

OUR DIFFERENCES WITH THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL ALTERNATIVE

**PROPOSED BY CPI (ML) LED BY
COMRADE VINOD MISHRA**

Of late, the CPI (ML) led by comrade Vinod Mishra has been very vociferous in propagating their concept of 'National Alternative' through various Party and allied journals, in organising seminars, organising Provincial and All-India conferences, based on this concept.

Our Party has never accepted their concept of National Alternative. Now their Party journal — Liberation (November, 1981) has published a special article. "Build up anti-autocratic Front taking anti-feudal struggle as the key link" explaining the ideological and political roots of their concept of National Alternative.

No doubt at present our two organisations are having bilateral discussions on various issues dividing our two organisations. In spite of these discussions. Since their concept of 'National Alternative' is being propagated openly, we are forced to make our criticism of their concept open. The purpose of our criticism is to openly demarcate our position from their concept and to facilitate a friendly and comradely debate on this question leading to better understanding among the communist revolutionaries and their organisations.

Our criticism is mainly based on the above-said article published in Liberation.

1. Strategic Aim.

India is a vast semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, ruled by the big bourgeois-big landlord classes, subservient to imperialism and social imperialism, with the latter having the dominant position in the economic, political and military affairs of the country.

The contradiction between the alliance of imperialism, feudalism and comprador-bureaucrat capitalism on the one hand and the broad masses of

the people on the other is the principal contradiction in our country today.

Only a successful People's Democratic Revolution and the establishment of people's Democratic Dictatorship of the workers, peasants, the middle classes and the national bourgeoisie under the leadership of the working class can lead to the liberation of our people from all exploitation and the Dictatorship of the ruling classes and pave the way for building Socialism and Communism in our country — the ultimate aim of our Party.

People's War based on Armed Agrarian Revolution is the only Path for achieving People's Democracy in our country.

Thus one could see that People's Democratic Dictatorship of the four democratic classes led by the working class is the strategic aim of the Party to achieve New Democratic Revolution in our country.

National Alternative — for what ?

So when these comrades speak lightly of National Alternative in our country, they should remember the following factors :

— The Alternative to the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal order can only be New Democratic order under the leadership of the working class.

— The National Alternative to the present big bourgeois - big landlord government can only be people's Democratic Dictatorship of four democratic classes led by the working class.

— The opposition section of the ruling classes and the CPI and CPM speak of the National Alternative to the present Indira Congress government through elections. This is nothing but Parliamentary Path, which will never take us to the desired goal.

— The National Alternative to the present Parliamentary Path is only People's War based on Armed Agrarian Revolution.

In our understanding, there can be no other National Alternative, as far as Marxists-Leninists are concerned.

This is the theoretical aspect concerning the National Alternative, which is missing in the various articles and propaganda material produced

by the organisation led by comrade Vinod Mishra.

11. General Political United Front of the working class with sections of the ruling classes — When ?

Of course these comrades will argue that here, they are using National Alternative, not of a strategic nature, but National Alternative in terms of the present day situation.

It is true that the strategic concept of People's Democratic Front, consisting of the Four Democratic classes—workers, peasants, middle classes and the National bourgeoisie—under the leadership of the working class—cannot be achieved with a single step. It is a long process of struggle.

New Democratic Revolution has to pass through many phases of struggle, with a change in the political situation of every country. We should give united front slogans that suit such a change, and combine that united front slogan with the resistance struggle and thus advance the Agrarian Revolutionary struggle in the country.

Even with this correct concept, let us examine the concept of National Alternative given by our comrades belonging to the organisation led by comrade Vinod Mishra.

In the name of the National Alternative, they have raised the slogan of building the Anti-Autocratic Front as their immediate task.

These comrades have explained that the classes that can be brought into this autocratic front include the proletariat, the peasants, the petty-bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie and lastly those sections of big bourgeoisie and big landlords who oppose autocratic clique'. (Ibid, P.13)

To build this anti-autocratic front, the said article further says 'and hence only democratic forces are to be included in this front, although it may on certain occasions make some adjustments with pro-American or other ruling class forces who have some contradictions with autocratic clique'. (Ibid, P.9)

On the one hand the article says that this is the front which includes 'pro-American forces'. On the other hand they say that 'Only democratic forces are to be included in this front and have some "adjustments" with the pro-American forces or other ruling class forces having contradictions with

the autocratic clique.

Isn't there a contradiction between these two formulae ? We leave it for the comrades to explain.

The comrades may say that this front includes only democratic forces. If true, if the Front includes only democratic forces, how is it different from the People's Democratic Front ? Then why should the front be changed into anti-autocratic front ?

The comrades may say that their front seeks only "adjustments" with sections of the ruling classes opposed to Indira's autocracy, and that these sections remain outside the anti-autocratic front. If so, how are they going to reconcile with their own statement that the front includes "those sections of big bourgeois-big landlord classes who oppose autocratic rule". They have to explain this contradiction.

The comrades may also say that their anti-autocratic front is not an exclusive anti-Soviet Front with pro-American forces. But will they explain whether the big bourgeois-big landlord forces opposed to Indira's autocracy includes the pro-American forces or not?

Any how, the political orientation of the article is too clear : It is for a general political united front with the pro-American and other opposition sections of the ruling classes.

This is the crux of the matter. This raises the fundamental question as to when the working class can unite with sections of the ruling classes.

The history of the advanced capitalist countries tells us that the working class and its party had united with a section of the ruling classes—the capitalists—during times of the struggle against fascism for certain democratic rights or against foreign invasion for national independence.

The history of all Asian, African and other Third World countries also tells us that in these countries the working class, and its party had united with sections of the comprador bourgeoisie against colonial rule and against foreign aggression.

Particularly, the history of the Chinese Revolution tells us that the CPC under the leadership of comrade Mao had united with the bourgeoisie i.e., with Sun Yat Sen — against imperialism and warlordism during 1924-

and again during the struggle against Japanese aggression with the *dominatang* (1937-45).

Based on this historical experience, our political resolution "Our tasks in the present situation" has clearly said that working class can unite with sections of the ruling classes against foreign aggression of either of the two super powers against our country for National Independence, or against neo-colonialism of any one of the two super powers for national liberation.

Even during the time of an Emergency rule, the working class unites with sections of the ruling classes for democratic rights as it happened during the earlier rule of Indira Gandhi during 1975-77.

Except in these three conditions, there is no theoretical foundation or historical precedence to show that the working class and its party can unite with sections of the ruling classes in a general political united front.

We have clearly stated that even when we unite with them on certain conditions, we should expose their reactionary nature and reactionary policies on other issues and thus maintain our independence.

On all other occasions, particularly during the period of semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism, we must utilise the contradictions of the ruling classes and their organisations to advance people's struggles—economic and political, national and international—link these immediate struggles of the people with the resistance struggle and step by step advance the agrarian revolution in the country to achieve the strategic objective — New Democratic Revolution.

From where does the authoritarianism or autocracy or even fascism stem in the conditions of our country today?

It is the present semi-feudal system in the country that gives rise to fascist methods of rule, emergency rule, authoritarianism or autocracy. As long as the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system continues in our country, the danger of fascism, authoritarianism or autocracy exists.

All the ruling class parties — the Indira Congress, the Pawar Congress, Lokdal, Janata the BJP — are interested in preserving the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal order. Even the CPI and CPM because of their revisionism are objectively helping in the preservation of the present system in the country.

Even the regional parties— the Akalis, the DMK and AIDMK — are all big bourgeois, big landlord parties interested only in preserving the present system in the country.

Since the Party of the working class — the Marxists-Leninists — is working for the total destruction of this system, any section of the ruling classes including those in the opposition or the CPI and CPM cannot and will not join this struggle.

Any adjustments with these sections in the name of building the anti-autocratic front can only mean the watering down of the struggle against the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in the country.

That is why our Party has ruled out any general political united front with any section of the ruling classes or the CPI and CPM, because such a step is bound to weaken our basic struggle against the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in the country.

Comrades belonging to the organisation led by comrade Vinod Mishra, knowing or unknowingly, have separated the struggle against Indira's autocracy from our basic struggle against the present system in the country. This is a very serious theoretical lapse on their part with dangerous political implications for the future.

One point for clarification — The article says that "autocracy is also linked with the concentration of capital in semi-feudal and semi-colonial countries but this capital is not imperialist finance capital but comprador-bureaucrat capital".

The article further says "internationally we find many autocratic rulers who are good at bargaining with the super powers and exercise relative freedom." (Emphasis ours)

What is the meaning of these sentences ? Can we deny the existence of foreign finance capital in India entrenched in both the private and public sectors, and the govt. getting thousands of crores of rupees as loans from the imperialist and social imperialist powers ? Isn't this foreign finance capital dominating the economic, political and military affairs of this country ? Isn't this foreign capital the main prop of the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in our country, which is the root cause of fascist repression, or authoritarianism or autocracy as you like to call it ?

You call the bargaining power of the autocratic rulers as "relative

freedom". Is this different from the "marginal independence" of our country being described by some communist revolutionaries? In spite of this bargaining power, is it not true to say that our ruling classes are subservient to imperialism and social imperialism?

United front with pro — American forces against pro — Soviet forces?

Now these comrades say that anti-autocratic front includes big bourgeois-big landlord classes opposed to Indira's autocracy. This cannot but include pro-American forces.

The two super powers — US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism — are two common enemies of the world people. The peoples of the world should fight against both these common enemies, taking Soviet Union as the greater danger.

Both these two super powers are contending for supremacy in India, and in this contention, Soviet Union has got the upper hand in the economic, political and military affairs of our country.

So in this situation, we should fight against all imperialisms, particularly the two super powers, taking Soviet Union as the greater danger.

Taking Soviet Union as the greater danger cannot and does not mean that we should unite with USA as against the Soviet Union either nationally or internationally.

Comrade Mao has always advocated that while driving the tiger away from the front door, one should beware of the wolf entering by the back door. But he never said that we should unite with the wolf in order to drive out the tiger.

Comrade Mao had always said that we should utilise the contradictions of the enemies and defeat our enemies one by one.

It is theoretically and politically wrong to always unite with the lesser enemy to defeat the greater enemy. It is absurd to think of such tactics in the struggle against semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism.

It is so with our struggle against the pro-Soviet and pro-American forces. Both of them represent different sections of the big bourgeois-big

landlord classes. Today our struggle is aimed at both these sections, the pro-Soviet and pro-American forces, taking the pro-Soviet forces as the greater danger.

Any idea of uniting with US imperialism as against Soviet social imperialism will only mean the replacement of the present Soviet domination by US domination. This will not bring about any change in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in our country.

Any idea of uniting with the pro-American forces to replace the present pro-Soviet Indira Gandhi government, in today's correlation of forces in the country, will only mean the replacement of the present pro-Soviet govt. with a pro-American govt. That will not bring about any change in the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in the country which is the root cause of all the miseries of our people and naturally they will not accept such a change. The earlier Janata government has already proved this.

This is enough to show the bankruptcy of building a united front with pro-American forces against pro-Soviet forces.

Are there exclusive pro-Soviet and pro-American forces at present in our country ?

One more point. Are there exclusive blocks of pro-Soviet forces and pro-American forces for our comrades to unite with the exclusive pro-American forces against the exclusive pro-Soviet forces ?

Now look at the role of the two Super powers in India today. The Soviet Union, while dominating the public sector and supply of military hardware to the Indian Army and having a military alliance with the Indian govt. in the form of the 'Friendship Treaty', is at the same time entering the private sector. On the political side, while mainly depending on the Indira Congress, the CPI and CPM to maintain its predominance in India, it is at the same time trying to create its own lobbies in all other big bourgeois-big landlord parties national and regional — including the opposition section of the ruling classes.

US imperialism and West European countries including Japan while maintaining their dominance in the private sector, trade and loans to the govt., are at the same time entering the public sector too.

On the political side, while mainly depending on such parties like

BJP and certain leading sections in the Lokdal, Janata and other regional parties etc., they are, at the same time trying to create their own lobbies inside the ruling Indira Congress itself.

In line with this role of the two Super powers in India, their respective lobbies, the pro-Soviet and pro-American lobbies in India are also playing a similar role.

While pro-Soviet lobby, mainly represented by the Indira Congress among the big bourgeois-big landlord parties, mainly depending on the Soviet Union for maintaining its power, is at the same time maintaining friendly relations with US imperialism and other imperialist powers in the West. The recent IMF loan is a clear example of this.

While the pro-US lobby, mainly depending on US imperialism and other Western powers, is at the same time maintaining friendly relations with the Soviet Union. None of them are for scrapping the so-called Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union.

The experience of the earlier Janata govt. has amply proved this. Not only that. The big bourgeois-big landlord ruling classes in India, and their parties, are expansionist by nature, while their methods may be different. To achieve their expansionist aims, they depend more on the Soviet Union — a rising imperialist power — than on US imperialism, which is on the defence everywhere.

Taking the particular situation existing in South Asia, where the Indian govt. is in contradictions with its neighbours, particularly with China, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Indian ruling classes as a whole are dependent on the Soviet Union to maintain and improve their position.

Such being the actual position, exclusive pro-Soviet and pro-US lobbies existing in India at present is nothing to do with reality. And for these comrades to speak of building the anti-autocratic front with pro-US forces is nothing but a day-dream

What is the line of the CPC and the Chinese govt. on this?

These comrades have always been the first in welcoming every Chinese move, political and ideological. They even supported the recent decision of the CPC to restore Liu Shao Chi.

We request these comrades to calmly consider whether their present line of building the anti-autocratic front with pro-American forces against the pro-Soviet forces has anything to do with the current line of the CPC and Chinese govt. towards the two super powers.

Today, CPC and Chinese govt. are following three worlds theory, which takes the two super powers as the source of all the troubles in the world and opposes both of them, taking the Soviet Union as the chief source of war danger and hence the greater danger.

It supports all National Liberation struggles of all the third world countries against all imperialist powers, and their hegemonism, particularly that of the two super powers.

CPC and China, oppose Soviet aggression in Afghanistan and Soviet-backed Vietnamese aggression against Kampuchea. At the same time they equally oppose US support to Israel's aggression against the Arab countries and the Palestinian people. It opposes American support to white-racist South Africa's aggression against the African countries and their people. It exposes the American conspiracies in Korea and Taiwan and the Soviet military concentration on China's northern border.

Recently, during his tour of Nepal, the Chinese Premier openly declared that China will not join any anti-Soviet front.

These are enough to show that China and CPC oppose both the super powers, taking Soviet Union as the greater danger. This is the correct line that any Marxist-Leninist Party should adopt. We only want our comrades of the organisation led by comrade Vinod Mishra to apply this correct international line to the concrete conditions in India where both the super powers are contending for domination. If they do that, they cannot but come to the same conclusion as we have — oppose both the super powers and their lobbies where and when necessary, taking Soviet Union and its allies as the greater danger.

III. Wrong political assessments.

No doubt it is true that today Indira Congress is in power not only in the centre but in the majority of states also. It is the ruling power which is mainly responsible for maintaining the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in the country. It is the ruling power that suppresses and oppresses our people. It has already armed itself with NSA and ESMA to

suppress the just struggles of the people.

Therefore Indira Congress and their governments should be the main targets for political attack. In order to defend and extend democratic rights and civil liberties, on certain immediate issues of the people, it is necessary to unite with the opposition section of the ruling classes, while at the same time exposing their reactionary nature on other issues and thus utilise their contradictions with the ruling power to advance the people's struggles. While so doing, we should not create any illusions among the people about the "democratic nature" of this opposition section of the ruling classes, and their parties.

But the comrades belonging to the organisation led by com. Vinod Mishra are not content with this. To suit their wrong concept of National Alternative — Build the anti-autocratic front—they are spinning out certain political assessments which have nothing to do with the reality. Look at some of the astounding assessments of these comrades.

The said article says :

"Indira autocracy arose as the representative of the most reactionary, ultra-chauvinist section of the ruling classes with the active support of Soviet Social imperialism."

To picture Indira Gandhi as "representative of the most reactionary, ultra chauvinist section of the ruling classes" is nothing but one-sided stress.

Practice has proved that Sri Morarji Desai or Charan Singh are no less reactionary than Indira Gandhi. They are all representatives of the same ruling class — the big bourgeois-big landlord classes. Since the ruling classes themselves are reactionary and chauvinist, it is wrong to pick out certain individuals like Indira Gandhi or one political party- the Indira Congress — as the most reactionary or ultra chauvinist section of the ruling classes. Such a definition is devoid of any class approach. Such an assessment has nothing to do with any reality.

Can anybody say that BJP and its RSS are less chauvinist than Indira Congress ? Which is the ruling class party in India that is not playing chauvinistic role towards our neighbours ? For that matter, even the CPI and CPM are not lagging behind.

They do not stop with this. They further say "we call this clique (Indira clique) autocratic" (Ibid-p.9)

As the characteristics of this autocratic clique, they speak of this clique playing with "populism", "concentrated campaign against organised working class", concentration of power in executive hands", "special penchant for police actions in dealing with mass movements", "supreme leader" etc.

In all humility, let these comrades explain if the other opposition section of the ruling classes have not exhibited the very same characteristics, that are attributed to the Indira clique.

Did not the Janata Party play the very same "populist" slogans to come to power in 1977? Did they not betray the people the moment they come to power in 1977? When once the Janata Party came to power, did it not resort to the very same repressive measures to suppress the people's struggles? Who was responsible for the murders of Pantnagar during the Janata regime? Who was responsible for mass murders of workers at Swadeshi Textile Mills of Kanpur? Who was responsible for police repression against the peasants of Baurihora in Bihar in 1978-79? Who started the communal riots in Bihar over the question of 'reservations' during the period of the Janata government? Didn't the Janata government enact various Goonda Acts to suppress the working class strikes? Didn't the Janata govt. in MP enact the mini MISA to suppress the working class strikes? Did not the Janata government continue keeping hundreds of communist revolutionaries in jails throughout the country under one pretext or another? Didn't the Janata government allow the Indira Congress ministry in Andhra to extend the Disturbed Areas Act to suppress the growing peasant movement in Karimnagar district? Didn't the Janata government continue employing the notorious Preventive Detention Act without trial? Didn't the Janata government arm itself with powers to enact regional Emergency rule?

If one remembers that the present Janata, Lokdal, BJP etc. were all partners in that Janata govt. notorious for all the misdeeds mentioned above, how can these comrades say that only Indira clique is autocratic and all others opposed to it are democratic?

While fighting Indira's autocracy and utilising the contradictions of the opposition with the ruling power, one should not create any illusions about them among the people, because when they come to power, they are bound to use the very same autocratic methods and repression against the people, because both of them belong to the same ruling classes — the big bourgeois, big landlord classes.

We must also remember that bourgeois democracy or bourgeois fas-

cism are two methods of the ruling classes which they will use depending on the economic and political crisis to the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system. Indira Congress or any other opposition ruling class party will resort to both these methods to preserve the present system of exploitation as the situation demands.

That is the reason why we say that while we utilise the contradictions of the ruling classes and their parties on certain issues to a certain extent, at the same time we should not have any general political united front with any section of the ruling classes, because our struggle is basically aimed at the total destruction of the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal system.

Experience of CPC during the First Civil War

This was also the practice of CPC in the Chinese Revolution during the first civil war period — the period of struggle against the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system in China.

As comrade Mao says in 'New Democracy', during this period, the CPC did not have any general political united front with any sections of the big bourgeois, big landlord classes, with any section of the Koumintang. During this period, even the national bourgeoisie in China was mainly tied to the Koumintang.

During this period, in the areas ruled by the Koumintang, CPC worked among non-party intellectuals, among the Kuomintang army men, among the progressives — teachers, students and intellectuals - as can be seen from the pamphlet 'Experiences of Chinese Revolution some unpublished notes - recently distributed by IPANA (pp 68-69).

In the liberated areas, the main targets of the United Front during this period was to win over non-party progressively enlightened gentry and intellectuals, enlightened gentry meaning the political, economic and military representatives of the landlord class in the locality.

The main slogan of the United front work in this period had been "resolutely overcome close-doorism", "unite with our real friends, win over the middle forces and attack our real and chief enemy".

The basic policy formulated by comrade Mao was to isolate the die-hard forces, develop the progressive forces and win over the middle forces. This is the meaning of utilising the enemies' contradictions to strike at the

chief enemy.

United front work should be done in upper, middle and lower strata, but with lower stratum as the basis. If one combines the three, that will be a great achievement. This was the method of CPC for united work at that time in China.

Now let us look at the type of united front work that CPC did in Shanghai at that time under the occupation of Kuomintang. The main tasks were : to organise the basic masses, to establish united front, to penetrate the enemy ranks, to cooperate with the armed struggle in the countryside. On the united front, the same IPANA pamphlet says :

“In the big cities, working class is rather concentrated and also the upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie (professors, high ranking intellectuals). So it is important to organise a united front. In the cities, the main targets for setting up the front is the national bourgeoisie.”

This experience of China should tell us that during the period of struggle against semi-colonial and semi-feudal system, there can be no general political united front with any section of the ruling classes except utilising the contradictions of the ruling classes on certain issues to a certain extent, to our advantages.

IV. Dangerous concessions.

The slogan of building the anti autocratic front which includes ‘sections of the bourgeoisie and big landlords who oppose that authocratic clique’ -- is bound to lead to dangerous concessions to these sections in order to unite with them in the struggle against Indira's autocracy.

Agrarian Revolutionary struggle relegated to the background.

This is bound to lead to placing the Agrarian Revolutionary task to a secondary position and building the so-called anti-autocratic front as the primary task.

This is nothing out of our imagination. The said article itself says that “many revolutionary and democratic forces have now the question of defeating the autocracy as their immediate task”.

The said article goes to the extent of saying that this struggle against autocracy is a phase of struggle. It says "Moreover what is more important is to expose the tactical slogans of various opportunist combines and to evolve, propogate and popularise our own tactical slogans in this transitional period". (Emphasis ours)

So it is clear that these comrades think the struggle against Indira's autocracy is a distinctive phase-- a transitional phase on our way towards New Democratic Revolution. It is really surprising how these comrades can say that change of big bourgeois - big landlord govts. can bring about transitional phases of struggle, without any change in class relations. Having called this a distinctive phase of struggle, it is not surprising to see them taking this struggle against autocracy as the immediate task and all other tasks as secondary.

This is also not our interpretation. The intention of the authors of the said article is too clear to be missed. The article says : "The great expedition for area-wise seizure of power temporarily halts"

What is the meaning of this? Even given the most favourable interpretation, it can only mean slow abandonment of resistance struggle under their leadership whatever be its character and strength. There can be no other meaning for this.

Concession to the opposition section of the ruling classes

Having made concessions on the theoretical concept itself, having taken the struggle against Indira's autocracy as the immediate task, these comrades are bound to make concessions to the opposition section of the ruling classes and their parties in order to unite with them against Indira's autocracy.

This again is not our assumption. Look at what their article itself says.

"It may on certain occassions make some adjustments with pro-American or other ruling class forces who have some contradictions with the autocratic clique".

What is the meaning of these adjustments? This can be nothing but concessions to those ruling classes who join you in the struggle against Indira's autocracy.

Having gone so far, they are giving theoretical cover to giving these concessions : While explaining that the contradictions of the ruling classes have to be utilised, the article says : "utilisation means mutual adjustments on some issues against the common enemy without relinquishing our class position and our right to criticise and to independently mobilise the masses".

What are the issues on which these comrades want to mutually adjust with the opposition section of the ruling classes opposed to Indira Gandhi ? What type of adjustments do they want to make with these sections ?

Ofcourse they do not want to spell it out. But the whole orientation of this article is too clear on this -- It is putting their "resistance struggle" into the background "temporarily".

Programme of Action without resistance

The programme of Action that the article is proposing is too clear on this :

- Expose thoroughly all opportunistic alliances.
- Support to united attempts of major trade unions towards mass political strikes.
- Emphasise on local united campaigns.
- Build non-Party-class organisations.
- Do infiltration work in those parties, organisations which are led by big bourgeoisie and landlords.

What does it all amount to ? This will lead to nothing but some economic and political agitations, some agitational struggles on immediate issues of the people and some united work with other mass organisations.

If this is not relegating the resistance struggles of the masses into the background, what else is this ?

It is very significant to note that nowhere the article has explained how they are going to overthrow Indira's autocracy -- through parliamentary path or agrarian revolutionary struggle, as the main form of struggle. It is a very significant omission to note.

The article itself says that they are temporarily halting "area-wise seizure of power". The article proposes a programme of action which is devoid of any resistance struggle. Then how are these comrades going to overthrow Indira's autocracy?

After having said that the struggle against Indira's autocracy is the immediate task, that this struggle against Indira's autocracy is the transitional phase, and after having said that they are halting temporarily the "area-wise seizure of power", to say that they are still for "gradually arming the masses" has no practical meaning. It can never come into practice. It is not the primary task according to their own written words. "Arming the people" and continuous resistance to landlord-goonda-police counter-revolutionary violence cannot be separated from the task of building the base areas. But they say that they are "temporarily" halting this process.

Bourgeois Alternative

Whether they like it not, knowingly or unknowingly, the orientation in the article is bound to lead to the bourgeois alternative -- the parliamentary path.

After having said that Indira's autocracy is the main enemy and should unite with pro-American forces and other big bourgeois - big landlord forces opposed to Indira Gandhi -- they will be forced to tie themselves to these forces.

But these forces want to defeat Indira's autocracy through elections. But the slogans of these comrades so far has been "boycott the elections" as a strategic slogan. But in their anxiety to defeat Indira's autocracy, the main enemy, their followers are bound to support these "anti-autocratic forces" in elections either officially or unofficially or through their mass organisations.

This practice is bound to remain for a long time to come with them. When Indira Gandhi's autocratic clique is in power their immediate task will be to defeat that clique and when that clique is in opposition, their main task will be to prevent it from coming back to power.

Their orientation that the struggle against Indira's autocracy is the immediate task cannot but lead to this practice.

The idea of building the anti-autocratic front with pro-American forces

and other opposition sections of the ruling classes against Indira's autocracy only breeds illusions about these forces. This can be seen from the invitation letter in Hindi sent by the organisers of the Delhi seminar where they raised the question of an intermediate government.

They have also characterised that only Indira clique is autocratic. Will not this formula ultimately lead them into general political united front with CPI and CPM -- who claim to be 'heroes' of the struggle against Indira's authoritarianism? Let us wait and see.

Their characterisation that the struggle against Indira's autocracy is a transitional phase of struggle, that they are halting temporarily "area-wise seizure of power" -- is bound to lead to a situation of tying themselves with those ruling classes opposed to Indira Gandhi and their bourgeois alternative.

The whole concept and orientation of these comrades on the question of 'National Alternative' has nothing to do with the experience of the Chinese revolution.

In all the phases of the Chinese struggle, against Kuomintang in the First Civil War, against Japanese aggression and in the Second Civil War -- armed struggle was the principal form of struggle and all other forms of struggles were combined with this principal form of struggle.

Taking this experience, united front with the opposition section of the ruling classes on certain issues, to a certain extent, should be linked with the main form of struggle -- agrarian revolutionary struggle. Without agrarian revolution, there can be no basic changes in our society.

So it is wrong in principle to delink the struggle against Indira's autocracy from the agrarian revolutionary struggle, as these comrades are doing.

Our Path clearly says :

— The Path of Protracted People's War means taking armed agrarian revolutionary struggle as the principle form of struggle and combining it with all other forms of struggle.

— The path of Protracted People's War means taking the armed peasant struggle and combining it with the necessary changes in the tactics of united front, as the situation demands, in all phases of struggle.

— Armed agrarian revolutionary struggle is the main form of struggle in the People's War.

— Agrarian revolution means a struggle against all forms of exploitation, oppression and suppression practiced by the landlords.

— Communist revolutionaries should consciously direct all these struggles towards Armed agrarian revolution.

— The struggle for Agrarian Revolution—the primary task—should be linked with all other forms of struggles, national and international, the struggle for united front and the struggle for civil liberties.

— The People's struggles, particularly the peasant struggles, should be linked with the resistance struggle against landlord-goonda-police, counter-revolutionary violence.

— The people's struggles, the resistance struggle and party building are inter-linked and they cannot be separated.

The link between the principal form of struggle and other forms of struggle has been correctly formulated here. Here in India, in all the phases, agrarian revolutionary struggle should remain the main form of struggle.

All the immediate struggles of the masses -- economic and political, national and international -- including the struggle for united front and for civil liberties should be consciously diverted towards the resistance struggle, taking the present situation in our country into consideration.

It is entirely wrong to delink the struggle for united front against Indira's autocracy from the resistance struggle.

Of course these comrades say that they want to build the "anti-autocratic front" taking the anti-feudal struggle as the key link.

If these comrades are serious in taking the anti-feudal struggle as the key link, then can they escape from the responsibility of organising the peasants for resistance against landlord-goonda-police counter-revolutionary violence?

In our country, a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, the people even in their anti-feudal partial struggles, are faced with the suppression by landlord-goonda-police combine. The people should be politically and

organisationally prepared to resist the counter-revolutionary violence of the landlord-goonda-police. To resist this counter-revolutionary violence, the people should be armed with the locally available weapons.

If one wants to take the anti-feudal struggle as the key link, one cannot separate it from active resistance to the landlord-goonda-police violence.

Is there any hint in this article about linking the anti-feudal struggle with the resistance struggle ?

On the other hand are they not halting this resistance struggle for the sake of building the so-called anti-autocratic front ?

In today's semi-colonial and semi-feudal conditions of our country, there can be no real anti-feudal struggle without active resistance and arming of the people with the locally available weapons.

If one takes up active resistance struggle against the landlords and their henchmen, what becomes of the 'adjustments' that these comrades want to make with the opposition section of the ruling classes ?

That is why we say that their whole concept of 'building the anti-autocratic front', taking it as the immediate task, their 'adjustments' with these sections for the sake of united front with them, precludes any active resistance to landlord-goonda-police violence.

In the absence of such active resistance, their anti-feudal struggle cannot go beyond agitational struggles on economic issues, at best some militant struggles without any political orientation of consciously leading them to agrarian revolutionary struggles, the resistance struggle, and building areas of resistance.

V. Their practice

The practical steps these comrades are adopting to build the National Alternative - "building the anti-autocratic front" are also illuminating. When we see the practice of these comrades for the last six months one cannot but come to the following conclusions :

Without the Party leadership.

The state conferences and the Delhi seminar, held so far, show all the participants are various mass organisations - some under their own leadership, some under the leadership of others, some mere paper organisations or nominally existing, and certain individuals with their own political aims.

What is singularly conspicuous is the absence of their Party. They always stress that only mass organisations should participate in such meetings.

Can anybody build a united front, whatever be its name, without the leadership of the working class party ?

On the one hand they say that without exposing "opportunist political alliances" and "popularise our own tactical slogans", "proletarian leadership cannot be established".

But one has to ask-can proletarian leadership over the united front be established without the proletarian party directly taking part in it ? How can the mass organisations under the leadership of the party fulfill the task of ensuring the leadership of the Party ? Has any body ever heard of such a proposal ?

Of course, they use such terms as proletariat "as leading core of this movement", "peasants, especially landless and poor peasants constitutes the main force of this movement", that "the sum total of united front work must be a front led by and based on the worker-peasant alliance". These expressions have no meaning, if there is no direct participation of the working class party in the united front work and leading the same. Worker - peasant alliance as the basis of active resistance struggle against the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system.

A united front, whatever be its name, without worker - peasant alliances as its basis, without the leadership of the working class party, can it be anything except heterogeneous organisation without a clear cut political orientation ? Can such a united front ever mobilise the people for struggle against Indira's autocracy?

They say that the Party of the working class should not directly participate in such united fronts. Since, according to them, such direct participation will drive away the non-party democrats, party should be behind the cover ! Non-party democrats do not want to associate with us directly in the struggle against Indira's autocracy but they want our mass organisations

to participate in such a struggle. With such a concept, are not the non-party democrats utilising the working class party for their own selfish ends ?

This whole concept goes against the basic Marxist-Leninist concept - that the working class Party should be the leader of the united front and it should have worker-peasant alliance as the basis of the united front : only then can the working class party give leadership to the non-party democrats.

Now they want other revolutionary groups to participate in such united front organisations and their conferences. Without prior agreement among the participant communist revolutionary organisations on the programme and the line of action of such an alternative, what will happen ? Given the differences among these organisations, bitter debates are bound to take place among them on the programme and line of action in the presence of the non-party democrats. It is the non-party democrats that will utilise our differences to their advantage, and not the communist revolutionaries leading the non-party democrats onto the path of struggle. Here also one can see the absence of party leadership over the united front.

Association with dubious elements

In the name of drawing non-party democrats into the united front work, these comrades are associating themselves with elements who have their own selfish political aims.

To give only two examples :

— In spite of our warning about the characteristics of Datta Samant and his trade union movement, these comrades took the trouble of going to Datta Samant to invite him to the Delhi Seminar. He curtly refused to come. The nature of this non-party democrat can be seen from the fact that he called upon the Bombay city transport workers under his leadership, to run the buses when the entire workers of India went on a day's general strike on 19th Jan. 82.

— Shankar Guha Neogi, another non-party "democrat", duly attended the Delhi Seminar, participated in the discussions, joined the All -- India Preparatory Committee to organise the National conference, but dutifully sent a telegram to Indira Gandhi saying that his trade union would not join the January 19th All India strike.

Can such elements ever to expected to join the struggle against Indira's

autocracy ?

National Alternative through Seminars

Their method of creating these organisations is also peculiar. They call various organisations for seminars on certain subjects and after discussion on the said subject, they immediately try to create an All India organisation as part of their preparation for the National Alternative.

Seminars being organised on certain subjects are welcome. But without confining themselves to this declared objective, it is a very wrong method for them to build All -- India organisations with their concept of National Alternative, for which one cannot but object.

These methods are only a reflection of weak mass base and lack of solid mass work to prepare the proper ground for an effective united front.

Lack of sufficient preparation from the base

The struggle for united front should be attempted at all levels -- the base, the middle and the upper levels. Out of these, the work at the base is the main. This is the Marxist-Leninist concept and practice.

Having once decided that the struggle against Indira's autocracy is the immediate task, having decided that this is also a 'transitional' phase of the struggle for New Democratic Revolution, they go ahead with calling the mass organisations under their leadership and under the leadership of others, some weak, some nominal, some existing only on papers, to State conferences and All-India Conferences, and setting up State level bodies and All-India organisation to bring their National Alternative into practice.

This is nothing but a fictitious attempt. In the absence of solid mass organisations and solid mass base, conferences will be the beginning and the end in itself of all such attempts to build the united front.

United front with other organisations requires joint campaigns on agreed issues, joint struggles at the base level on agreed issues. Joint activities and joint struggles demand joint discussions to decide on issues of struggle, joint campaigns and joint struggles. Only such an orientation and practice will prepare the ground for building the front at the top. Now they attack this method as a mechanical step. Skipping over the task of building the mass base through joint struggles, these comrades have now taken to

the method of artificially creating a united front organisation with various mass organisations -- mainly theirs. This cannot but end in failure.

Now these comrades are even trying to give a theoretical explanation, and that too wrongly quoting comrade Lenin. Now they say that "it is imperative on our part to 'act from above'".

During the course of 1905 Revolution in Russia, it was comrade Lenin who called on the party "to act from above". But this was when he was giving the call for a "Provisional Revolutionary government", to demarcate the Party from the political lines of the Cadets, the Mensheviks etc. He was giving the political orientation for the 1905 Revolution. This call he could give because he had armed masses behind him and the Soviet were springing up and the 1905 Revolution was surging forward.

What has Lenin's call to 'act from above' to do anything with your present activities, when you do not have the armed masses behind you and when you are even "temporarily" halting the "resistance" struggle under your leadership, whatever be its character and strength ?

VI. Refutation of Slander.

Immediately after the Joint Declaration (6-10-81) you comrades went ahead with your concept of 'National Alternative'.

Nationally, our comrades have abstained from these conferences organised by them. These comrades at lower levels, in various states have released a slander campaign against our party and our General Secretary that having first agreed to participate in their conferences for the National Alternative, we have gone back on our word.

Though the General Secretary of our party had brought this slander campaign to the notice of your General Secretary, nothing has been done so far to remove the misunderstandings on this question and put the things in the correct perspective.

First of all we want to say that our delegation and the General Secretary of our party, in our mutual discussions, have never agreed to the concept of 'National Alternative' as explained by the organisation led by comrade Vinod Mishra.

In our joint discussions, both the delegations explained their respec-

tive positions on the question of a National Alternative which were in variance with each other. Ultimately it was agreed to form Joint Action Committee of Communist Revolutionaries, the concept and Programme of the National Alternative, the participants to the National Conference and the name of the 'National Alternative' should be discussed and accepted in the said Joint Action Committee and that the National Conference should be held on the basis of the call to be given by the said Joint Action Committee.

This was agreed to by both the delegations to the joint discussions. This was the political background for saying in the Joint Declaration "intensifying joint activities to develop people's struggles and to build up the All-India National Alternative comprising of mass organisations under the leadership of communist revolutionaries and other democratic forces".

One should not look at the Joint Declaration apart from this political agreement.

Even taking the literal meaning of the Joint Declaration, there are two important things which these comrades are conveniently forgetting. The All-India National Alternative has to be preceded by the intensification "of joint activities to develop people's struggles". Let us remember that after the Joint Declaration, there was no effort for joint activities in the proper sense of the term, let alone intensifying the joint activities.

Secondly there is no mention of accepting the National Alternative based on the understanding of the organisation led by comrade Vinod Mishra. What should be the basis of the National Alternative, its concept and orientation -- that has been left open for future discussions in the said Joint Action Committee.

This shows very clearly that our delegation and our General Secretary have never accepted the concept of the National Alternative as being propagated by the organisation led by comrade Vinod Mishra and the question of going back on our given word does not arise at all.

On the other hand, we want to remind these comrades that so far in all our joint discussions they have all along been telling us that they had no basic differences with our resolution "Our tasks in the present situation" passed by our Special Congress. But the present article of these comrades "Build up anti-autocratic front" shows they basically differ with our political resolution on the question of utilising the contradictions of the ruling classes.

In all the joint discussions, held so far, what these comrades have been saying is that only the four democratic classes come into the united front. Now they say that their united front consists of pro-American forces and other sections of the ruling classes opposed to Indira Gandhi.

VII. Our concept and practice to build the United front.

The strategic united front we have to build is People's Democratic Front consisting of the workers, peasants, middle classes and the national bourgeoisie under the leadership of the working class in order to make the New Democratic Revolution a success.

Of course, at present, the national bourgeoisie is mainly tied to the various sections of the ruling classes and their parties and they are not yet prepared to align themselves with us in the struggle against imperialism, and the ruling classes in India, who are comprador in nature.

But there is basic antagonism between the interests of national bourgeoisie and imperialism and its subservient ruling classes. So, as the economic and political crisis in India deepens, as the national bourgeoisie feels the oppression of imperialism and the big bourgeois-big landlord classes, as the revolutionary movement under the leadership of the working class grows into an alternative force, then the national bourgeoisie will break with imperialism and the present ruling classes.

Keeping the vacillating role of the national bourgeoisie and their connections with exploitations, with a correct approach towards them, as the revolutionary movement advances, a section of the national bourgeoisie will join us, a section will get neutralised and a section having connections with imperialism and the present ruling classes may join counter-revolution.

Keeping this strategic concept of the united front, we should continue to take a positive attitude towards the national bourgeoisie, voice their demands in opposition to imperialism and the present ruling classes, and always seek points of agreement with this section for joint struggles and agitation, while opposing their vacillating role.

This is our strategic concept of People's Democratic Front. A correct approach to the United Front helps the agrarian revolutionary struggle and the agrarian revolutionary struggle again strengthens the struggle for united front.

Of course keeping this strategic concept of the People's Democratic Front, various tactics have to be adopted, in various phases of our struggle to build the United Front, all finally leading to the People's Democratic Front.

In building the United Front, our attitude towards the various sections of the ruling classes should also be clear.

As we have described in the beginning itself, there are specific occasions when the working class can have a general political united front with certain sections of the ruling classes for specific objectives.

But such conditions do not exist in India at present. That is why we have rejected the policy of having any general political united front with any sections of the ruling classes, at present.

Even then we should utilise the contradictions of the various ruling classes on various issues, from issue to issue, as we have fully explained in our political resolution, "Our tasks in the present situation" and our basic lessons document.

That is the reason why we are basically opposed to the concept of "anti-hegemonic front", "anti-Soviet front", "Patriotic and Democratic Front", or your "anti-autocratic front", which are bound to lead to a general political united front with sections of the ruling classes, whatever be the subjective wishes of those who advance these slogans.

Any united front we build now, should at least help us to unleash the common struggle against the present government, help our resistance struggle, finally leading to the establishment of base areas. Otherwise it has no meaning.

Our Practice

To build the united front, this is what we are practising :

— To build the worker-peasant alliance which should be the basis for any United Front.

— To work in other Trade Unions under the leadership of other parties, while building our own trade unions, and thus build the unity of the working class.

— To participate in all general agitations and struggles given by the opposition section of the ruling classes including the revisionists and neo-revisionists if they help in the anti-government struggle. Even if we are not partners in any joint committees, we join in such agitations and struggles with our own slogans.

— We utilise the contradictions of the ruling classes and their parties on specific issues to unite with all those that could be united on these issues against the greater danger, the present Indira Congress government.

— We unite with all those that are prepared to unite with us in the various civil liberties both at the state and All India level.

— We unite with others in India-China Friendship Association if they are willing to work on the single issue of Friendship between India and China.

— We unite with others in various writer's organisations.

— Our student organisations are uniting with other student organisations for struggles on specific issues whenever possible.

— We are utilising the contradictions of the landlord groups in the rural areas so as to defeat the main landlord in any particular area, without aligning ourselves with any landlord group.

— We are uniting with others in various employee organisations.

With this approach and practice, we have joined all joint agitations called by the opposition sections of the ruling classes, other trade unions, on various issues in all the provinces where our party units are working. Our student organisation has united with other student organisations in Punjab to conduct the struggle against bus-fare hike. We are uniting the broadest sections of the masses and mobilising them to maintain the communal peace in Punjab.

We believe that with this approach and practice towards united front, our contacts with others are bound to grow, having a positive effect on the immediate struggles of the people, ultimately leading to the establishment of the people's Democratic Front with the four democratic classes under the leadership of the working class.

VIII. The crux of our differences

The crux of our differences on the question of the 'National Alternative' are :

(1) For our Party, in the phase of the struggle against semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, the National Alternative is New Democratic Revolution under the leadership of working class, whereas your organisation is proposing defeat of Indira's autocracy as the immediate task.

For our Party, the National Alternative to the present big bourgeois-landlord government is People's Democratic Front consisting of the democratic classes -- the workers, the peasants, middle classes and the national bourgeoisie under the leadership of the working class with worker-peasant alliance as the basis, whereas your organisation is proposing "Building the anti-autocratic Front" as the National Alternative. This is nothing but a bourgeois alternative.

For our Party, People's War based on Agrarian Revolutionary struggle is the only National Alternative to the present Parliamentary Path peddled and practiced by all the opposition section of the ruling classes and the CPI and CPM, whereas your Party is proposing building the "anti-autocratic front" as the National Alternative, which is bound to lead the Marxist-Leninist Party to the Parliamentary Path either in the name of the Party or through mass organisations.

(2) For our Party both the Super powers -- US imperialism and Soviet social imperialism -- are the common enemies of the world people, with Soviet social imperialism as the greater danger, both nationally and internationally, and the working class party should mobilise the people of India against both the super powers, taking Soviet Union as the greater danger, whereas your party is proposing to build in India an anti-autocratic front with pro-American forces as against the anti-Soviet forces. Such a course either nationally or internationally is bound to play into the hands of US imperialism and its allies in India.

(3) For our Party the struggle against semi-colonial and semi-feudal system is a distinct phase of struggle. Change of big bourgeois-big landlord governments does not bring any changes in the class relations of the present day society, whereas your party thinks that the struggle against Indira's autocracy is a transitional phase of struggle. Such a formula is not only based on false assumptions, but is bound to lead the working class party into the

hands of that section of the ruling classes opposed to Indira's autocracy.

(4) Our Party thinks that autocracy, authoritarianism or fascism is a product of the present semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and that any big bourgeois-big landlord party, national or regional, coming to power, is bound to resort to repressive measures to suppress the growing just struggles of the people to save their semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, and in order to liberate our people from all exploitations and repression, the struggle should be directed towards the destruction of semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, whereas your party is proposing that Indira's clique is the only autocratic clique whose defeat is the immediate task. Such a formulation does not even take into consideration the experience of the earlier Janata government, and it only breeds illusions among the people about the opposition section of the ruling classes.

(5) Our Party holds that in a period of foreign aggression against our country by any one of the two super powers, the working class party should have a general political united front with certain sections of the ruling classes for National Independence. Similarly during the period of neo-colonialism by any one super power in our country, the working class should have a general political united front with sections of the ruling classes for National Liberation.

Even in periods of Emergency rule, as in Indira Gandhi's rule during 1975-76, the working class Party can have a united front with sections of the ruling classes for Civil Liberties.

In all other periods, the struggle is aimed against the whole system of semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism. In such periods, there can be no general political united front between the working class and any section of the ruling classes, but the policy should be one of utilising the contradictions of the ruling classes and their parties from issue to issue.

Based on this concept, in today's conditions in our country the policy of our Party is to utilise the contradictions of the ruling classes and their parties on the immediate issues of the people, national and international, economic and political, and all these people's struggles should be primarily aimed against the government of Indira Congress and thus defeat the enemies one by one.

But your party is proposing a general united front with opposition sections of the ruling classes in the name of building the anti-autocratic

front, which is bound to lead the working class party to adopt the bourgeois alternative.

(6) Our party firmly holds that in all phases of the struggle for New Democratic Revolution, People's War-based on agrarian revolutionary struggle - is the main form of struggle, and the struggle for agrarian revolution is the primary form of struggle in all phases of struggle for New Democratic revolution, and all other forms of struggle -- the socio-economic struggle, and political struggle, national and international, the struggle for the united front, the struggle for Civil Liberties should be linked with the primary form of struggle -- the agrarian revolutionary struggle.

Our party Document says : "The main direction of the Party among the peasants should be selection of strategic areas, concentration of cadres, formulation of fighting and agitational slogans with extensive discussions with the people of the area, mobilising the peasants for struggles on those issues, building the peasant organisations, arming the people with the locally available weapons in the anti-feudal struggles from the very beginning, organising of the Village Volunteer organisations, people's resistance to landlord-goonda-police violence and repression, and thus create, develop and defend areas of sustained resistance and thus advance to establish the base areas in the countryside. We should be conscious of the fact that all anti-feudal partial struggles should be linked with the extensive propagation of revolutionary politics of Armed Agrarian Revolution and with the building of the Party. We should adopt the necessary forms of struggles in all stages in keeping with the level of consciousness and through a long process of consolidation and expansion". The people's struggles, the resistance struggle and party building are interlinked and cannot be separated.

But your party is proposing the temporary halting of the expedition for area-wise seizure of power which at best can only mean abandoning the resistance struggles under your leadership, whatever be its character and strength. Such an orientation is against the concept of People's War and is bound to lead to the adoption of bourgeois parliamentary alternative to the present Indira Government. All your caution about exposing the opportunistic alliances, about taking the anti-feudal struggle as the key link, will not save you from such a course.

We earnestly hope that the comrades belonging to the organisation led by comrade V.M. calmly and deeply think about our criticism on the concept of National Alternative. Their concept of National Alternative is no way different from the Patriotic and Democratic Front which our Party had adopted earlier and we had to wage a fierce ideological struggle to defeat it.

Rejection of a particular individual but adoption of his political line will only lead to disastrous consequences for the agrarian revolutionary struggle in our country.

During the period 1968-70, some comrades abandoned mass organisations, mass struggles, economic and political struggles and mass resistance, and substituted the line of "annihilation of class enemies" for the correct line of People's War and brought immense damage to the cause of agrarian revolution in our country. At that time they abandoned the line of united front. Now also we see some organisations of the communist revolutionaries giving slogans of united front --anti-hegemonic front, Patriotic and Democratic front, anti-Soviet front, anti-autocratic front etc. with the idea of uniting with opposition section of the ruling classes. This line also will damage the cause of Agrarian Revolution in our country.

Road to Liberation

3rd March, 1982.