

Communist Party and the United Front*

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I

The debate between various constituents of the seven-party United Front—between the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Right Communists particularly—has drawn different reactions from various quarters.

All those anxious about the stability of the United Front and its Government are stunned by this debate and regret that things have shaped out this way. They are afraid for the stability of the non-Congress Front and Government—the fruit of their long-cherished desires and relentless efforts. Some of them are also disappointed that “these people also like Congressmen are quarelling among themselves and ruining the State”.

Among the Enemies

In the enemies of the United Front the debate and quarrels have created glee. They feel that they will be able to get out of the predicament created by the formation of the United Front against all their wishes and expectations and the success the Front won in the Fourth General Elections. They hope that this Government will collapse if not today at least tomorrow and President's rule will follow it. They also hope that once this Front falls apart, the Congress will not have

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to face another such powerful Front. In furtherance of these desires, to utilize the differences and quarrels inside the United Front in their favour, they are making organized efforts to intensify the present quarrels and invent and give currency to stories so as to spread demoralization among the friends of the United Front and create new hopes among its enemies.

Though not in the category of enemies, there is a section opposed to the United Front inside the Front itself—these are the elements inside each constituent party who maintain inimical feelings towards one or more parties of the Front. A section of Right Communists who had to swallow their debacle in the 1965 mid-term elections, who hold the CPI(M) mainly responsible for this debacle of theirs and for this reason hate it and who are ever prepared to use every opportunity to fight it; a section of the RSP which, though not to the same degree as the Right Communists, deal with issues with the same attitude to an extent; a section of Marxist Communist comrades and sympathizers who are opposed to the United Front tactics of the CPI(M) leadership since these tactics created the opportunity for the Right Communists who had been wiped out in the 1965 mid-term elections to raise their head again with the 1967 elections—variations of these three can also be seen in the other parties.

All these elements saw the recent debate from their own particular viewpoint. They were happy that they had the opportunity now to try to oust from the United Front and Government those constituents whom they opposed and, if that was not possible, at least to weaken such parties. If there were Marxist Communists and sympathizers who demanded that the Rightists should be thrown out, the reverse side could be seen among the Rightists. Similar was the approach of the RSP's which took up the stand, "let the Communist Party (Marxist) form the Government with those whom it wants, we will keep out". Each one of them, knowingly or unknowingly, helps the enemies of the United Front. For this very reason, they get all help from the enemies of the Front.

Meaningless Propaganda

Worth particular mention in this connection is the organized propaganda that is being carried on that extremist influence is growing in the CPI(M), that because of the extremist pressure the CPI(M) leadership is getting ready to oust the Rightists, etc. Earlier, their story was that the "Marxists were themselves planning to quit the Front and the Ministry". All the newspapers which day in and day out oppose the United Front and its Government, have actively spread this story. It is clear that this propaganda is aimed at strengthening the opponents of the United Front inside each of the constituent parties.

Officially, on behalf of the CPI(M), its State Committee Secretary, Comrade A. K. Gopalan has made it clear that this is a baseless fabrication. He has categorically stated that there is no question of the CPI(M) quitting on its own or trying to oust any other constituent. But these people still continue their campaign. It will, therefore, be useful, to examine the false nature of this propaganda, to refer to some of their earlier campaigns of a similar nature and what effect they had.

When about a year ago, CPI(M) General Secretary, P. Sundarayya came to Kerala along with Polit Bureau Member A. K. Gopalan, these same newspapers, had stated that the visit was to implement the all-India leadership's decision to remove me from Chief Ministership and place Comrade A. K. Gopalan there. Even some of the constituent parties of the United Front, specially the Right Communists, believed this to be true. Along with the papers which openly oppose the United Front and the Government, Right Communist papers, which are supposed to be supporters of the United Front, also joined to conduct this propaganda.

Prior to this, for some time they had carried on another campaign that there were "liberals" and "extremists" in the all-India leadership, that I was a "liberal" and Comrades Sundarayya and Gopalan were "extremists". It looked as if the Right Communist papers were competing with the Congressite papers in conducting this campaign.

Rightist Dream at the Time of the Plenum

The speculations they made and the reports they spread on the eve of the State Plenum in January were in continuation of this propaganda campaign. They said that the "extremists" would get a majority in the Plenum, that afterwards there would be changes in the Ministry and so on. They did not hesitate even to classify the delegates from the districts and count the votes and on that basis make "forecasts" about the Plenum. When, belying all these "forecasts", the Plenum concluded making it evident that the Party's unity had been even more strengthened, the election of Comrade Gopalan as the Secretary of the State Committee was interpreted by them in two ways—one, that it was a victory of the "extremists", the other that it was a tactic of the "liberals" to tame the "extremists".

They did not hesitate in making speculations about the all-India Plenum either. With supreme self-confidence they forecast that the Party would be split into two in Burdwan. When this forecast also was belied, they came out with the explanation that "a split was avoided by making a compromise with the extremists". When here and there some individuals and groups began indulging in anti-Party activities in violation of the Plenum decisions, they again hoped the CPI(M) would split into two from top to bottom. The present campaign is yet another expression of this hope.

Not only those papers openly opposing the United Front, not only the Right Communist Papers and Party Committees, even their Ministers are echoing this propaganda. It is notable that in a statement M. N. Govindan Nair made a few days ago, he made a contrast between "the policy of the sensible E. M. S and the policy of the impetuous Sundarayya". Such references are also there in some of his public statements regarding the Idikki incidents. It was by putting together his statement and some boastful statements of those who call themselves "extremists" that Congressite papers spread stories like "another Vietnam being organized in Idikki", etc. Congress papers on one side, self-styled extremists on the other, a Right

Communist Minister in between—all the three together have raised a storm against the CPI(M) and its leadership.

It is my duty to advise the Right Communists that it is better to give up these dirty tactics. They must remember the result of their campaign against us in 1962-63 charging us with being “Chinese agents” and in 1964-65 in the name of “the alliance with the Muslim League”. A repetition of that today would cut at the very root of the non-Congress Front in which they and we are participating.

Method of Work of a Revolutionary Party

Anyway, I consider it my responsibility as a member of the Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) and as the Chief Minister of the United Front Government to state all the facts regarding the questions that are under debate today

Before that, let me state again what has been made clear earlier, the all-India leadership of the CPI(M) functions with much stronger unity than the leadership of any other party in India. All the ideological policy documents which form the basis of the Party’s unity have been adopted unanimously by the Polit Bureau and all such documents prepared by the Polit Bureau have been accepted by the Central Committee with overwhelming majorities. The same was the case with most of the State Plenums and the Central Plenum. Thus the CPI(M) has a political line which has been adopted with the support of 80 per cent of the Party membership.

As in the matter of political policy, so on the question of organizational policies to implement the political line, the same unity exists in the Party. The Party has a leadership which evaluates the work of every Polit Bureau member on the basis of criticism and self-criticism and corrects mistakes whenever necessary; evolves general organizational principles for the functioning of State Committees and units lower down and reviews their work periodically; corrects those committees and individuals which make mistakes in implementing the Party line and takes action against those who refuse to make the necessary corrections.

It is only natural that discussions on many issues take place in the leadership of a Party which deals seriously with every political and organizational question. Different views and approaches get expressed; the contradictions between them become clear; but as a result of the collective discussions the originally expressed one-sided approach is abandoned and a more correct and acceptable approach is taken.

Similarly, the mistakes and shortcomings in the work of individuals and committees are pointed out; those who are responsible for them are criticized; through this process the mistakes of each one of them are corrected and the guarantee is created that such mistakes will not be repeated in the future. This is the method of functioning of a revolutionary party basing itself on Marxism-Leninism.

My Party and Myself

As a responsible worker of a Party which functions on this basis, my work (just as the work of other comrades) has been criticized. On the basis of this criticism and self-criticism, at various stages many directives (resulting from the discussions in which I participated) have been given to me. I have tried my best to implement these directives and have received all help from my colleagues in this.

It was as a part of this process that Comrades Sundarayya and A. K. Gopalan came to Kerala a year ago. The Party in Kerala, and specially myself, who bears the responsibility of the administration in the name of the Party, has to deal with very complex problems which the Party nowhere else in India faces. Simultaneously with dealing with problems, the Party here as in the rest of the country has to conduct inner-Party discussions on many ideological questions and strengthen the Party organization. To help this, apart from Comrades Sundarayya and Gopalan, Comrades Basavapunnaiiah and Ramamurti have also visited the State on many occasions. It is because of the collective effort made by them, me and the State Committee, that the Party in Kerala has

been able to advance with greater unity than ever before on ideological-tactical-organizational questions.

It is this process which is being interpreted as Party control over me. All that I have to say to those who conduct this propaganda is: I am proud to work under the discipline of the Party. There may be individuals in other parties who consider themselves to be above the Party and the movement, but not in the CPI(M). If anyone of us tries to exhibit such arrogant individualistic tendencies, the Party will not tolerate him. If there are people among the enemies who think that by praising me personally they can use me against the Party they are living in a fool's paradise.

A word about the Chief Ministership also: I have taken up this position as directed by my Party (its all-India and State leaderships). The moment the Party thinks I am not fit to continue in this position any longer or that somebody else can fulfil the task better, I will withdraw from this position. My duty, as of other members of the CPI(M), is to do whatever work the Party gives from whichever position the Party assigns. Comrade A. K. Gopalan's attitude is the same. So, there will be no in-fighting in the CPI(M) for Chief Ministership as the so-called "knowledgeable political quarters" propagate. They are trying to fit the names of A. K. G. and E. M. S. to their own ugly images reflected in the mirror.

The Aim of the Criticism

As mentioned earlier, serious discussions have taken place in the Party's all-India leadership and State leadership regarding the problems to be tackled and the policies and programmes to be adopted by the United Front Government of Kerala and the CPI(M) which is one of its constituents. The entire Party ranks have been associated with these discussions. As a part of this process, the views expressed on various occasions by many in the all-India and State leaderships and the work of many of them have been criticized. As a person who has played a not-so unimportant role in all this, my views and work have been naturally subjected to more

criticism. Further, this criticism has also received more publicity.

There are no differences in the Party regarding the object of these discussions and criticism and self-criticism: Strengthen further the United Front and its Government; while making necessary practical adjustments to keep together all the other constituent parties, put forward the Party's independent views on policy and ideological questions without any compromise; improve the work of the State leadership and Ministers who have to fulfil all these responsibilities.

All those who are not jaundiced by enmity to the CPI(M) and examine things truthfully will see that as a result of the collective effort of the all-India and State leaderships the Party has been able to arrive at a clear-cut understanding about the tasks of the Party in the United Front and about the relations that should exist between the constituent parties. The reality is that the Party has fought relentlessly against both the Right-reformist deviation of abandoning the independence of the Party and merging it in the United Front and the Left-sectarian deviation of breaking relations with other constituents of the Front in the name of independence of the CPI(M) and as a result has safeguarded and strengthened the unity of the U.F. and at the same time succeeded in rallying all friends of the Party to campaign for the independent line of the Party. I think it would be worthwhile to look back a little to make this clear.

II

It was in April 1964 that the struggle between the revisionist and Marxist ideologies inside the CPI reached a decisive stage and the process of the formation of two parties began and with the walk-out of the Marxists in protest against the policies of the revisionist majority of the then National Council, the present CPI(M) began to take shape.

Of the 32 National Council members who walked out, six from Kerala immediately issued a statement which expressed the hope that this split between the Marxists and revisionists

in the ideological political organizational spheres should not be a hindrance to the formation of the Left united front necessary for the mid-term elections in Kerala scheduled for 1965 and appealed to the revisionists to co-operate with the formation of such a united front. The basic approach of the CPI(M) towards united front tactics pursued since then could be found in this Statement. And this approach was a continuation of an uncompromising stand in the basic struggle between revisionism and Marxism on the one hand and on the other readiness to co-operate with the revisionists if they were willing to unite and mobilize the non-Congress democratic forces.

First to oppose this approach were the revisionist themselves. They emphatically said that unless we made adjustments on the ideological organizational issues, there was no question of co-operation between them and us in the formation of a non-Congress democratic front. Some articles which supported their stand mentioned me by name and said that it was my eagerness to become Chief Minister that was behind our stand on the united front. M. N. Govindan Nair, to condemn split, said that the inevitable result of the split in the Communist Party would be the victory of Congress in the elections, that if the Marxists had not split the Party, the Kerala administration would have fallen like a "ripe mango" into the hands of Left democratic forces, etc. In the background of the desire of the Kerala people to see the formation of a non-Congress Government, they had perhaps hoped that this propaganda would help to isolate the CPI(M).

On this basis, they went ahead with the slander campaign against us as "Chinese agents", for "capturing the *Deshabhimani*", etc. In all this, Congressite papers gave them unstinted support. M. N. Govindan Nair did not stop there, he attacked A. K. G. and me on the basis of the families into which we were born. Not only did this not have the desired result, it totally boomeranged. A big section of even those who ideologically stood apart from us were disgusted with these dirty tactics. As for Party members, it was clear that

the overwhelming majority had rallied to the CPI(M). The revisionists then had to change their tune. Ultimately they had to accept that there was no difficulty in forming a Left democratic united front with the two Communist Parties in the same way as with parties like the SSP and the RSP.

Thus, they were forced to accept the concept of a united front including the two Communist Parties which they had so contemptuously rejected when we put it forward in the beginning.

Cutting Their Own Nose

Even after this, revisionists adopted tactics, one after another, to try and isolate us from the other parties coming forward to join the United Front. The first blow they aimed at us was on the question of including defence in the United Front programme. Their calculation was that we who had already been dubbed as "Chinese agents" would either reject the demand to include defence in which case they could isolate us from other patriotic parties or we would have to give up our basic stand in which case it would be politically a victory for them. Totally defeating this game of theirs, we took a stand which recognized the need for defence but at the same time stressed the necessity of settling disputes with neighbouring countries peacefully.

This was the same stand which we had taken in 1962. For stating this stand in a speech at a Pazhavangadi Maidan rally then, not only papers like *Mathrubhoomi* and *Manorama*, but also Right Communist papers like *Navajeevan Janayugom* and the then *Deshabhimani* had unleashed an onslaught on me. But without sliding back even an inch from this stand, we pursued it in our talks in the United Front. By 1964, the political situation was very much changed and it was clear that it would not be possible to disrupt a non-Congress United Front in the name of defence.

Then they came with their new tactic. They took the stand that a Left political line should be to defeat not only the Congress but all the reactionaries and, hence, it was neces-

sary to oppose the Muslim League and Kerala Congress as much, if not more than the Congress, and with such a stand, they sought to restrict the scope of the United Front. The CPI(M), SSP and KTP were not prepared to accept this position. All the three parties held the view that there should be some electoral understanding with the Muslim League since it was not likely to join a Left United Front. The Right Communists said this was unacceptable to them and disrupted the United Front.

As in the past, the Congress papers rushed to their aid. Papers, both in English and Malayalam, with gusto propagated that the Right Communists and RSP had taken a principled stand regarding the elections while the CPI(M), SSP and KTP were allying with reactionaries. This gave great hopes to the Congress.

Once more the people dealt a heavy blow to the Right Communists. They rejected with contempt the slander of Home Minister Nanda and Dange, who collected evidence for him, that we were "Chinese agents". The Kerala electorate gave the largest number of seats to the CPI(M). And the revisionists had the honour of forfeiting the largest number of security deposits. It was clear from the election results that the Right Communists had cut their own nose to spite the CPI(M).

Rightists' "Change of Mind"

Following this, the Right Communists were forced to do a self-examination though limited. They accepted that all democratic parties would have to jointly work with the CPI(M) on the demand for rice, working class issues, etc. They also began participating in the political campaign to win the release of CPI(M) comrades in detention. Thus the feeling was created in the people that they would again co-operate to form the united front which they had disrupted before the mid-term elections.

But with the outbreak of the Indo-Pak war the situation changed radically. Under the leadership of Prime Minister

Shastri, Congress and other reactionary forces tried to whip sentiments against Pakistan and China. Most of the Left parties including the Right Communists took part in this. The Right Communists also joined the efforts of others to isolate from other parties the CPI(M) which refused to fall a victim to this anti-China, anti-Pakistan hysteria. They began to shout that there was no such thing as a Kashmir problem, that no settlement with Pakistan was possible, that the nation should unite to face a joint aggression by China and Pakistan, etc. With this the United Front itself ceased to exist.

Even after Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin suggested that a peaceful settlement should be found to the Indo-Pak problem, for some time they stuck to their old anti-Pakistan stand. Only after Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri himself showed sobriety on the issue did a change of heart take place in the Rightists.

As a big blow to this political line came the Tashkent talks. The Shastri-Ayub Agreement was signed. Meanwhile, the food situation in Kerala began to worsen. Only then did the Right Communists agree to a joint agitation on food. This struggle began with the Kerala Bandh of January 26, 1966. Following its success and in the background of the forthcoming elections, the Right Communists and other parties began taking a more realistic attitude to the question of united front. The Right Communists shifted from their old position of the Muslim League being a reactionary party with which no united front was possible. The Muslim League also shifted from its position that Communism was anti-religion and hence there was no question of any united front with the Communists. The concept of a non-Congress front comprising of all parties willing to work jointly on the basis of a minimum programme came to be widely accepted.

Even after the acceptance of not only this principle but also the minimum programme, the Right Communists continued their anti-CPI(M) stand. They insisted on getting constituencies in which the CPI(M) had been proved to be far stronger, and went on postponing endlessly the distribution

of seats. They unnecessarily went on prolonging the United Front talks for weeks together with their insistence that in Quilon district where they were stronger they would not concede a single seat to the CPI(M) but themselves should get at least three seats in the Malabar area where the CPI(M) was stronger. The result was that the United Front had only a very short period to conduct an organized election campaign.

Despite all this the Kerala electorate gave the United Front 117 out of the 133 seats. If the Right Communists who were forced to accept the united front tactics in 1966-67 had accepted it in 1964-65, a United Front Government could have been formed in Kerala two years earlier. But the Right Communists and the RSP which stood with them made this impossible then and helped the imposing of President's rule on the people of Kerala for two years. Still, because of the new approach that they adopted after the blow dealt to them in 1965 the people forgave them for their mistake in 1964-65 and hoped that they would, at least in the future, adopt such policies as would strengthen the United Front and weaken the Congress.

Before examining how far this hope has been fulfilled and if it has not been fulfilled what it is due to, one factor has to be emphasized. And that is that the United Front took shape not only through the struggle on general ideological political organizational issues but through the struggle between the Marxists and revisionists on specific issues connected with the building of the U.F. itself. There were different approaches to issues like the aim of the U.F., the forces that should be included in it, the enemies which it should fight, the structure and form of the Front, the principles to be accepted in the matter of division of seats, etc. and on all these issues there were constant conflicts between Marxism and revisionism. And these conflicts were openly put before the people. It was because all this was done in front of the people that the Right Communists had to correct their mistake. For instance, on the question of attitude to the Muslim League, though there had

been lots of discussions between the parties, without the experience of 1965, the Right Communists and RSP would not have corrected their mistake.

III

The thesis of strengthening unity through struggle is as correct since 1967 as it was till then. As will be discussed later, it is clear that there are differences not only between the Right Communists and the CPI(M) but between many constituents of the U.F. No doubt many of them can be settled through mutual discussions. But issues which each party considers to be of basic importance cannot be solved through such mutual discussions. Public debates (ideological struggles) will have to be conducted on them. There is nothing wrong in holding such public debate and conducting such ideological struggles. They are only natural wherever united fronts for achieving a common aim are formed by parties based on different ideologies and outlooks. Only thing to be guarded is that they should be conducted not to weaken but to strengthen the U.F.

This implies that the constituent parties which conduct such public debate and ideological struggles should do so with mutual respect and confidence. It should not be forgotten that the objective of the ideological struggle on issues where there are ideological-political differences is to evolve with the help of the people a policy acceptable to the whole U.F. Precisely because of this, even while expressing frank opinions about the views of other parties, it should be with a friendly and fraternal attitude. Always to be kept in mind is that there is an opposition party here ever ready to utilize in its own selfish interests the differences and conflicts between the constituent parties of the U.F.

CPI(M)'s Approach

In short, each party while it takes its own independent stand on issues which it considers to be of fundamental importance, should be careful to see that it does nothing which adversely

affects the unity of the U.F. We claim that the CPI(M) has such an approach. If there has been any mistake anywhere, we are only too willing to correct it. It is our hope that other constituent parties will also adopt this approach.

It is on this matter that the CPI(M) cannot agree with the approach of the so-called "extremists". The truth is that at every stage there has been a confrontation inside the Party between their anti-united front approach and the Party's Marxist-Leninist approach and on every occasion it is the Party's Marxist-Leninist approach which has won.

Mid-term Elections

It has been mentioned earlier how the CPI(M) in Kerala had even at the time of the split with the revisionists called for a united front including the revisionists to fight the impending mid-term elections in the State. The approach of that appeal, that of united front, was subjected to inner-Party discussion and criticism. Inside the Party the view appeared that the fight against the revisionists was more important than the fight against the Congress and hence no place should be given to the Rightists in the non-Congress front. Some comrades argued for this line both at the State Party Conference in Alleppey and the all India Party Congress in Calcutta. There were full discussions on the question in both the places and on the basis of these discussions the Party Congress through a separate resolution made clear its policy regarding the Kerala elections. The Party Congress by an overwhelming majority adopted the line of united front including the revisionists.

Central Committee's Decision

Not only in the Kerala election in 1964-65, the same question came up later regarding the general election in 1966-67. The question was again raised whether it would be correct to include the revisionists in the U.F. But the Central Committee which was elected by the Party Congress, when it evolved its tactics for the Fourth General Elections, ex-

tended the understanding of the Party Congress regarding the Kerala mid-term elections to the all-India level. The election strategy evolved by the Central Committee was one of considering the Congress as the main enemy, of exposing before the people parties like the Jana Sangh, etc. which had adopted with some variations the same basic policies of the Congress and of building united fronts consisting of all parties and organizations willing to give up anti-Communism and unite to defeat the Congress. And on this basis, as in Kerala in 1965, the Party tried to build united fronts including the revisionists in West Bengal and other States in 1966-67. (If this effort did not succeed in many States as in West Bengal, the reason was the same as in Kerala in 1965.)

Two Sides of the Same Policy

It is as important to form the non-Congress united front and maintain it as to clearly state the independent stand of the Party on basic issues on which there are differences with constituent parties including the Rightists. These are two sides of the same policy. This approach evolved by Marx, Engels and Lenin was later adopted by the Communist International. The Chinese Communist Party's successful strategy was its continuation.

What can be dominantly perceived in the 20-year Kuomintang-Communist alliance is this "unity and struggle" and the expert use of both. The CPC at no stage gave up the struggle against the Kuomintang leadership. But even while conducting the struggle it had sincerely striven for unity. Ultimately, two armies led by the Kuomintang and the Communist Party declared open war. A few months before the beginning of this civil war, the CPC from its Congress raised the slogan of a "coalition Government" between the Kuomintang and the C.P. A Coalition Government if possible, civil war if necessary—this was the stand of the CPC.

In concretely and scientifically examining issues, all Marxists accept historical materialism as their guide. Marx and Engels are the first teachers who gave form to this theory

and applied them to the situation existing in Europe during their life time. Lenin went forward on the path which they had opened, and basing himself on the principles formulated by them he conducted his revolutionary theoretical and practical activities. Hence the statement "Leninism is the continuation of Marxism". Stalin went forward on the path opened by Marx, Engels and Lenin. Mao Tse-tung followed Marx, Engels, Lenin and also Stalin. Thus Marxists of each generation use the inheritance from their predecessors to carry on their practical revolutionary activity and in their turn leave their own experience as inheritance to the next generation.

But just as Russia, which Lenin examined had its own peculiarities and China which Mao analysed had its own peculiarities different from those of Russia, today's India has its own peculiarities different from those of both Russia and China. Hence to blindly copy here everything that Lenin and Stalin did in Russia or Mao did in China is to challenge the very essence of Mao's contribution. And that essence is to apply the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism to the peculiarities of one's own country. To copy in India all that Mao did in China in the same way is to raise Mao to the level of a god and throw away Mao's contribution in practice. Lenin showed how Kautsky committed this crime against Marx.

Law of Contradictions

The law of contradictions in relation to the work of the united front composed of various classes against a common enemy is, as Mao has clearly stated, "unity-struggle-more unity." The participants in the U.F. are interested in vanquishing the common enemy. So what is basic to them is unity. It is in the interest of each constituent to work to development is unity and strengthen it. At the same time, though subordinate to the struggle against the common enemy, there are mutual contradictions between the various constituents without solving these contradictions the unity

of the front cannot be strengthened, cannot even be maintained. And to find the solution there has to be struggle between these constituents— not in a way to strengthen the common enemy but in a manner to weaken it.

It is through this constant process of unity and struggle that a revolutionary front of many classes advances from victory to victory.

Any Marxist Party which seeks to organize a revolution on this basis has first to find answer to the question : Who is the main enemy? Any error in answering the question will adversely affect revolutionary strategy.

We do not have to deal here as to how Mao Tse-tung dealt with this question at every stage in the history of the Chinese Revolution. If we take the case of India, up to 1947, imperialism was India's main enemy and in the anti-imperialist united front the bourgeoisie also had a place. Hence, the Indian National Congress, the political party of the bourgeoisie, had a place in the united front. The law which governed the relations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat then (between the Congress and the Communist Party) was "unity-struggle-more unity".

Anti-Congress Struggle

This situation changed after 1947. The bourgeoisie became the ruling class, compromised with the feudals and a bourgeois landlord state came into existence. Inside the bourgeoisie, the main partner in this state, a monopoly section began to develop in collaboration with foreign monopolists. And they began to get the upper hand more than any other section in the state. In this situation it became clear that the main enemy is the Indian big bourgeoisie and its political representative, the Congress, because under their rule national interests were being sacrificed as a result of collaboration with foreign monopolists and the rural poor were being attacked as a result of the compromise with the feudalists. The only way to protect the interest of the working class and peasant masses was to wage the struggle against the

new ruling classes and their political representative, the Congress.

• It became the task of the proletariat and its Communist Party in this struggle against the main enemy to rally in the democratic front along with the workers and peasants all those sections ready to co-operate with the working class—not only the peasantry and the middle classes but also those sections of the bourgeoisie willing to fight the growing Indian monopolists and foreign monopolists who in collaboration with them were exploiting India. But the relation between the working class and the Communist Party and the bourgeois and petty bourgeois sections from the other classes which come into the front is not one of unity alone; it is one of unity and struggle and the law which governs this relation is “unity-struggle-more unity”. Hence the anti-Congress front does not develop in a straight line. In its onward march, on occasions there will be temporary and partial setbacks. When there are setbacks, the task is to reduce its impact and duration, the task is to foresee the twists and turns and avoid the dangers.

IV

With this perspective, the CPI(M) was able to adopt the approach of conducting the struggle against revisionism and at the same time forging united front with the Right Communists in the anti-Congress struggle. This enabled the Party to evolve a scientific policy which combined “unity and struggle” with the revisionists in the period from 1964 to 1967. To strengthen the anti-Congress struggle it is absolutely necessary to fight uncompromisingly against revisionist ideology and activities. But there is a basic contradiction between the revisionist leaderships’s opposition to anti-Congress struggle and the fundamental interests of the ranks of the revisionists which constitute a section of the toiling people. It is with this understanding that the Party, while it conducts the struggle against revisionism has the perspective of mobilizing the ranks of the revisionists also as a part of

rallying all the anti-Congress forces. That is, the Party does not compromise with the revisionists for fear that without such compromise the anti-Congress struggle will be weakened nor does it keep the Right Communists out of the anti-Congress front in the name of “uncompromising struggle against revisionism”. As pointed out earlier, during the Kerala mid-term election in 1965 and the general elections in 1967, the Party had adopted the line of including the Right Communists in the United Front and at the same time, as a part of the process of building up that Front, openly opposing revisionism in the ideological-political-organizational sphere.

Great Success of This Approach

The 1967 election results registered a great victory for this approach of the Party, they also showed the bankruptcy of the revisionist approach. The Kerala and West Bengal Governments dominated by Left forces came into existence. In both these States, the CPI(M) secured more seats than any other Left or democratic party. This position which the CPI(M) secured in two States was not secured by the Right Communists in any State. These are all significant developments. It became clear that in the two States where the Communist Party was gathering strength before the split, it was the CPI(M) which represented it.

To cover this up, the Right Communists tried to get the “honour” of being in the Ministries in three States—Bihar, U.P., and Punjab. And what was the result? The revisionists had to give up a basic position of theirs in the ideological struggle with the Marxists—the position of uncompromising struggle against parties like the Jana Sangh, Akali, etc. The same people who in 1965 in Kerala sabotaged the United Front in the name of uncompromising struggle with the Muslim League did not hesitate to become junior partners in Governments with Akalis and Jana Sangh in 1967. Can political bankruptcy, opportunism to get into Ministries be exhibited more nakedly?

Let that be. In the new situation which developed after the 1967 elections, how do things stand between Marxism and revisionism? Does the principle of "unity-struggle-more unity" still remain valid or has the struggle inside the U.F. ceased because of the formation of the non-Government as a result of the process of struggle since 1964? Has any new law of contradiction of "unity-more unity" replaced the law of "unity-struggle-more unity"?

Every person who believes in contradictions will say that it is wrong to pose the question this way, because it is a basic principle of the law of contradictions that everything in the world moves on the basis of conflicts between contradictory forces. Hence, anyone believing in contradictions will know that contradictory forces exist in the United Front formed in Kerala, that conflicts between them are inevitable and that these contradictions can be solved only through conflicts.

Instability in Kerala Since 1952

There is one factor in Kerala which covers up these realities. Since the first general elections in 1952 political and administrative instability has continued to exist in Kerala. Crises and continuous changes in Government have affected the lives of the people. The people were regretting that because of the Congress attitude of "not being able to rule, at the same time not allowing any one else to rule, political instability has become an incurable curse". From the experience of the 1954, 1957, 1960 and 1965 elections, they had been looking forward to a Government of a party or coalition of parties which could win the majority of seats. They saw the 1967 elections as the opportunity for this. Unlike in all the other States, even before the elections, seven parties formed a United Front on the basis of a minimum programme. And that Front won 117 of the 133 seats and a Government stable for the first time since 1952 has come into existence in the State. The people expected that the Front would be able to govern for five years without any difficulty. The constituent

parties of the Front have only to maintain the unity they forged before the elections, then Kerala will have a stable Government for the first time—this was their evaluation of the election result.

They considered it treason even to hint that even in this situation contradictions continued to exist inside the U.F. and that there would be conflicts between these forces. The enemies of the U.F. tried to spread demoralization among the people who had placed their trust in the U.F. by exaggerating the inevitable differences and conflicts inside the Front. There was reluctance in the beginning to give expression to the differences among the constituent parties themselves. And when these differences became accentuated and began to be aired, there was an uncontrolled expression of views and on their basis, attacks and counter-attacks.

This, at times, reached to a dangerous extent creating alarm in the U.F.'s friends that the U.F. and its Government would crack up and glee in the enemies of the Front. But on each such occasion temporary patchworks were made and unity safeguarded. But since there was no clear understanding about the relations between the various constituent parties of the Front, conflicts again raised their head. Instead of a principled struggle helpful to defend unity, the approach of disrupting unity through attacks and counter-attacks was adopted. This in an extremely intense form has been seen in the last two months in the U.F.

The CPI(M) wishes more than any one else to find a solution to this crisis. We have no intention of either going out ourselves or throwing any constituent out of the U.F. as is being propagated by the enemies of the U.F. whether outside or inside the Front itself. As has been made clear earlier, if any Party gets out of the U.F. on its own or tries to oust another party from it, that will be a betrayal of the pledge to the people. Those who are interested in the further development of the U.F. have to avoid this, find solutions to the conflicts that have recently arisen in the U.F. and further strengthen it.

See the Reality

But it is useless to make good intentioned statements that charges and counter-charges by the various constituents should be ended. The problem cannot be solved even by discussing the issues which have led to the "charges and counter-charges" and reaching an understanding about them. It is necessary to accept certain realities about the character of the U.F. and the relations between its constituents and arrive at mutual understanding on that basis. What I am attempting here is to place the views of the CPI(M) which will help this process.

First, as before 1967, since then also the non-Congress front is an alliance of various classes and sections whose party interests are in conflict with each other and hence differences and conflicts between them are inevitable; but there is another contradiction which is more important than the conflicts between them and that is the contradiction between Congress rule and the people; the objective of taking forward the victory won against Congress rule in 1967 and forming a non-Congress Government at the Centre itself unites the anti-Congress forces.

Kerala and West Bengal Governments

—Instruments of Struggle

Second, there are two distinct views on how to take forward the United Front Governments formed on the basis of the unity of anti-Congress forces. One of the two views is that of the CPI(M).

The Party looks at the victory of the non-Congress Front in Kerala and the formation of the non-Congress Government as only a small part of the struggle that has to be waged against the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes and their state on a countrywide scale. A new opportunity has been created for developing the organized strength of the toiling people who, under the leadership of the working class are fighting against the class enemies; this has to be utilized to strengthen the organized strength of the masses— this is the evaluation of the Party of the 1967 March election victory

and of the Kerala Government. And hence the Party's Central Committee stated that the Governments of West Bengal and Kerala must be looked upon as instruments of struggle

The Other Approach

As against this approach of the CPI(M), there is another approach inside the U.F. itself. The non-Congress Governments that have been formed are not to be used as instruments of struggle, the occasion for that struggle is on the eve of the next elections; what is to be done today is to use whatever powers are there to do whatever good things that can be done. If more good things than the Congress did or could do can be accomplished in these five years, that will naturally result in gaining strength for the U.F. (not only in this State but in other States also). As a result, in the next elections, the strength of the Congress would be reduced and that of the U.F. enhanced. The attempt to gain more strength by running a good administration after the election victory and through this gain even more strength and a bigger victory in the next elections will be defeated by the CPI(M) tactics of agitation along with administration—this is the second approach which has taken shape in the U.F.

The difference in the two approaches is a difference between the ideology of two classes which participate in the U.F.—the ideology of the working class and that of the bourgeoisie (or petty bourgeoisie). The first is the ideology of revolution; it is the approach of establishing a new state of the toiling people after smashing the bourgeois-landlord state through revolutionary struggles under the leadership of the working class, it is the strategy of using to the utmost the bourgeois parliamentary system in the activity to attain this objective. This strategy is directed to win majorities and get office wherever possible and utilize it to develop the revolutionary forces.

The second approach is that of making only some changes in the present state instead of smashing the bourgeois-landlord state and establishing a new state through the

revolutionary struggles of the masses, it is a strategy which makes the bourgeois parliamentary system and elections under it all-important, it is the practice of functioning the majority and office that have been won subject to the rules and traditions of the parliamentary system.

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Third, the same difference as on the issue of combining "administration and agitation" can be seen on the question of Centre-State relations also. The approach and line of the CPI(M) on this question is also very clear. The position today is that in a fully centralized state (at the Union level), as a result of the policies evolved and pursued by the bourgeois feudal ruling classes, it is impossible for the Government of any State to find solutions to the basic problems confronting that State. Hence, for a State like Kerala to find solutions to its chronic problems the policies of the Centre themselves have to be changed. And it is the task of the United Front and its Government to exert pressure for this policy change.

Not only the CPI(M) the United Front as a whole has accepted this reality. The policy statement adopted by the constituent parties of the U.F. before the elections had stated this clearly.

On the question of food, too, the policy statement had said :

"The Government will demand of the Centre to provide in time all the rice requirements of the State's people at prices within the capacity of the poor people of Kerala and will seek the co-operation of the people to exert the necessary pressure on the Centre. It is our opinion that to solve the food problem, substantial changes have to be made in the policies at present pursued by the Central Government. For instance, it is necessary to bring wholesale trade in foodgrains into the State sector, ensuring that small traders and co-operative societies are not adversely affected, guarantee fair prices to the cultivating peasants while at the same

time organizing distribution in such a way as to make food available to the consumers at low prices. All this cannot be done by a State Government alone, specially the Government in a deficit State like Kerala. What the Kerala Government will do is to exert pressure on the Centre to concede the demand that Kerala should get the rice it needs at low prices."

It follows from this that if it is impossible for the Kerala Government to solve the food, unemployment and other problems facing the State, and the Centre has to be made to find solutions to them, a struggle with the non-Congress Government and people of the State on one side and the Central Government on the other is inevitable.

But there are elements inside the U.F. who the moment they hear about struggle against the Centre become afraid or get worked up and abuse the CPI(M) for stating this truth. But even they have at times to participate in anti-Centre struggles (e.g., the Kerala Bandh of September 11, 1967) and even while opposing the concept of struggle against the Centre, they have to make statements that "they are not against struggle, they are only against struggle organized by the CPI(M) alone", etc. That is, they are in the unenviable position of having to pose as being not anti-struggle even while slandering the CPI(M) as the only exponent of struggle against the Centre.

Fourth, not only on issues like "administration and agitation," "anti-Centre struggle", etc. mentioned here, but on many other issues also like industrialization, attitude to labour, etc., there is a basic conflict between the working class approach and bourgeois or petty-bourgeois approach. Naturally this conflict finds expression inside the United Front, too. Even on questions like decentralization of power, official language and education medium, etc. conflicts are taking place all over the country between the interests of the working class and peasant masses and the approach of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. This also gets reflected inside the United Front.

Ideological Conflict

Fifth, it is clear from all this that in such circumstances, ideological conflicts will take place inside the Front. It is also clear that they cannot be confined to the four corners of the United Front. Many questions come up daily in the sphere of administration like the food policy, the Kerala Government should pursue and the place of control and de-control in it, the basic principle of taxation, role of the private sector, especially foreign monopolists, in industrialization, how to strengthen working class struggle and the role of the police and labour departments in it and so on. There will also be such differences naturally on the question of the place of Malayalam, Hindi and English in education and administration. All these differences cannot be covered up. Inevitably, there will be open debates and ideological conflicts on them. But to portray all this as the weakness and disintegration of the United Front will not conform to reality. On the other hand, it will be wise to accept these differences and conflicts as reality and come to commonly acceptable positions on issues on which there are differences.

The Rightist Line

Special mention has to be made here of the differences and ideological conflicts between Marxists and Right Communists. The SSP, Muslim League and other parties do not claim to be Marxists, they also openly declare that on questions like state, revolution, etc., theirs is a position of opposition to Marxism. The position of the Right Communists is different. It is while they claim that they stand firmly by Lenin's teachings on State and Revolution, that they demand "administration and agitation cannot go together, either stop agitation or give up administration". It is while they claim to stand by the Leninist principle that collaboration between Indian and foreign monopolists is harmful to India's national interests, that they also adopted the approach of holding talks with Japanese monopolists as the best way to in-

dustrialize Kerala. They have accepted the slogan of nationalization of wholesale trade in foodgrains, but that has not prevented them from propagating that rice prices have gone up in Kerala because of the checkpoints to prevent movement of rice from one district to another. In short, they have landed themselves in the position where they swear by Marxism-Leninism but advocate bourgeois-petty bourgeois policies and organize campaigns on that basis.

This is what is behind the Right Communist attacks on the CPI(M) in general, and its Ministers and leaders like P. Sundarayya and A. K. Gopalan in particular ever since the formation of the non-Congress Government in Kerala. It is not necessary to go into the details of these attacks here they have been stated on many occasions earlier. It will not be correct to think that these attacks are being made because of any special enmity to certain individuals. It will not also be correct to see it as an attempt to take revenge for the shattering blow they received in 1964-65. More important than all this is the conflict between the revolutionary ideology represented by the CPI(M) and the bourgeois-petty bourgeois ideology which the Right Communists represent. Their principle that administration and agitation cannot go together, their insistence that only after the Kerala Government has accomplished certain specific things can the struggle against the Centre be launched, their approach to food, industrial and labour policies—it is all this that forces them to take a stand against the CPI(M). Their attacks on the CPI(M) is only a part of this basic conflict in ideology.

Seventh, because of this, whenever bourgeois-petty bourgeois ideology in any form appear from the side of the Right Communists or any other constituent of the U.F., the CPI(M) cannot compromise with it, it has the duty to expose before the people the danger which such ideology entails to our democratic system. If the Party fails to fulfil this responsibility, it will be betrayal of the revolutionary working class movement.

It is in this regard that in the period from March 1967 to

August, the Kerala State leadership of the Party, the Ministry and I personally committed mistakes. What the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee did was to correct these mistakes. It has to be emphasized that the Central Committee (Madurai) Resolution of August 1967 and subsequent resolutions, while correcting this mistake corrected another mistake also. Another wrong tendency had begun to raise its head inside the Party, the tendency of disrupting the United Front itself and sacrificing the election gains of the people in the name of correcting the mistake of abandoning the ideological struggle inside the United Front. The Polit Bureau and the Central Committee corrected this mistake, too, when it evolved the policy.

Thus while the CPI(M) insists that differences which crop up on issues of fundamental differences should not be covered up, the Party is also vigilant that the method of giving form to this conflict should not lead to the disruption of the U.F. This means not only that no party either on its own leaves the Front or others oust one party from it. The Party is emphatic that the method of discussion and struggle should be such as to help the United Front as a whole to reach a commonly acceptable position.