes of removal of all control on food movement and full and vigorous control, we may state that the essence of their campaign was to ignore the role of the Central Government and to call for "structural reforms" in the administration of food without which, they claimed, there could not be any struggle with the Centre.

Not only with regard to food, but with regard to every field of the State Government's activity, the revisionists adopted this attitude. They did, in fact, join not only some other constituents of the United Front but even the Congress in condemning our Party's call for a struggle against the Centre. We, therefore, had

independently to mobilize the people of the State in a phased programme of struggle against the Centre. The revisionists and several others did in the beginning ridicule our call for struggle but had, in the end, to agree that we were successful in mobilizing the people. Our direct action of October 23 was an admittedly magnificent success. So, too, was the mobilization of our Party at the final day's rally and demonstration after the Party's Congress.

### **Where Do They Stand Now?**

The question, therefore, arises: Where do the revisionists stand now on the question of "structural reforms" as the Central slogan around which the activities of non-Congress Governments and the communist movement should be concentrated? Are they still of the view that it is "sectarian" and "dogmatic" to hold that any effort to bring relief to the working people will lead to a confrontation between the Congress Central Government and the non-Congress State Government? If they do, there is no question of our accepting that position.

The foregoing discussion on the role and limitations of non-Congress Governments raises once again the old theoretical question on which Lenin in his days fought an uncompromising struggle against revisionism. We mean the question of the extent to which the party of the working class can and should use bourgeois parliamentary institutions.

### **Lenin on Parliaments**

Lenin, it is well-known, firmly rejected the idea propagated by the "heroes of the Second International"—the idea that parliament being the expression of the will of the majority, the working class can use it for transforming capitalist society into socialist society. Pointing out that even the most democratic of parliamentary institutions in a capitalist set-up is an instrument of capitalist oppression over the toiling masses, he made it obligatory on every communist to combat the idea that there can be any medium in capitalist society through which the toiling masses can express their will.

Even in his well-known polemics against the "Left communists" who advocated the policy of the boycott of parliament on the ground that bourgeois parliaments had become outmoded, he agreed that bourgeois parliament was from a historical angle "obsolete" and that Soviet democracy had come on the scene of history. He made it clear that for the advanced class-conscious sections of the working class, bourgeois parliamentarism was obsolete. His criticism of the "Left communist" line was only that they were equating what was historically obsolete, what was obsolete for the advanced class-conscious sections of the working class with what was obsolete for the class as a whole, for the masses. Advising how to use the bourgeois parliamentary institutions in the class struggle, he went on:

".....it has been proved that, far from causing harm to the revolutionary proletariat, participation in a bourgeois-democratic parliament, even a few weeks before the victory of a Soviet Republic and even after such a victory, actually helps that proletariat to *prove* to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be done away with; it *facilitates* their successful dissolution, and *helps* to make bourgeois parliamentarism 'politically obsolete'."

### **What CPI(M) Programme Says**

Marxism Leninism, therefore, cannot but look upon the process of elections and the institutions of elected legislatures in capitalist societies as nothing but the instruments of class struggle, nothing but fields of battle in which the organized working class mobilizes and organises all sections of the working people against the bourgeoisie and its allies. No quarter will be given to any political or tactical line that would create the illusion among the people that the exploiting classes will allow themselves to be "peacefully overthrown" if only the working class and its allies "play the parliamentary game". That is why our Party Programme calls the "universal adult franchise and parliament and legislatures", "instruments of the people in their struggle for democracy, for defence of their interests". The Programme goes on:

"Although a form of class rule of the bourgeoisie, India's present parliamentary system also embodies an advance for the people. It affords certain opportunities to them to defend their interests, intervene in the affairs of the state to a certain extent, and mobilize them to carry forward the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress".

The Party, however, has no illusion that the exploiting classes will calmly look on while the working people utilizes the opportunities afforded by the existence of parliamentary institutions. "When the people begin to use parliamentary institutions for advancing their cause and they fall away from the influence of the reactionary bourgeoisie and landlords, these classes do not hesitate to trample underfoot parliamentary democracy as was done in Kerala in 1959" (and, we may now add, as was repeated in Kerala itself in 1965 and West Bengal in 1967). "When their interest demands, they do not hesitate to replace parliamentary democracy by military dictatorship. It will be a serious error and a dangerous illusion to imagine that our country is free from all such threats".

### **"Concept of Gradualism"**

It is interesting to note that, paying lip service as they have to do to the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism, the revisionists, too, have in a way incorporated the very same idea in their Party Programme. They, however, do not mean it seriously, as will be clear from the foregoing discussion on their conception of "structural reforms". The crux of their understanding of "structural reforms" is the abandonment of the Leninist idea that communists go into bourgeois parliamentary institutions with the basic objective of educating the mass of the people on the real class character of the bourgeois parliamentary institutions, educate them on the need of a revolutionary overthrow of the exploiting classes. In place of this revolutionary conception is advanced what was called by the Sixth Congress of the (then united) Communist Party of India as the "concept of gradualism", the "concept of smooth advance". Our Party firmly rejects this concept.

This rejection by our Party of the path of parliamentarianism was denounced by our opponents (including the revisionists) as the advocacy of the so-called Chinese path of armed struggle everywhere and under all conditions. In the 1962-65 period of bitter battle between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism, the advocates of the latter joined the chorus of anti-communism and denounced us as "adventurists", training guerrillas and preparing for armed struggle everywhere. The notorious "white paper" issued by Gulzarilal Nanda's Home Ministry, it is well-known, was based among other things on the vile slanders spread against us by the revisionists.

### **We Stand by Our Programme**

Just as for all other sections of anti-communists so for the revisionists, too, rejection of bourgeois parliamentarianism as the path of struggle for socialism is equivalent to the adoption of immediate armed struggle; refusal to accept the peaceful non-violent path is equivalent to the acceptance of individual and group terrorism as the only path of advance. They, therefore, denounced us in the early years of struggle within the communist movement for the so-called advocacy of armed revolution here and now.

Finding that line of argument does not hold water now, in view of the serious and effective work that we have been and are still carrying on in the field of bourgeois parliamentary institutions, they now turn round and say that we have given up our old "adventurist" line and accepted the "sober line" of parliamentary struggle. The whole thing is ridiculous because, as we have stated above, we have even in our 1964 Programme called the institutions of bourgeois-parliamentary democracy as means through which the people can mobilize themselves and fight the exploiting classes. That was why the Seventh Congress of our Party (which completely broke with revisionism as an ideological-political trend) called for a United Front of all the radical left forces in the country (including the revisionists) in order to inflict a crushing defeat on the Congress. The Party Congress call for such a United Front of Left and democratic forces in Kerala (where the mid-term elections were to take place in a few weeks' time) is the most effective

reply to the off-repeated canard that we were taking a negative attitude to the struggle on the parliamentary front.

Let us, therefore, make it perfectly clear that we have nothing to change on the fundamental principles laid down by our Seventh Congress which adopted the Party Programme. Not only did we envisage the use of elections and the elected institutions as means of further strengthening the struggle against the exploiting classes, but we even visualized a situation in which "Governments pledged to carry out a modest programme of giving immediate relief to the people" would come into existence. While we have no doubt that the "formation of such Governments will give great fillip to the revolutionary movement of the working people and thus help the process of building the democratic front", we added that even such a development "would not solve the economic and political problems of the nation in any fundamental manner. The Party, therefore, will continue to educate the mass of the people on the need for replacing the present bourgeois-landlord state and Government headed by the big bourgeoisie even while utilizing all opportunities for forming such Governments of a transitional character".

### **Power from Barrel of Gun**

This discussion on the place of struggle on the parliamentary front in the development of the revolutionary movement will be incomplete if we do not make reference to a question posed before us by the revisionists on the one hand and the so-called "extremists" on the other. That question is: Do we believe in the "Thought of Mao Tse-tung" that "power flows from the barrel of a gun"? The revisionists accuse us of believing in and trying to practise this theory, while the "extremists" accuse us of the opposite. The facts, however, are:

(i) As Marxist-Leninists, we do not believe that the bourgeois landlord classes will voluntarily relinquish power. On the other hand, they will fight a last-ditch battle even after it has become clear that they are on the way out. We are of the view that even after a century, Karl Marx's idea that "force is the midwife of the new society that is growing in the womb of the old" is still true.

Comrade Mao has only put this Marxist idea in a probably little more picturesque language when he brought in "the barrel of the gun". That idea, therefore, is, in its essentials, correct and should be accepted by every Marxist-Leninist.

(ii) But we as Marxist-Leninists look upon the Marxist theory not as a dogma but as a guide to action. (This, by the way, is what Comrade Mao himself taught. He, like Lenin, tried to combine the greatest possible flexibility in practice with firm refusal to compromise on theory. How else can one reconcile the "Thought of Mao Tse-tung" with regard to "the barrel of the gun" as the source of political power with a call for coalition Government with the Kuomintang, against which of course he was in a few months' time to launch a furious battle?)

(iii) The guiding line in every attempt to relate theory to practice is the proletarian class standpoint, i.e., which particular practice, which particular method will help the mass movement of the working people to advance; which will weaken the enemy most, secure allies in the struggle against the enemy and neutralize the middle strata? It is from this angle that we look upon the efficacy or otherwise of any particular method of struggle, peaceful or non-peaceful.

### **1951 Statement of Policy**

We may, in this connection, remind our revisionists as well as the "extremists" that this question had once before become the point of controversy in the united Communist Party. That controversy was settled in the Statement of Policy adopted by the Central Committee in 1951. Let us quote the relevant passage from that Statement for the benefit of our revisionists and of our "extremists".

It is the reactionary classes, the Statement pointed out, "who pose for us the question whether our creed is violence or non-violence. Such a poser is a poser of Gandhian ideology which in practice misleads the masses and is a poser of which one must steer clear. Marxism and history have once for all decided the question for the Party and the people of every country in the world

long ago. All action of the masses in defence of their interests to achieve their liberation is sacrosanct. History sanctions all that the people decide to do to clear the lumber-load of decadence and reaction in their path to progress and freedom".

There is, however, one action, the Statement went on, "history does not sanction and that is individual terrorism". Why is this not sanctioned? "For the simple reason that therein the masses are not in action. Therein the belief is fostered that the heroes will do the job for the people. Therein it fosters the belief that many more such actions will mean in the sum-total the annihilation of the classes or the system. Ultimately, it leads to passivity and inertia of the masses, stops their own action and development towards revolution and in the end results in defeat. Hence Marxism warns against individual terrorism and bans it."

### **Who has Strayed from this Path?**

The revisionists on the one hand and the "extremists" on the other may have strayed from the path laid down in the above Statement of Policy. The former might want to abandon it in favour of the path that is peaceful everywhere and under all circumstances; they may want to equate vigilance against the enemy and preparedness to meet all eventualities as "adventurism" and "sectarianism". The "extremists" might want us to abandon the above method in favour of violence everywhere and under all circumstances. We, however, refuse to follow their lead. We adhere firmly to the idea that the bourgeois-landlord regime can be replaced by People's Democracy only through revolutionary struggle and that there is no revolutionary struggle unless every form of struggle is used to mobilize and unite the working people under the leadership of the working class. This was our stand in 1964 (Seventh Congress); this is our stand in 1968 (Eighth Congress). The revisionists as well as the sectarians are welcome either to join us on this basis or to tell the people why this is wrong.